

Studies in the Concept of Ideology:  
From the Hegelian Dialectic to Western Marxism

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## ABSTRACT

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Ideology is interpreted broadly in this study as consciousness, where consciousness is the relation of knowledge to its object. This thesis investigates the connection between Hegel's theory of consciousness and society and Marx's political and social thought. It shows that many discoveries, previously considered to be those of Marx alone, like surplus-value and the transition from capitalism to communism, were first developed and employed by Hegel. The study also demonstrates that key concepts, which remain only implicit in Marx, such as social class, alienation, revolutionizing practice, contradiction and dialectic, are given full theoretical form only in the works of Hegel. It examines and shows the strong similarities between Hegel's and Marx's theory of religion, capitalism and the state, and stresses that their theory details not the conditions for the emancipation of a class, but rather the liberation and freedom of the social individual. The dissertation explores the writings of the young Marx and Feuerbach and shows that Western Marxism, to its theoretical detriment, owes much more to them than it does to Hegel and the mature Marx. The connection between the philosophies of Kant and Feuerbach and the ideology of contemporary bourgeois society is demonstrated, as is the organic, if antagonistic, unity between the alienated consciousness of Western Marxism and that of its bourgeois opponent. Contemporary Marxist theory is subjected to critical analysis within the framework of a comprehensive account of dialectic method and exposition. The thesis concludes that social thought and political action might be enriched and extended through a new synthesis of Marx with Hegel.

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All work is directed only to the aim or end; and when it is attained, people are surprised to find nothing else but just the very thing which they had wished for.

G. W. F. Hegel (1975:293)

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Hegel and Marx

This study is an attempt to rescue Hegel's thought from the interpretation imposed on it by Marx. I will argue against Marx's claim that the Hegelian dialectic "must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell". There is no "mystificatory side" (Marx, 1976:103, 102) to the Hegelian dialectic: Hegel's use of the dialectic method is identical with that of Marx.

In Capital, as is well known, Marx openly declares himself the pupil of Hegel (1976:103) — and he is certainly Hegel's foremost exponent and student. As I will show, Marx's theory of modern capitalist society owes much more to Hegel than is generally recognized; but there are also many aspects of Hegel's thought which Marx fails to explore or develop. Some of these aspects are illuminated in the chapters which follow, including especially the dialectic method. "Hegel", notes Mehring, "is alleged to have said on his death bed about his pupils: only one of them understood me, and he misunderstood me." (1969:308) With hindsight we can say that Hegel might almost have been thinking of Marx.

"The mystification which the dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands", states Marx, "by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner."

Paradoxically, however, Western Marxism\* has made no serious effort "to discover" the "rational form ... of the Hegelian dialectic". (Marx, 1976:102-103) Usually the main effort goes in the opposite direction, and Marxist commentators on Hegel are everywhere distinguished by their negative and critical approach to his thought. Here — as in many other respects — they resemble their bourgeois counterparts. Nor is this resemblance accidental, since the prevailing consciousness or ideology of Western Marxism shares much the same categories and an identical structure of thought with its bourgeois opponent. And Hegel's dialectic method is from start to finish the enemy and destroyer of what he refers to as "the understanding", or bourgeois, mind. As Marx puts it, "the dialectic ... is a scandal and abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinaire spokesmen ... being in its very essence critical and revolutionary." (1976:103)

Dialectic concerns ideology or consciousness, but the point of view taken of the concept of ideology in this study is somewhat different from the standard approach. Consciousness is "the relation of thought to its object" (Hegel, 1954:184); false consciousness — or ideology in the pejorative sense of the term — occurs when consciousness believes itself to be alienated or external to its object. What Marx would call communist consciousness, or what Hegel

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\* For the purpose of this study Western Marxism refers to the diverse traditions of contemporary Marxist thought, excluding Marxism as it is today officially conceived and practised in the socialist bloc. The work of the classical thinkers of the Russian Revolution, like Lenin and Trotsky, is treated here as part of the heritage of Western Marxism. Alone among Western Marxists, however, Lenin makes a genuine contribution to the understanding of Hegel; the debt this study owes to Lenin's commentary on Hegel in the Philosophical Notebooks (1963) will be readily apparent.

terms "reason", is a form of thought which perceives itself to be identical with its object. Both Western Marxist and bourgeois thinkers, however, conceive of thought as separate from or external to its object. "The ... accepted concept of logic", notes Hegel, "rests upon the assumed separation of the content of knowledge and the form of knowledge (or truth and certainty) — a separation that is assumed once for all in ordinary consciousness." (1954:178) For the understanding mode of thought, there is a finished world existing outside, and independent, of thought; and the problem of knowledge is simply to gain access to the external world. This view, as I will argue, is the root of all ideology or false consciousness; it forms the dominant structure of thought in capitalist society — a structure which both Marxist and bourgeois have in common. For this type of consciousness, "Truth is supposed to be the agreement of thought with its object, and in order to bring about this agreement (for the agreement is not there by itself) thinking must accommodate and adapt itself to its object." (Hegel, 1954:179)

The notion that thought is identical with the external world is, of course, dismissed by Marxist and bourgeois positivist alike as "wild idealism", "sheer metaphysics", and so on. It is also opposed by Kant who argues that "thought in its relation to the object of thought does not go out of itself to its object, while the object, as a thing in itself, simply remains a something beyond thought". (Hegel, 1954:179) The suggestion, however, that thought is identical with its object does not entail a belief in the non-reality of the outside world. The categories of thought are identical with the substance of the outside world, but they are also distinct from it. "A concrete thing", notes



Hegel, "is always very different from the abstract category as such". (1975:132) The notion that knowledge is identical with its object is the fundamental thesis of dialectic method. For the dialectic is based on the concept which Marx refers to as "revolutionizing practice", and which Hegel names, "ideality". This concept conceives thought and thinking as practical human activity, as the effort through which men and women translate their ideas about the external world into concrete reality. This is Hegel's meaning when he writes, "To think is an expression which attributes especially to consciousness the determination which it contains." (1954:187)

The concept of revolutionizing practice or ideality is best illustrated by a relation familiar to everyone: work. As Hegel suggests, "work and effort [are] the middle term between subjective and objective". (1976:126) Through work human beings transform the objects of the external world into things designed to satisfy their particular needs and desires. "Labour is, first of all," notes Marx, "a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. He sets in motion the natural forces which belong to his own body, his arms, legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs". (1976:283)

Hegel observes that there are three phases or "moments" in the labour process, a process which he variously refers to in the Phenomenology of Mind (1967) as "the general process of negation", "action", and "externalization". (e.g. 1967:424) The first moment, which Hegel calls, "purpose", occurs as an imaginative construction which consciousness applies to a given external reality. Included in

this phase are the talents, abilities and character of the acting subject as well as the object to which the purpose is applied. Without these two elements of purpose, Hegel remarks, consciousness is only "nothing working away towards nothing". (1967:421) An example of purpose would be an artist's conception of the completed sculpture before he or she begins work on a chunk of stone.

The second phase of externalization, the "means", is the process through which the purpose is "actualized", and includes all aspects of the labour performed along with the object on which it is expended. In the example of the artist, the means include the activity of shaping the stone, the tools used by the artist, and the stone itself. The third moment of externalization is the completed or "manifested" object, which appears now, "no longer as immediate or subjectively presented purpose but as it is brought to light and established as something other than and external to the acting subject". In the example given above, the third moment is the completed statue which as a real object manifests the original conception or purpose of the artist. Hegel sums up the process of externalization or work as follows: "acting is simply transferring from a state not yet explicitly expressed to one fully expressed". (1967:421)

Work is an aspect of practical human activity, ideality or revolutionizing practice. But the chief element in work, as in all ideality, is thought or human consciousness. Only the action of thought separates human activity from that of other animals. In a passage deeply influenced by Hegel, Marx writes:

We presuppose labour in a form in which it is an exclusively human characteristic. A spider conducts operations which resemble those of a weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect

to shame by the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labour process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally. Man not only effects a change of form in the materials of nature; he also realizes ... his own purpose in those materials. And this is a purpose he is conscious of, it determines the mode of his activity with the rigidity of a law, and he must subordinate his will to it. This subordination is no mere momentary act. Apart from the exertion of the working organs, a purposeful will is required for the entire duration of the work. (1976:284)

The concept of ideality or revolutionizing practice as expressed in work is deceptively simple. In the course of this study I shall demonstrate that it lies behind all the passages in Hegel which critics decry as "metaphysical", "nonsense", "abstruse", and so on. It is precisely through ideality that the social world of human beings manifests what Hegel calls "objective thoughts". The social world is a result of practical human activity — an activity which translates "mere thoughts" into reality. "... In as far as it is allowed", notes Hegel, "that understanding, and reason, are of the world of objects ... in so far as it is admitted that the determinations of thought also have objective validity and existence." (1954:187) Recognition that human activity is precisely the concrete manifestation of thought leads Hegel to write that, "Logic therefore coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts — thoughts accredited able to express the essential reality of things." (1975:36)

Everyone acts on the assumption that thought represents the union of subjective and objective. We naturally assume that our ideas may be translated into objectivity through purposeful action. Everything we

do is an illustration of this assumption. Yet this assumption is abandoned when we theoretically approach the relation of consciousness to its object. We place thought on one side, and conceive it to be a subjective reflection of what we place on the other side — objective reality. "To say that Reason or Understanding is in the world", Hegel observes, "is equivalent in its import to the phrase 'Objective Thought'. The latter phrase however has the inconvenience that thought is usually confined to express what belongs to the mind or consciousness only, while objective is a term applied, at least primarily, only to the non-mental." (1975:37)

Ideality or revolutionizing practice is the means whereby mind or human consciousness shows itself to be "the absolutely concrete". The absolutely concrete, for Hegel, is something which in every aspect is identical with itself even in its distinction of itself from itself. The mind of the sculptor, for example, remains a self-identical thing even while it distinguishes an aspect of itself — the sculpture — from itself, through sensuous human practice. Hegel refers to the mind or consciousness of the human individual as "the notion" and the notion is "absolutely concrete ... when it exists as notion distinguishing itself from its objectivity, which notwithstanding the distinction still continues to be its own. Everything else which is concrete, however rich it be, is not so identical with itself and therefore not so concrete on its own part ..." (1975:229)

Thought is identical with concrete human activity and, therefore, even the most abstract theoretical constructs are also aspects of human ideality. Accordingly, the logical syllogism is simply a theoretical expression of, among other things, the concrete relation we

call work. "The teleological relation", says Hegel, referring to work or ideality, "is a syllogism in which the subjective end [of the human individual] coalesces with the objectivity external to it, through a middle term which is the unity of both. This unity is on one hand the purposive action, on the other hand the Means, i.e. objectivity made directly subservient to purpose." (1975:270) Hegel distinguishes the Means (of production) from "the material or objectivity which is pre-supposed", i.e., the raw material or object to be worked on. (1975:272) Accordingly, we have what Marx later calls, "the simple elements of the labour process ... (1) purposeful activity, that is, work itself, (2) the object on which that work is performed, and (3) the instruments of that work". (1976:284)

Dialectic concerns the relation of the individual with society, a relation Hegel calls, "the rational syllogism". (1975:245) Work or ideality is the means through which the individual makes him or herself identical with society. "All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society." (Marx, 1973:87) The human individual is, for Hegel and Marx, the social individual; and the social individual is both identical with, as well as distinct from his or her social world. Marx expresses this notion in the Grundrisse as follows:

When we consider bourgeois society in the long view and as a whole, then the final result of the process of social production always appears as the society itself, i.e. the human being itself in its social relations. Everything that has a fixed form, such as the product etc., appears as merely a moment, a vanishing moment, in this movement. The direct process of production itself here appears only as a moment. The conditions and objectifications of the process are themselves equally moments of it, and its only subjects are the individuals, but

individuals in mutual relationships which they equally produce and produce anew. The constant process of their own movement, in which they renew themselves even as they renew the world of wealth they create. (1973:712; my emphasis)

Marx's formulation simply repeats, though in more concrete terms, Hegel's theory of the interchangeable relation of the individual with society or the "universal":

Everything is a Syllogism. Everything is a notion [i.e. a part of society], the existence of which is the differentiation of its members or functions, so that the universal [social] nature of the Notion [the human being] gives itself external reality by means of particularity [i.e. work or ideality], and thereby as a negative reflection-into-self, makes itself ... [a social] individual. Or conversely: the actual thing is an individual, which by means of particularity rises to universality and makes itself identical with itself. The actual is one: but it is also the divergence from each other of the constituent elements of the Notion [society]; and the Syllogism represents the orbit of the intermediation of its elements, by which it realizes unity. (1975: 244-245)

Through their ideality or revolutionizing practice in society individuals develop their natural capacities and talents, and also form a concrete connection between themselves and society. "An individual", says Hegel, "cannot know what he is till he has made himself real by action." (1967:422) Or as Marx puts it, "Through this movement [the labour process]" the individual "acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power." (1976:283)

The concept of work or ideality, as developed by Hegel and Marx, provides a ready example of two essential aspects of the dialectic: contradiction, and affirmation or transcendence. These concepts, of

course, will be developed further in the following chapters, but a preliminary acquaintance with them is nevertheless useful. The accepted notion of the dialectic is the dull formula "thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis". This "dialectic triad" appears rarely in the work of either Hegel or Marx and, as it stands, says less than nothing about dialectic. Still, since it is a well-known formula, it may help the reader to comprehend dialectic movement. In the labour process, the "purpose" of the working subject is the "thesis". The objective reality on which that purpose is actively exercised is the "anti-thesis", and the product of the labour process is the "synthesis".

The object confronting the individual represents a contradiction between his or her ideal notion of what the object should be, and what it actually is. And the activity of the individual is directed at surmounting this antithesis. The result of the labour process like that of all dialectic movement is affirmation or transcendence ("Aufheben" in Hegel's terminology). It is a positive or constructive result which contains in itself all the moments which joined together in its creation. The negative activity of labour — an activity which confronts, opposes and transforms external reality — also has a positive or affirmative result. The synthesis contains or suspends the earlier moments of thesis and antithesis in itself. The positive aspect of dialectic in the labour process is emphasized by Marx:

A machine which is not active in the labour process is useless. In addition, it falls prey to the destructive power of natural processes. Iron rusts; wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize on these things, awaken them from the dead, change them from merely possible into real and effective use-values. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part of its organism, and infused

with vital energy for the performance of the functions appropriate to their concept and to their vocation in the process, they are indeed consumed, but to some purpose, as elements in the formation of new use-values, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as means of subsistence or into a new labour process as means of production. (1976:289-290)

The labour process not only provides an instructive illustration of dialectic; its form under capitalism also explains the alienation of consciousness from its object characteristic of the bourgeois and Western Marxist mind. The understanding consciousness is incapable of perceiving the unity of thought and being precisely because under capitalism this unity is concealed beneath the antagonistic relations of bourgeois society. From the point of view of the worker, the means of production and the commodities he or she produces are alien and foreign powers — "objective facts" which rule the worker instead of being ruled by him or her. Even the purpose — the design or plan of the thing to be produced — is not the worker's but someone else's. The entire labour process is external to the worker — a realm of alienation. "... The fact", writes Marx, "that surplus labour is posited as surplus value [or profit] of capital means that the worker does not appropriate the product of his own labour, that it appears to him as alien property; inversely, that alien labour appears as the property of capital." (1973:469-70) For the worker, the labour process is simply the means to earn money and make a living; it has nothing to do with the translation of his or her ideas into objective reality.

Notes Hegel,

The work is, i.e. it is for other individuals, and for them it is an external and alien reality, in whose place they have to put their own [work], in order to get by their action consciousness of their unity with reality. In other words, the interest



which they take in that work owing to their original constitution is other than the particular interest of this work, which is thereby turned into something different. The work is, thus, in general something transitory, which is extinguished by the counter-action of other powers and interests, and displays the reality of individuality in transitory form rather than as fulfilled and accomplished. (1967:427)

Nor is alienation confined simply to the consciousness of the worker. For the capitalist, also, the labour process is an external and alien reality — and even more so in the case of the capitalist, since he or she does not take part in it. Moreover, the commodities produced are not intended for the personal consumption of the capitalist — their design, quantity and quality are dictated by the needs of the market; and even if these needs are manipulated by the capitalist they are not those of the capitalist but rather of the consumers. The capitalist desires only to make a profit, just as the worker desires only to make a living. Both capitalist and worker subordinate their activity to ends external to that activity; everywhere there is on one side the objective fact and on the other the subjective value. The mystification of fact and value; the split between idea and reality; the discord between thought and being is the objective principle of capitalist society.

But if ideas are felt to be separate or external to reality, the same division is introduced by the understanding mind between the individual and society. As a result, for bourgeois and Marxist thinkers alike, there is on the one hand, the isolated individual, and on the other, the social world. The alienation between the two is believed to be absolute. For the bourgeois thinker, the separation is rational and represents everything good in the world. For the Marxist,

the cleavage is a necessary product of the evils of capitalism; unity between the individual and society is "a mere 'ought to be'" (Hegel, 1976:48) which must await the communist revolution. For Hegel and Marx, however, the union of the individual with society exists already in bourgeois society — even if the inner harmony finds expression here only as outward conflict.

In a discussion of what Hegel calls the "'immediate' syllogism" of the understanding, (which is simply the ordinary syllogism of formal logic) he criticizes both the alienation of the individual from bourgeois society, and also the distorted view of the relation between thought and its object which this alienation entails:

In the 'immediate' Syllogism the several aspects of the notion confront one another abstractly, and stand in external relation only. We have first the two extremes, which are Individuality and Universality; and then the notion, as the mean for locking the two together, is in like manner only abstract Particularity. In this way the extremes are put as independent and without affinity either towards one another or their mean. Such a Syllogism contains reason, but in utter notionlessness — the formal Syllogism of Understanding. In it the subject is coupled with an other character; or the universal by this mediation subsumes a subject external to it. In the rational Syllogism, on the contrary, the subject is by means of the mediation coupled with itself. In this manner it first comes to be a subject: or, in the subject we have the first germ of the rational Syllogism. (1975:245)

The separation or alienation of thought from its object in bourgeois society leads to the attribution of human qualities to things, and to the treatment of human beings as objects. The result is a bizarre mixture of materialism and idealism in the understanding consciousness. "The crude materialism of the economists", notes Marx, "who regard as the natural properties of things what are social relations of production among people, and qualities which things obtain

because they are subsumed under these relations, is at the same time just as crude an idealism, even fetishism, since it imputes social relations to things as inherent characteristics, and thus mystifies them." (1973:687) Mystification, however, does not stop with the bourgeois economists. It appears just as clearly in the abstract categories of Western Marxism. Throughout this study I will emphasize that both Hegel and Marx are primarily concerned not with "class" or "class struggle", as is Western Marxism, but with the self-emancipation of the social individual from the alienated structures of bourgeois society. The question of revolution is not the liberation of the proletariat from the domination of the bourgeoisie, but the liberation of the social individual from the confines of an alienated society. Class is an abstraction to which no concrete reality corresponds. It can be at once a crude materialist concept according to which "class" is an external reality existing apart from the individuals who compose it; or an equally crude idealist notion which imputes human characteristics to an abstract category. The Western Marxist ideal of the working class simply does not exist; a fact demonstrated by the constant dissatisfaction of Western Marxists with what they perceive as a "bourgeoisified" and "consumerist" Western proletariat. Classes are groups of individuals defined in terms of property relations and function in society. Classes are an explanatory category, only in so far as that category says something about the concrete individuals grouped within it. For Western Marxism, however, the individual is an explanatory category only in so far as he or she says something about class.

The abstract and alienated character of Western Marxism brings it closer to the materialism of Feuerbach and the young Marx than it is to either the mature Marx or Hegel. This study will demonstrate that the writings of Marx, especially the Grundrisse and Capital cannot be understood except as a dialogue with Hegel. As Franz Mehring puts it in his classic biography of Marx: "He went beyond Feuerbach by going back to Hegel." (1969:127) Marx's debt to Hegel, however, is much greater than even Marx himself appreciates. Marx employs Hegel's dialectic method and with it he makes the same discoveries as Hegel had already made a generation before him: discoveries which include, as I will argue, the theory of surplus value and the transition of bourgeois society to the rational or communist state.

The argument of this study is not simply about a much misunderstood aspect of intellectual history. It concerns something more fundamental. If I am correct, there are in Hegel a great treasure of insights and theory which could help to broaden and enrich the entire approach of Western Marxism to the study of bourgeois society as well as to the phenomenon of bureaucratic socialism.

Western Marxism has the advantage over bourgeois thought in that it at least advances to a negative standpoint over against capitalist reality. Bourgeois and Marxist consciousness in this respect represent opposite sides of what Kant would call "an antinomy of pure reason". (1893:255-256) On one side is the bourgeois mind which advances the proposition that capitalism is just and reasonable; on the other side, the Marxist consciousness holds that capitalism represents everything bad and irrational. Much evidence may be, and is, gathered to support the conclusions of either side. But the

arguments remain in the grip of the limited categories of thought shared by both opponents. Nevertheless, the Marxist begins from the correct notion that a large proportion of the individuals within bourgeois society are condemned to an existence in which their influence over their own lives and their freedom are restricted and held fast by the alienated nature of capitalism. As Hegel suggests, "The side of the antinomy which asserts the concept of freedom," i.e., in this case Marxism, "... has the merit of implying the absolute starting point, though only the starting point, for the discovery of truth, while the other side goes no further than existence without the concept and therefore excludes the outlook of rationality and right altogether." (1976:48)

## 2. Structure of the Study

Most works on Hegel make a rigid distinction between the metaphysical and social aspects of his thought. Other studies suggest that these aspects cannot be separated since each throws light on the other — they are supposed to be reciprocally related. Both these approaches are bound to miss what is essential in Hegel. His metaphysics and his social thought are in fact dialectically related: they are identical and distinct. Hegel's metaphysics deals with the categories of human thought which, he insists, reflect as well as create through concrete practice the social and natural universe of men and women. Consequently his investigation of the categories is also a theory of society and nature. I have tried to illustrate this argument with the example given

above of Hegel's notion of the syllogism. Similarly, Hegel's concrete study of bourgeois society and the rational state in The Philosophy of Right (first published in 1821) is based on the theoretical framework and the dialectic method presented in his examination of the categories. "... The doctrine of speculative logic", Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Right, "is here presupposed ..." (1976:36) The reader, therefore, will find in this study no distinction between Hegel the metaphysician and Hegel the social theorist. The two Hegels are really one.

Just as there is no separate philosophy and social theory in Hegel, there is also no rigid distinction between these two areas in the work of Marx. The codification of Marx as a philosopher (dialectical materialism) and a social scientist (historical materialism) is even less justified with Marx than it is with Hegel since Marx produced no separate works giving a comprehensive philosophical outlook. The distinction between philosophy and social theory is in any case a product of the fantasies of the bourgeois mind.

Before 1845 the young Marx was deeply influenced, along with his mentor, Feuerbach, by Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind (1967). This influence is, of course, also apparent in his mature work. I have deliberately used the Phenomenology in this Introduction in order to show the parallels between Capital and the Phenomenology. The Phenomenology, however, will be referred to only very rarely in the following chapters. Hegel himself observes in 1831 of the Phenomenology (which was first published in 1807) that it is a "characteristic early work not to be revised — relevant to the period in which it was written — the abstract Absolute was dominant at the time of the

Preface." (Quoted in Findlay, 1975:vi-vii)

The Phenomenology is full of exciting passages and brilliant insights. But most of the substantive content of the work is contained and elaborated in the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830). Moreover, the Encyclopaedia is far richer in form and content than the earlier work. The so-called Lesser Logic (1975) (Part One of the Encyclopaedia) is a condensed and powerful version of the original Science of Logic ("Greater Logic") (1951) which went to press in the years 1812, 1813 and 1816. Most of the references in this study are to the Lesser Logic, but the Greater Logic (1951 and 1954) is also referred to. Part Three of the Encyclopaedia, The Philosophy of Mind (1969) is often ignored by Hegel scholars; but this much underrated volume is used extensively in this study. As Hegel himself declares (1976:21), the Philosophy of Right is based on "premisses ... expounded" in the Philosophy of Mind. Hegel's three-volume Lectures on the History of Philosophy (1892, 1894, 1896) is vital to an understanding of his thought and I have made numerous references to it; the same is true, though to a lesser degree, of his Lectures on the Philosophy of History. (1956)

Concentration on Hegel's later works rather than on the Phenomenology is justified not only because their author considered them to be superior to it, but also because the mature Marx relies much more on them than on the Phenomenology. In Capital, for example, the Phenomenology is not cited even once; but there are references to the Encyclopaedia, the Philosophy of Right and the Greater Logic. Moreover, the Hegelian dialectic is perfected not in the Phenomenology or even the Greater Logic, but in the Encyclopaedia.

This study advances from the most abstract social categories to the most concrete. The following chapter considers the "natural individual" as seen by Hegel and Marx — the individual as he or she appears in primitive society and also as the individual matures and develops within the context of bourgeois society. The chapter concludes with a preliminary investigation of contradiction and its relation to the development of the natural individual. The next two chapters are concerned with religion and Christianity, and show the connection of religious teachings with the revolutionary ethos of both Hegel and Marx. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the link between theories of knowledge and the social relations of capitalist society. They contain a discussion of Feuerbach, the young Marx and Kant, and also the radical theory of knowledge put forward by Hegel and Marx. In Chapters 7 and 8 the nexus of the property relations of bourgeois society with the notion and reality of the capitalist state are examined. The concluding chapter is an exposition of dialectic method and an overall critique of the prevailing theories of modern Western Marxism.

Kant observes that once it is completed, theoretical research which appeared very dubious when half-finished "is at last found to be in an unexpected way completely harmonious with that" which went before "provided this dubiousness is left out of sight for a while and only the business at hand is attended to until finished". Consequently he suggests that "writers would save themselves many errors and much labour lost (because spent on delusions) if they could only resolve to go to work with a little more ingenuousness." (1956:110) The structure of this study follows the form of its content. It is by no means



the result of a pre-established intent. It began as an investigation of the relationship between Hegel and Marx; and this indeed is what it is. But most of the views about Hegel criticized in this study are ones I also used to hold. Thus, the movement of the form of this work is also the movement of my own discoveries and of a developing appreciation not only of Hegel but also of a new Marx. To say that I consciously employed the dialectic method would be false; but in retrospect, the method is really contained in it. For dialectic is, above all, a method of discovery.

## CHAPTER 2

## CONSCIOUSNESS AND FREEDOM IN THE "NATURAL" INDIVIDUAL

1. The Philosophy of Mind

Individual human consciousness is the active element in all social forms. It is only through the conscious activity of real, living human beings that society — or in Hegel's terminology, "objective mind" — along with its systems of material production, art, philosophy, and science, is constructed. "The individual", writes Hegel, "is the absolute form." (Kaufmann, 1966:398) Society is the manifestation of reason or the Idea, and reason, in turn, "exists only in a subject and as the function of that subject. Thus active reason is Thinking". (1969:223) Hegel puts this notion another way when he observes that the will of the individual "is the existential side of reason ... the act of developing the Idea, and of investing its self-unfolding content with an existence which, as realizing the idea, is actuality. It is thus 'Objective' Mind". (1969:239) Hegel's view of the role of the individual is adopted by his most influential "pupil", Marx. "Men in every century ..." writes Marx, are " ... both the authors and the actors of their own drama." (PP:111) Since for Hegel conscious human activity is the source of social phenomena, the study of society should begin with an inquiry into the nature of the human mind. It is to this inquiry that Hegel devotes the major part of the third section of the Encyclopaedia, the Philosophy of Mind. (1969)

Hegel's study of human consciousness differs radically from all earlier efforts to come to grips with the nature of mind, and has much to offer even to present-day theories of consciousness. For Hegel, each phase of human social development, such as ancient or feudal society, represents a particular form or stage in the development of individual human consciousness or ideology. "Every ... form in which the Idea is expressed is at the same time a passing or fleeting stage ... " (1975:24) In Hegel's terminology, the Idea refers to a particular society, and also to the system of thought in which the social relations of the individual within that society are expressed.

"We thus", Hegel avers, "have two Ideas, the subjective Idea as knowledge, and then the substantial and concrete Idea [society] ... " What Hegel calls the "true speculative Idea, the Notion, in its determinations ..." (1892:106) is the concrete appropriation and expression in philosophy (or social science), of both the knowledge and the social relations of a particular epoch. Hegel maintains, however, that a new form of civilization is developing within "civil" or present-day capitalist society (1976:84); in this advanced societal form, the social relations of the individual will conform to human and rational principles, so that the "subjective Idea", or knowledge, will be identical with the "concrete Idea", or society. These two forms of the Idea, then, will be united within the "true speculative Idea". "The Idea", Hegel declares,

turns out to be the thought which is completely identical with itself, and not identical simply in the abstract, but also in its action of setting itself over against itself, so as to gain a being of its own, and yet of being in full possession of itself while it is in this other. (1975:23)

As I will argue in the concluding chapters of this study, Hegel's "true speculative Idea" is precisely what Marx means by communist

society — the rational community of associated individuals in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all". (Marx, 1969, I:127)

In his theory of human consciousness in The Philosophy of Mind, Hegel explores the development of the mind of the human individual which he believes will eventually emerge within the rational, or communist, society. "We have to deal", Hegel explains,

with this unity of subjective principle [individual human rationality] and substance [society]: it constitutes the process of Mind that this individual one or independent existence of subject should put aside its immediate character and bring itself forth as identical with the substantial. Such an aim is pronounced to be the highest end attainable by Man. (1892:106)

The process Hegel refers to is elucidated by Marx where, in the Grundrisse, he suggests that the "final result of the process of social production always appears as the society itself, i.e. the human being ... in its social relations. Everything that has a fixed form, such as the product etc., appears as merely a moment, a vanishing moment, in this movement". Communist society, Marx suggests, will annul what Hegel calls "the immediate character" of the individual by providing "free time — which is both idle time and time for higher activity ..." This free time will transform "its possessor into a different subject", a transformation which involves

both discipline, as regards the human being in the process of becoming; and, at the same time, practice, ... experimental science, materially creative and objectifying science, as regards the human being who has become, in whose head exists the accumulated knowledge of society. (1973:712)

Hegel's exploration of mind, which places seminal insights on human psychology within a profound theoretical framework, should have established him as one of the forerunners of modern psychology. But

if Hegel towered over his contemporaries in this field, his efforts have yet to be comprehended by, and assimilated into, the mainstream of theoretical psychology. The deep influence of Hegel's theory of human consciousness on Marx is already evident in the Manuscripts of 1844 (1964:174) and especially in the 1845 Theses on Feuerbach, where Marx observes that it was left to (Hegelian) idealism to develop "the active side" of "human sensuous activity, practice ..." whereas materialism saw society "only in the form of the object ... or of contemplation ..." (1969, I:13) What impressed Marx most, of course, was Hegel's effort to study human consciousness as it appears in the context of society. For Hegel embraces Plato's interpretation of the maxim, "know thyself", according to which human self-knowledge is best achieved not by concentrating on the individual alone but rather by looking at the social and political aspects of human life.

Hegel rejects the abstract systems of rational psychology which attempt to explain consciousness by treating it as a thing and debating whether the mind is "simple" or "complex", "mortal" or "eternal". Mind, for Hegel, "is not an inert being but, on the contrary, absolutely restless being, pure activity ..." The fundamental quality of consciousness is its "ideality" or "negativity", a quality completely overlooked by rational psychology. (1969:3) The ideality of mind, writes Hegel, is the "triumph over externality ... Every activity of mind is nothing but a distinct mode of reducing what is external to the inwardness which mind itself is, and it is only by this reduction, by this idealization or assimilation, of what is external that it becomes mind." (1969:11) Ideality refers to the creative nature of human consciousness, and it is closely related to

the notion of externalization or work developed in the Phenomenology. In this sense, ideality is "manifestation", the objective expression of the individual's consciousness through his or her activity or practice in society. (1969:16-17) But ideality means something more than externalization, since it also refers to the ability of the human mind to capture in thought the essence and meaning of its social and natural world.

If Hegel is opposed to rational psychology he is equally withering in his critique of empirical theories of consciousness based on the teachings of Locke and Condillac. For these thinkers mind is simply the process of mentally abstracting from the objects received by the senses: thus people have the notion of time because they perceive its passing, and they have the idea of space because they actually see it. These theories, which inspired the French school of Idéologie headed by Destutt de Tracy (Lichtheim, 1967a:7), were based on a model which materialist philosophy shared with the natural sciences, and treated the mind as a complex of reciprocally related forces and faculties. For Hegel, however, "reciprocally related" means only "externally connected", and the protestations of empirical psychology that it treats mind as a "harmoniously integrated" totality, were only "high sounding but empty phrases". (1969:4)

According to Hegel, a totality cannot be understood in terms of its constituent elements, whether or not these elements are reciprocally related. To study mind in its true nature as a living, organic unity means to see it in terms of its absolute necessity, its development as a "self-originating and self-actualizing universal Notion". (1969:5) Empirical psychology accepts its material as given by

experience and organizes it in accordance with the canons of a method designed to investigate phenomena without consciousness or intelligence. Philosophy (or social science), however, must "comprehend mind as a necessary development of the eternal Idea and must let the science of mind, as constituted by its particular parts, unfold itself entirely from its Notion". (1969:5) For Hegel, the notion of mind, its essential feature, is liberty or freedom which he provisionally defines as "the absence of dependence on an Other, the relating of self to self". (1969:15) This notion is not Hegel's subjective fancy or idea, rather it is the "absolutely immanent" quality of human consciousness. The idea of freedom is the "absolute concept" (1976:33); it is the "actuality" of men and women, " — not something which they have ... but which they are". (1969:240) Consequently, to grasp the content and nature of mind, the observer has "merely to look on as it were, at the object's own development ..." and treat "the so-called faculties of mind ... as steps [in its own] liberation". (1969:5, 184)

The mode of study Hegel proposes to utilize in the investigation of human consciousness is precisely the dialectic method. The dialectic itself, and the method and manner of exposition related to it will be considered in detail in the final chapter of this study. But it is useful to keep in mind at the outset its resemblance to the method Marx employs in Capital and elsewhere. For both thinkers the development of society and the individuals within it is considered in relation to a future epoch of absolute freedom and liberty. "The absolute goal ... of free mind", writes Hegel, "is to make freedom its object, i.e. to make freedom objective as much in the sense that

freedom shall be the rational system of mind, as in the sense that this system shall be the world of immediate actuality ..." (1976:32) Writing under the impact of his renewed acquaintance with Hegel, Marx states in the Theses on Feuerbach that "the standpoint of the old materialism is 'civil' society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or socialized humanity". (1969, I:15) Similarly in Capital, bourgeois society is presented as a progressive and necessary stage in the organic development of society towards the ideal of socialism; a society where, after the "expropriators are expropriated", production is carried out "by freely associated men, and is consequently regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan". (1976:929, 173)

It is ironic in this context that Marx is praised in popular accounts as a hard-headed realist while Hegel is taken to task for his idealism.\* Both Hegel and Marx recognize that the notion of freedom or liberty is a powerful element in human consciousness. As Hegel observes, "freedom is a 'fact of consciousness'", one which "anyone can discover in himself". (1976:21) Marx's vision of communist society is itself rooted in fundamental notions about the consciousness of men and women which are drawn directly from Hegel, but which Marx did not trouble to outline or elucidate in a systematic fashion. For example, in passages from the Poverty of Philosophy, which echo Hegel's idea that the investigator has only to observe the development of mind toward its own liberation, Marx speaks of the "need for

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\* Perhaps the most lucid account heretofore of the relationship between Hegel and Marx, Sydney Hook's From Hegel to Marx (1976), consistently hammers on this theme.



universality, the tendency towards an integral development of the individual". This tendency, in connection with the struggle of the working class, has become so clear "that people have only to take note of what is happening and become its mouthpiece". (PP:138, 120) More than ten years later Marx returns to this theme in the Grundrisse. Here Marx observes that the determining element in the development of society is not the economic factor — even, to use Engels's famous formulation, "in the last instance" (Quoted in Althusser, 1969:111) — but "the absolute working out of the creative potentialities of men". What is social wealth, asks Marx,

other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange. The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself ...? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming? (1973:488; my emphasis)

Marx's "absolute movement of becoming" represents the development of human freedom — just as it does for Hegel: in fact the passage from the Grundrisse is taken almost word for word from a description of wealth in the Phenomenology (1967:523-525). But for Hegel as well as for Marx, freedom as it exists in individual human consciousness, "is itself only a notion — a principle of mind and heart ..." As such it has developed historically "into an objective phase, into the legal, moral, religious and not less into scientific actuality". (1969:240)

## 2. Anthropology

The structure of the Philosophy of Mind reflects Hegel's intention to advance from the most primitive and basic elements of human consciousness to "rational and free mind" and its expression in the state, history, art and philosophy. The first section of the work, "Subjective Mind", deals with human consciousness proper and begins with a discussion of the physical and mental properties of the individual human being or soul. But Hegel's notion that the individual cannot be understood apart from the society in which he or she is placed is at once evident from the title of the first section of "Subjective Mind": "Anthropology. The Soul". The soul is, in Hegel's terminology, the arena of mind's implicitness; in plain language it is the natural form in which individuals come into the world and over which they have no real control. We cannot choose the circumstances of our birth, our racial and national characteristics or qualities like mortality and the ageing process. Similarly, the pattern of our feelings and sensations, the cycle of sleep and waking, the affliction of insanity and so on, are aspects of the human condition and beyond our immediate influence. Accordingly, Hegel deals with these subjects and others like superstition and the supernatural in the Anthropology. Hegel's influence on Marx is strikingly evident here as in many other aspects of the Philosophy of Mind. Thus in the plan for Marx's proposed but never completed study of the forms of state and forms of consciousness and their relation to the material basis of society, Marx writes: "The point of departure obviously from the natural characteristic: subjectively and objectively. Tribes, races, etc." (1973:110)

The natural or primitive man and woman bears no resemblance for Hegel to Rousseau's noble savage. It is in primitive society that the individual is least free and self-determined. More than at any other stage in the development of civilization, the human being is here determined by and identical with his or her social and natural surroundings. Hegel's view is accepted by Marx: "... Human beings become individuals only through the process of history. He appears originally as a species being ..., clan being, herd animal ..." (1973:496) Since this stage of human society corresponds with the lowest development of consciousness, Hegel's discussion of mind begins with "universal natural soul" or primitive society. Universal natural soul, however, is not separate from and independent of its members; society, even in its most primitive phase when individuals have the least autonomy is still nothing but the conscious activity of the individuals who make it up. "Just as light", Hegel writes,

bursts asunder into an infinite host of stars, so too does the universal natural soul sunder itself into an infinite host of individual souls; only with this difference, that whereas light appears to have an existence independently of the stars, the universal natural soul attains actuality solely in individual souls. (1969:35)

Marx is no less adamant than Hegel in insisting on the primacy of the individual even in primitive society where, he remarks, the main concern is "the reproduction of the individual". (1973:485)

If the individual in primitive society lacks autonomy, this society itself is not far removed from the determining influence of nature; and so its members are prey to superstition and myth which attribute to natural events a supernatural significance. Individuals in less developed societies lack the intellectual confidence of their

modern counterparts and therefore base their decisions on external phenomena rather than on the "prudent consideration of all the circumstances". Accordingly, superstition led the Greeks, for example, to determine their actions by the results of animal sacrifice and to imagine that there is "more in the animal's entrails than there is to be seen in them". (1969:40) Hegel, however, refuses to deny altogether the validity of primitive and ancient beliefs. Just as there have been rare but undeniable instances of the supernatural in modern society, the intimate intercourse with nature experienced by earlier peoples must have inspired "a few real cases of ... what seems to be marvellous prophetic vision of coming conditions and of events arising therefrom". Nevertheless, "as mental freedom gets a deeper hold, even those few and slight susceptibilities, based upon participation in the common life of nature, disappear". Only "animals and plants ... remain for ever subject to such influences". (1969:37)

Hegel's account of mental life in primitive society is echoed in Capital where Marx connects the existence of myth and superstition with "the immaturity of man as an individual, when he has not yet torn himself loose from the umbilical cord of his natural species-connection with other men, or on direct relations of dominance and servitude". Reflecting the nineteenth-century milieu of triumphant positivism Marx declines to speculate on the validity of beliefs in the supernatural, but goes on to indicate their link with the "low stage of development of the productive powers of labour and correspondingly limited relations between men within the process of creating and reproducing their material life, hence also limited

relations between man and nature". Nevertheless, the continuity of Marx's thought with that of Hegel is demonstrated rather than refuted in Marx's observation that

These real limitations [of material life] are reflected in the ancient worship of nature, and in other elements of tribal religions. The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. (1976:173)

### 3. Human Nature

For Hegel, society is composed of and produced by individuals. But society itself cannot be reduced to the independent actions of isolated individuals. Men and women are above all social beings, and their character and individuality are best explained in terms of the society in which they live. The peculiarly British notion that society consists of individuals pursuing their own selfish interests, which was formulated originally by Hobbes and Locke and later systematized by such thinkers as Mill and Spencer, is itself a product of the British character. In Britain, notes Hegel, "the individual in all his relationships aims to be independent of others, his connection with the universal [society] bearing his own peculiar stamp". Thus, the British "recognize the rational less in the form of universality than in that of individuality. That is why their poets rank higher than their philosophers". (1969:50) Hegel's view of the relationship between society and the individual is shared by Marx. In the Grundrisse, for example, Marx defines society as "the man in his

social relations". Accordingly, society does not consist of isolated individuals, but rather "represents the sum of relations ... in which these individuals stand to each other, and of the connections between them". (1971:103)

By assuming a fundamental continuity between society and the individual, Hegel and Marx come out against notions of an unchanging human nature — the view of men and women as basically selfish, driven by a need for power over others and so on. As Marx puts it, "the human essence ... is the ensemble of social relations". (1969, I:14) There are, Hegel admits, certain innate qualities such as genius and talent which are more prominent in some individuals than others. But even these "are, to begin with, merely dispositions" which "if they are not to be wasted or squandered" must be developed in and through society. (1969:52) Qualities belonging to the moral sphere like truth, understanding and generosity, are "not innate but [are] to be produced in the individual by his own efforts". (1969:52) The presence or absence of moral qualities in individuals is a function of the general culture in which they live, not of an eternal human nature. The phenomena of greed and avarice, envy and jealousy "are of no importance whatever for ethics", and belong "in a natural history of mind" — to which no doubt they will one day be completely confined. (1969:52) These accidental mannerisms of human conduct diminish in a highly developed cultural epoch "in just the same way that, in such a period, the shallow characters in comedies of a less culturally developed epoch — the completely frivolous, the ridiculously absent-minded, the sordidly avaricious — become much rarer". (1969:52-53) The naive hypocrisy of a Tartuffe, for example,

"has more or less disappeared. This downright falsehood, this veneer of goodness, has now become too transparent not to be seen through, and the divorce between doing good with one hand and evil with the other no longer occurs, since advancing culture has weakened the opposition between these categories". (1976:257)

Hegel's emphasis on the progressive effects of development in society and culture on the morality of the individual is aimed at Romantic notions about a by-gone golden age of human development. Marx, too, is suspicious of Romantic opinions which elevate the morality of previous epochs over that of the modern order. "... The childish world of antiquity", he remarks, "appears on the one side loftier" than our own. "On the other side it really is loftier in all matters where closed shapes, forms and given limits are sought for. It is satisfaction from a limited standpoint; while the modern age gives no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is vulgar." (1973:487-488) As Rosdolsky observes, Marx's opposition to the Romantic's critique of capitalism is not simply founded on their concealed support of feudal interests. "He reproached them much more with being totally incapable of grasping the 'course of modern history', i.e., the necessity and the historical progressiveness of the bourgeois social order which they criticized, and for confining themselves to moralistic rejection of it."<sup>\*</sup> (1977:422)

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<sup>\*</sup>Contemporary radicals who contrast today's "one-dimensional" and "consumerist" worker with the proletarian of the Russian October or the modern Chinese peasant are well-advised to keep the strictures of Hegel and Marx against Romantic moralism firmly in mind.

#### 4. The Ages of Man and Woman in Contemporary Society

The development of consciousness is a feature of the general progress of society, but it is equally a function of the stages of maturity in individual human beings. Hegel's account of these stages as they occur among people in modern society provides a most lucid demonstration of his dialectical approach to individual consciousness and its relation to society. Moreover, this account helps to resolve some of the thorniest problems in the interpretation of his thought. The ages of man and woman are above all the stages of mental growth and development, steps toward freedom in the sphere of individual consciousness. But they are not the clearly outlined counterpart of the actual social and intellectual flowering of individual human beings. The physiological and conscious aspects of individuals are subject to uneven development as is evidenced, for example, by the great intellectual accomplishment achieved by some children at a very early age. There is also a more fundamental difference between the stages of growth as Hegel outlines them and the development of any particular individual. The stages of maturity are the natural and necessary "moments" of human development; they represent the archetypical progress of human consciousness. Accordingly, they may or may not occur in any one individual in exactly the sequence and form in which they appear in theory; in some individuals they may not occur at all.

An example of this conception of development is available in Hegel's view of insanity. Insanity for Hegel is a developmental stage passed through by consciousness in its ascent to maturity, but



"this interpretation of insanity is naturally not to be understood as if we were asserting that every mind, every soul, must go through this stage of extreme development". The extreme of insanity does not appear "in every individual but only in the form of limitations, errors, follies..." (1969:124-125) One form of insanity for instance is "mania or frenzy" which sometimes gives rise to a "mood which torments" the afflicted person "with whims and fancies, but also to a suspicious, false, jealous, mischievous and malicious disposition". Such "fits of ill-will occur in everyone; but the ethical, or at least prudent person knows how to subdue them". (1969:135)

According to Hegel, life begins with an implicit unity between subject and object. Children are in basic harmony and peace with themselves and the outside world. "The child", writes Hegel, "lives in innocence, without any lasting pain, in the love it has for its parents and in the feeling of being loved by them." (1969:57) Even at birth, however, human babies may be distinguished from the lower animals, not only by their "delicately organized, infinitely plastic body," but also their "unruly, stormy and peremptory" nature. Where the animal is silent or expresses its pain by whimpering, the human infant makes its wants known by imperious screams. "By this ideal activity", notes Hegel wryly, "the child shows that it is straightway imbued with the certainty that it has the right to demand from the outer world the satisfaction of its needs." (1969:56-57)

The development of children is marked by an increasing mastery over the outside world and themselves. They begin to be aware of the actuality of their environment and to become and feel like actual human beings. Soon the child wishes to unite theory with practice

and "passes to the practical inclination to test himself in this actual world". Children are enabled to test themselves in this way by growing teeth and learning to stand, walk and talk. The child's incipient self-dependence is at first expressed in learning to play with tangible things. "But the most rational thing that children can do with their toys is to break them." Play gives over to the seriousness of learning and curiosity, and children awake to the feeling "that as yet they are not what they ought to be". (1969:59) They succumb to the desire to be more like the grown-ups they see around them, and begin to mimic adult activities.

The need of children to grow up, to strive after knowledge is the driving factor in all education. But children perceive learning not as an end in itself; rather they see it as a way to achieve an ideal they connect with a particular mature and authoritative individual. Consequently Hegel invokes discipline and obedience as key factors in the education of children (elements, incidentally, which reappear in his and Marx's theory of the development of consciousness in general). He criticizes "the pedagogy which bases itself on play, which proposes that children should be made acquainted with serious things in the form of play and demands that the educator should lower himself to the childish level of intelligence of the pupils instead of lifting them up to an appreciation of the seriousness of the matter in hand". There is no doubt "that children must ... be roused to think for themselves; but the worth of the matter in hand should not be put at the mercy of their immature, vain understanding". (1969:60) School forms the transition from the family into the world of society. At school children learn to be accepted

for what they do rather than simply for what they are. At home a child is loved regardless of his or her behaviour, "in school, on the other hand, the immediacy of the child no longer counts; here it is esteemed only according to its worth ..." In the classroom the child "is not merely loved but criticized and guided in accordance with universal principles, ... in general subjected to a universal order ..." (1969:61)

Youth is the stage of opposition between subject and object. The young person sees his or her ideals and fancies contradicted at every turn by the dull obstinacy of the outside world. The idols of childhood, the persons who once seemed worthy of respect and imitation are revealed as frauds and exchanged for substantive notions like the ideal of love and friendship or the universal world order of peace and understanding. These concrete ideals in turn are attributed by young people to themselves, while the world itself seems contingent and accidental by comparison. Not only is youth opposed to the world, it also feels compelled and qualified to change it. But youth fails to perceive that the ideal it cherishes has already succeeded in actualizing and explicating itself. Not the world, but the individual young person is the accident; the world will soldier on with or without a particular individual. And part of the world's substantial content is the ideal like love or friendship which young people take to be theirs alone.

The apparent opposition between the ideals of youth and the nature of reality means that youth feels unrecognized and at war with the world. In this conflict young people seem to possess a more altruistic character than the adult who has found a place in the

existing order. For Hegel, however, this is a superficial way of looking at things. In contrast with the youth who is still wrapped up in his or her particular impulses and subjective views, the adult has plunged into the life of society and has become active on its behalf. "The youth", Hegel dryly observes, "necessarily arrives at this goal; but his immediate aim is to train and discipline himself so that he will be able to realize his ideals. In the attempt to make these actual he becomes a man." (1969:62)

The entry from his or her ideal life into society "can appear to the youth as a painful transition into the life of the Philistine". The distress it causes and the impossibility of immediately realizing the ideals of youth can turn a person "into a hypochondriac". Hypochondria or, in modern terms, anxiety is not easily eluded, and the later it occurs, the more devastating its consequences are likely to be. "In this diseased frame of mind the man will not give up his subjectivity, is unable to overcome his repugnance to the actual world, and by this very fact finds himself in a state of relative incapacity which easily becomes an actual incapacity."<sup>\*</sup> (1969:62)

In Hegel's view, anxiety is synonymous with alienation since any disease indicates "the isolation of a particular system of the organism from the general life, and in virtue of this alienation of

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<sup>\*</sup>Hegel here anticipates a theory recently developed by the U.S. psychoanalyst, Leslie H. Farber. According to this writer, anxiety has reached epidemic proportions in Western society where the promise and hunger for personal freedom is strongest. He follows Karen Horney's definition of anxiety which closely resembles Hegel's notion of hypochondria, i.e., "the feeling of being small, insignificant, helpless, deserted, endangered, in a world "that is out to abuse, cheat, attack, humiliate, betray, envy". (Farber, 1976:21) Farber maintains that "anxiety is that range of distress which attends willing what cannot be willed", and suggests that it can only disappear under a state of things where "the predominant experience [is]

the particular from the general life, the animal exhibits its own finitude, its impotence and dependence on an alien power". (1969: 116) Alienation in this sense means that "I forfeit my freedom which is rooted in [my intellectual] consciousness, I lose my ability to protect myself from an alien power, in fact, become subjected to it." (1969:115-116) An alienated person is far from being a force for change in society; instead he or she is restricted and held fast by the surrounding environment.

Hegel's prescription for hypochondria or anxiety is deceptively simple. If the individual does not wish to perish, he or she must recognize the world as a self-dependent entity "which in its essential nature is already complete", and "accept the conditions set for him by the world and wrest from it what he wants for himself". To the individual his or her submission to the existing system seems arbitrary and irrational. But in fact this unity of the individual with the world stems from considerations which at their source are rational. "The rational, the divine", states Hegel, "possesses the absolute power to actualize itself and has right from the beginning, fulfilled itself, it is not so impotent that it would have to wait for the beginning of its actualization." Since the Idea will go ahead on its own, it makes sense for the individual merely to attend to his or her private affairs and forget the illusions of youth. "The man behaves quite rationally in abandoning his plan for completely transforming the world and in striving to realize his personal aims, passions and interests only within the framework of the world of which he is a part." (1969:62)

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one of freedom, as opposed to the bondage of the isolated will". (1976:27, 33)

Hegel here puts his finger on some basic questions about his philosophy, and also reveals a clue to the relationship of his thought with that of Marx. The clue concerns the concept of alienation which will be dealt with in detail in the following chapters. It is only necessary to observe here that in the Manuscripts of 1844 Marx rejects Hegel's view of alienation as a process, as a necessary stage in the development of consciousness in the individual as well as in the progress of human consciousness in general. For Hegel an alienated consciousness is incapable of initiating conflict and change and must adapt itself to the existing structure of society or perish. The young Marx, however, conceives the abolition of alienation as the result rather than the precondition for social revolution. On this view the alienation and degradation of the workers makes them into a revolutionary force. The notion of alienation presented in the Grundrisse more than a decade after the Manuscripts were written is much closer to Hegel's and reflects the culmination of a movement in Marx's thought which has its beginnings in the Theses on Feuerbach.

Hegel's idea that youth can avoid anxiety or alienation by throwing in its lot with the existing order lends weight to an accusation made by Sydney Hook (1976:19) and more recently Martin Nicolaus (1973:27) that Hegel is a conservative, a master at political accommodation who believes the Prussian State of the early nineteenth century to be the ultimate conclusion of all human progress. Marx originally rejected this view of Hegel and denied that his system could be explained by appeals to Hegel's "political accommodation". (Blumenberg, 1972:41) Later in the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" (1970a) and the Holy Family (1975) when Feuerbach's influence

on Marx was at its height, Marx wholeheartedly took up the opinion of Hegel expressed by Hook and Nicolaus. (O'Malley, 1970:xx, xxxv)

It is doubtful that Marx maintained this hostile view of Hegel when he wrote the Theses on Feuerbach where Marx complained that Feuerbach had abandoned Hegel's "revolutionizing dialectics". (Mehring, 1969:111) In the Poverty of Philosophy, however, in which as Mehring points out Marx "went beyond Feuerbach by going back to Hegel", (1962:127) there is no longer any question of Marx's opinion of Hegel. There Marx compares Hegel, "the simple professor of philosophy", with Ricardo, the "rich banker and distinguished economist". (PP:99) As is well known, Marx has the highest opinion of Ricardo and praises his "scientific impartiality and love of truth"; (1976:565) it is unlikely that Marx would put him in the same company as a political sycophant. In any case, the details of Hegel's life are in no way consistent with the accepted notion that "Hegel towards the end [was] a philosopher-pope bestowing benediction, as Pope's must, on the temporal emperor".\* (Nicolaus, 1976:27)

Whatever Marx's final opinion of Hegel's politics may have been, there is little doubt he stood by the assertion, repeated by Lichtheim

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\*Hegel was a fervent supporter of the French Revolution as a youth and never lost his regard for its achievements. (Kaufmann, 1976:8, 321; Pelczynski:1971) As Avineri points out, Hegel was constantly hounded by the Prussian censors and protested strongly against the State persecution of student radicals when it was very dangerous to do so. (1972: 3, 4, 67, 117, 130-131) It is usually forgotten first, that Hegel was passed over for a university chair until almost ten years after the publication of his epoch-making Phenomenology; and second, that the German universities of Hegel's time were the only remaining centres of free speech left in the country. After his death, Hegel's personally selected successor, Gans, attracted radicals from all over Germany, including Marx. (Nicolaievsky and Maenchen-Helfer, 1976:31-32) After all, even a "Marxist in Philosophy" (Althusser, 1975:165) can find fame and honour in State institutions without relinquishing his principles.

(1967:xxx) and Plamenatz (1976,II: 129-268), among other commentators, that for Hegel history is merely the eternal manifestation of a logical process which goes on behind the backs of living men and women. (Marx, 1976:102) Much the same picture is painted by such diverse Western Marxist thinkers as Althusser (1972, 1976), Colletti (1969, 1970) and Marcuse (1973:258, 314), although, as I will show in the next two chapters, Colletti and Marcuse also resort to the view that Hegel is a theologian. In any case, the notion that Hegel sees history as the manifestation of the Idea rather than the will of individual human beings appears to be supported by Hegel's suggestion that youth can forget its ideals and let the Idea unfold on its own. There is another interpretation, however, which is just as securely based on Hegelian texts as the previous ones, but which has the additional merit of being consistent with the overall trajectory of Hegel's thought.

As Hegel observes, if in society the mature individual is confronted with a self-dependent and objective world, this world is itself nothing but the historical result of the action of individuals. At each stage in its development, the social structure manifests the Idea as it appears in the consciousness of all the persons within it. The Idea is not "something far away beyond this mortal sphere", but is found "however confused and degenerated in every consciousness". (1971:276) "Actuality", or society, in turn, "consists just in mind's manifestation" and "belongs therefore to its Notion". (1969:18) Of course, this is not to be taken to mean that the ideas of every single person or group are faithfully reflected in the objectivity of society. For example, the idea is now abroad that women should no



longer be charged with the sole responsibility for the management of home and family, and that men should take an equal share in all aspects of family life. Clearly this idea extends the principle of personal freedom towards the condition of women, but it is far from being achieved in practice. Personal freedom, as expressed in the choice of a career independent of the home and its mind-stultifying chores, remains largely the prerogative of men, and is accepted as such in the consciousness of most people. Nevertheless, here and there the notion of personal freedom for women has a real presence in the form of day-care centres, women's rights organizations, a more self-dependent character in many women and so on. As Hegel puts it, "in finite mind" or the individual consciousness, "the Notion of mind does not ... reach its absolute actualization; but absolute mind [or society] is the absolute unity of actuality and the Notion or possibility of mind". (1969:18) In a passage where he believes he is contradicting Hegel, Marx repeats this observation: "History is the thoughts which are in the minds of all." (PP:105)

It is in this sense of society as the self-manifestation of the Idea, that Hegel calls the world into which the adult enters "complete". The freedom or liberation of mind "is not something never completed", it transcends the conditions of everyday life and establishes itself within these conditions. It is not an unrealizable goal "to be striven for endlessly; on the contrary mind wrests itself out of this progress to infinity, frees itself absolutely ... from its Other, and so attains absolute being-for-self". (1969:24) Accordingly, society leaves the individual "scope for an honourable, far-reaching and creative activity". Whereas society is "complete in its essential

nature ... it is not a dead, absolutely inert world but, like the life process, a world which perpetually creates itself anew, which while merely preserving itself, at the same time progresses". (1969:62-63) And it is precisely in this conservation and advancement of the world that the individual's work consists. A person not only re-creates in society something which is already there, but his or her activity also pushes society forward. Of course, the power of any one particular individual is severely limited, for "the world's progress occurs only on the large scale and only comes to view in a large aggregate of what has been produced". (1969:63) The tempo of advance is slow, but it is there all the same and its presence is visible for the individual even if only in retrospect. "If the man after a labour of fifty years looks back on his past he will readily recognize the progress made. This knowledge, as also the insight into the rationality of the world, liberates him from mourning over the destruction of his ideals." (1969:63)

In The German Ideology, and more than a decade later in the Grundrisse (1973:461), Marx provides a similar account of the visibility of progress: "Communism is not for us a stable state which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence." (1968:48) No less than Marx, however, Hegel believes that progress is not only a gradual development; it is also manifested in "qualitative leaps" like that characterized by the Revolution of 1789. "... The spirit of the time", writes Hegel, growing slowly and quietly ripe for the new form it is to assume, disintegrates one fragment after another

of the structure of its previous world. That it is tottering to its fall is indicated only by symptoms here and there. Frivolity and again ennui, which are spreading in the established order of things, the undefined foreboding of something unknown — all these betoken that there is something else approaching. This gradual crumbling to pieces, which did not alter the general look and aspect of the whole, is interrupted by the sunrise, which, in a flash and at a single stroke, brings to view the form and structure of the new world. (1967:75)

The greatest barrier to progress is the obstinacy of the old ideas and ways of looking at things that people inherit from past generations. The structure and institutions of society are the work of centuries and before new ideas can be accepted a significant proportion of men and women must be educated up to their level. "Isolated individuals", for example, "may often feel the need and the longing for a new constitution, but it is quite another thing, and one that does not arise till later, for the mass of the people to be animated by such an idea." (Quoted in Pelczynski, 1964:118) But prejudices and outmoded ideas are not solely the property of the great mass of people. They belong equally to the consciousness of the individual, however enlightened he or she may be. "We moderns too", notes Hegel, "by our whole upbringing, have been initiated into ideas which it is extremely difficult to overstep, on account of their far-reaching significance." (1975:51)

The ideas of men and women, no less than anything else, are a captive of reality. It is true, as Hegel observes, that the "old mole" of revolution (also a favourite metaphor of Marx) which "is inwardly working ever forward ... until growing strong in itself bursts asunder the crust of the earth which divided it from the sun" sometimes gives ideas "seven league boots". But these ideas merely

reflect a process which was long going on beneath the surface of appearance. The "work of the human spirit in the recesses of thought is parallel with all the stages of reality; and therefore no philosophy oversteps its own time". (1896: 547) Hegel's notion of the role of ideas in history as well as his general conception of the place of the individual in the historical process, is paraphrased in a famous passage on the opening page of Marx's The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (1969, I:398)

According to Hegel, men and women newly emerged from the inner conflicts of youth into the reality of the outside world must ensure that what is worthwhile in their ideals is translated into their practical activity; "what the man must purge himself of is only what is untrue, the empty abstractions." (1969:63) What Hegel means by empty abstractions can only be fully explicated with reference to his debate with the Kantian philosophy, a debate which will be dealt with below. But a provisional indication of its meaning may be given here. For Hegel, empty abstractions are notions which, when put into practice, destroy themselves. They are the opposite of the mindless prejudices people inherit from past generations precisely because they are bereft of all continuity with the past. In the French Revolution, for example, freedom and equality were interpreted in an empty or abstract manner. As a result, no distinctions of class or rank were tolerated, and government itself was interpreted as despotic rule by a faction. Instead of achieving their aim, however, the proponents of abstract freedom and equality succeeded only in annihilating

successive attempts at the government and order which the Revolution itself was meant to establish. (1967:603-607)

People with negative or abstract ideas about freedom view every possible manifestation or content of freedom in society as a restriction of freedom. This "freedom of the void" is the heart and soul of political or religious fanaticism; giving effect to it results in the destruction of the whole fabric of society, the loss of free thought as well "as the elimination of individuals who are objects of suspicion to any social order, and the annihilation of any organization which tries to rise anew from the ruins". (1976:22)

"Negative freedom" is the underlying element in anarchism, a form of politics deplored as much by Hegel as it is by Marx who observes that communism itself must preserve and build upon the accomplishments of the old order. (1976:173)

Hegel observes that the world offers the individual a whole range of creative activities, but the most important element in these activities is "the interests of right, ethics, and religion". This offering may strike modern readers as extremely meagre, to say the least. But Hegel's notion of these activities includes the entire realm of substantial and worthwhile endeavour, any activity in which the individual is "active on behalf of others". Men and women, he remarks, "can find satisfaction and honour in all spheres of their practical activity if they accomplish what is rightly required of them in the particular sphere to which they belong either by chance, outer necessity or free choice". (1969:63) Hegel's sanguine view of the possibility for the development and employment of an individual's ideals in the existing order may seem overly optimistic especially

when contrasted with the following bitter formulation from The German Ideology:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class, which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (1968:61)

But if Hegel may be accused of optimism surely the opposite charge applies here to Marx and Engels. "The danger of this formulation", remarks Ralph Miliband, "... is that it may lead to a quite inadequate account being taken of the many-sided and permanent challenge directed at the ideological predominance of the 'ruling class' and of the fact that this challenge ... produces a steady erosion of that predominance." (1977:53) As S. S. Praver observes, "the very existence of The German Ideology demonstrates [that] writers and thinkers can place themselves in opposition to dominant modes of thought". (1976: 108)

The mistake, of course, is to forget that bourgeois or capitalist society is also "our" society; society is nothing but the productive activity of the people who make it up. This idea, which is never forgotten by Hegel and rarely by Marx, who hailed it as the "outstanding achievement" and "final outcome" of Hegel's Phenomenology (1964:177), leads Hegel to suggest that the mature adult "becomes such only through his own intelligent concern for his temporal interests; just as nations only attain their majority when they have reached the stage where they are not excluded by a so-called paternal government from attending to their material and spiritual interests".

(1969:63) Hegel's emphasis on the "temporal interests" of the individual seems at first glance to once again substantiate his popular image as a cynical supporter of the status quo — an image that is further strengthened by his observation that the mature individual "is for, not against, the existing order of things, is interested in promoting, not opposing it; he has risen above the one-sided subjectivity of youth to the standpoint of an objective intelligence".

(1969:57) But what Hegel calls "the standpoint of objective intelligence" refers to the point of view an individual acquires by his or her membership in a social class. The temporal interests of the individual, therefore, are also the interests of his or her social class. "When we say that a man must be a 'somebody'." Hegel explains, we mean that he should belong to some specific social class, since to be a somebody means to have substantive being. A man with no class is a mere private person and his universality is not actualized.

The young person rebels at the notion of joining a social class and believes "that by entering a class he is surrendering himself to an indignity. This is the false idea that in attaining a determinacy necessary to it, a thing is restricting and sundering itself". (1976: 271)

For Hegel as for Marx, the class structure of the existing order contains not only the legions of privilege and inequality but also those of freedom and progress. "Here is the rose," writes Hegel, referring to the present order of things, "dance thou here ... To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight that reconciles us to the actual ..." (1976:11-12) In the view of both Hegel and Marx, the surface appearance of the prevailing system merely conceals the

developing outlines of a more rational and freer society ("the rose in the cross of the present") which may be perceived and fought for by the individual in society. In a striking image André Glucksman sums up the viewpoint of Marx in terms that apply just as well to that of Hegel. "Marx was a revolutionary", writes Glucksman,

because he assigned to the capitalist system the sole basis of its mortality. He has been turned into a Statue of the Commander, before whom incense is burned in expectation of a sign of the final date of its decease, while all about the banquet of life continues in the joy of profanity ... Marx is no Enlightenment Aufklärer for whom history progresses by choosing the best in light of comparison ... Marx knew, with philosophical knowledge, that no absolute justifies and that every stage of reality is formed by defending itself against the movement that carries it away. (1977:314)

The adult individual cannot be satisfied with the solipsism of youth, but is subject to what Hegel calls "a real antithesis" and is forced to seek out and find "itself in another individual". This antithesis — which is the root of the temporal or social interests of men and women — "is the sexual relation", a relation which has both a "subjective" and a "universal" aspect. (1969:64) Hegel maintains that it is the sexual instinct of men and women, their desire to find and realize themselves in others, which forms the foundation of society as well as the force behind the struggle for freedom and progress. "Love", as Hegel puts it, "is mind's feeling of its own unity." This unity, however, is achieved only within a social group. Hence in society, as in the family, "one's frame of mind is to have self-consciousness of one's individuality within this unity as the absolute essence of oneself, with the result that one is in it not as an independent person but as a member". (1976:110)

On the subjective side, the sexual relation is expressed "in an



instinctive and emotional harmony of moral life and love" which "acquires its ... moral and spiritual [social] significance and function in the family". Also on the subjective side of this antithesis are "political, scientific and artistic" purposes of the individual where these are merely his or her private and undeveloped interests or talents. But the antithesis within each person also has an "active half" where these purposes are pushed to "an extreme universal phase". Here "the individual is the vehicle of a struggle of universal and objective [i.e. class] interests with the given conditions (both of his own existence and that of the external world), carrying out these universal principles into a unity with the world which is his own work". (1969:64)

It is worth noting that in Hegel's time party politics had not developed very far (Pelczynski, 1964:8) and the political option advocated by Marx in the Communist Manifesto (1969, I) was, of course, unavailable. Nevertheless, there is no contradiction between Hegel and Marx in this respect. An individual may indeed become the vehicle of universal principles within the framework of a political party. The only stricture Hegel (and Marx) would impose is that the thinking of the individual should not prostrate itself and "remain stationary at the given, whether the given be upheld by the external positive authority of the state or the consensus hominum" — or the political party. The individual should rely on his or her own free thought, and "thought which is free starts out from itself and thereupon claims to know itself as united in its uttermost being with the truth". (1976:3)

Once entry into society is complete, the individual may well be

unhappy and depressed with the state of the world, and may even abandon hope of ever improving it. Almost in spite of him/herself, however, the adult soon finds a place in the objective world of work and becomes accustomed to it. At first this world seems strange and new; there appears to be little pattern in what the individual does, and every event seems to have a uniqueness and peculiarity of its own. But the longer an individual works the more he or she comes to see that events follow certain general rules, are subject to particular laws. Accordingly, the individual becomes completely at home when at work and gradually grows accustomed to what was formerly an alien world. There are now no surprises for the individual; only odd events, with little connection to the general run of things, provide diversion and interest. Without the constant opposition between expectations and reality, the individual becomes trapped in the mechanism of habit which eventually hurtles a person into old age.

"The very fact", writes Hegel,

that his activity has become so conformed to his work, that his activity no longer meets with any resistance, this complete facility of execution, brings in its train the extinction of its vitality; for with the disappearance of the opposition between subject and object there also disappears the interest of the former with the latter. Thus the habit of mental life, equally with the dulling of the functions of his physical organism, changes the man into an old man.  
(1969:64)

For the old person life has lost all its challenge and interest. Hope for the fulfilment of the ideals of youth has long since been abandoned, "and the future seems to hold no promise of anything new at all". The elderly individual imagines that he or she already knows the essence and general pattern of any event that may yet be encountered. Everything is explicable in terms of the maxims the old

person has long since mastered and internalized. The mind of the elderly is focused entirely on these substantial rules of conduct and the events in the past to which it owes knowledge of them. By living in the past, the aged person forgets the details of the present "names, for example, in the same measure that conversely, he firmly retains in his mind the maxims of experience and feels obliged to preach to those younger than himself". The wisdom of the old person, "this lifeless, complete coincidence of the subject's activity with the world", carries the elderly individual back to the days of childhood where there was also no opposition between subject and object, just "in the same way that the reduction of his physical functions to a processless habit leads on to the abstract negation of the living individuality, to death". (1969:64)

##### 5. On Nature and Contradiction

In his account of the sequence of ages in the human being, Hegel expresses the only dialectical "law" worth remembering, a law later emphasized by Marx with regard to history: "No antagonism, no progress. This is the law that history has followed up to our days". (PP:59) For both Hegel and Marx, contradiction, antithesis, or antagonism as they variously call it, is the origin of all change and development. "... The Hegelian contradiction ...," writes Marx, "is the source of all dialectics." (1976:744) In Hegel's words, "... Contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality, and it is only insofar as it contains contradiction that anything moves and has impulse and activity." (Quoted in Lenin, 1963:139) Without contra-

diction the human being grows old and dies: the mind of the elderly lacks contradiction, or the condition within a living organism which forces it out of itself and compels it to change itself and/or its environment. By resolving the contradiction within itself the organism at once transcends its original condition, preserves itself — and creates a new contradiction. In relation to the sequence of ages in men and women, for example, there is a contradiction between the desire of children to understand things and the limited nature of their knowledge, or between the ideals of youth and the character of society as youth sees it. Every type of contradiction or antithesis is not something external to the object in which it appears, but rather the contradiction is a distinguishing feature of the object itself.

In his seminal essay "Contradiction and Overdetermination" the French Marxist Louis Althusser observes that Hegelian contradiction concerns consciousness and for that reason, "it is simple". Consciousness has "no true external determination. A circle of circles, consciousness has only one centre, which solely determines it ..." (1969:102) Althusser is right to stress that Hegel's concept of contradiction involves consciousness, but the simplicity of the concept has not prevented its being misunderstood. As Hegel observes in a passage emphasized by Lenin in the Philosophical Notebooks, "In movement, impulse and the like, the simplicity of these determinations conceals the contradiction from imagination ..." (1963:141) In the following discussion I will attempt to sort out the meaning and function of the concept with regard to Hegel's view of the role of the individual in the development of thought and society, as well as in nature.

The comprehension of Hegel's concept of contradiction requires first of all a grasp of his notion of necessity, for as Lenin remarks, "the core of Hegelianism" is about "internally necessary movement". (1963:141) Hegel distinguishes what he calls "inner necessity" from "external necessity". External necessity "means determination from without only — as in finite mechanics, where a body moves in the direction communicated to it by the impact". This meaning of necessity is implied "in the ordinary acceptation of the term in popular philosophy". (1975:55-56) Accordingly, Kant assimilates the notion of necessity into the relation of cause and effect. "The concept of cause", notes Kant, "is one which involves the necessity of a connection between different existing things, insofar as they are different. Thus when A is granted, I recognize that B, something entirely different from it, must necessarily exist also." (1956:52) For Hegel, external necessity as represented by the relation of cause and effect "forms only one aspect in the process" of necessity. Moreover, it represents a relatively low level of necessity, a "finite" relation. Hegel notes that cause and effect are implicitly identical: "... a cause is a cause only when it has an effect and vice versa. Both cause and effect are thus one and the same content ..." But the relation of external necessity separates the cause from the effect "so that, though the cause is also an effect, and the effect also a cause, the cause is not an effect in the same connection as it is a cause, nor the effect a cause in the same connection as it is an effect". The consequence of utilizing the finite concept of cause and effect is that the investigation is led into "the infinite progress, in the shape of an endless series of causes, which shows itself as an endless series of

effects". (1975:216-17) Necessity in Hegel's meaning of the term, however, refers to the "self-movement" or "activity" of a single organic whole. It involves "the coincident alternation of inner and outer, the alternation of their opposite motions combined into a single motion". (1975:208)

Hegel argues that external necessity is "contingent" since it refers to something which "has the ground of its being not in itself but in somewhat [something] else". Something which is contingent, "may or may not be ... may be in one way or in another, [its] being or not being ... depends not upon itself but on something else". (1975:205) For Hegel, the concept of external necessity can make sense of a mechanism like a watch or a steam engine, but it is powerless to explain the interdependent functioning, development and reproduction of the parts within a living and growing organism such as an oak tree, human knowledge or society. Nor can it adequately comprehend the interdependent relations within a growing and changing unity or whole, such as the solar system. "What is necessary", says Hegel, is the "simple self-relation, in which all dependence on something else is removed". (1975:208) Within an organic whole or unity, the parts are defined entirely by their interdependent relation with one another and with the whole itself: "... the different is not confronted by any other, but by its other." (1975:173) On Hegel's definition, then, something which is necessary "has its end within itself, is unity with itself [and] does not pass into another, but, through [the] principle of activity, determines changes in conformity with its own content, and, in this way maintains itself therein". (1894:157) The "principle of activity" which "determines changes" in

an organism or self-dependent system is ... contradiction.

Necessity, for Hegel, is a "process" (1975:211) which "although derivative ... must still contain the antecedent whence it is derived as a vanishing element in itself". (1975:208) The result of this process, therefore, should not be interpreted as the fulfilment of a purpose already overtly present or visible at the beginning. Necessity, he remarks, is said to be blind if this means that in the process of necessity the end is not explicitly recognizable. The human baby, for example, does not appear first as a homunculus contained in the spermatozoon or ovum as people once believed; and while capitalism developed out of earlier modes of production, the purpose of the latter was not to elaborate the former.

The process of necessity begins with the existence of scattered circumstances which have no interconnexion and no concern with one another. These circumstances are an immediate actuality which collapses, and out of this negation a new actuality proceeds ... From such circumstances and conditions there has, as we say, proceeded quite another thing, and it is for this reason that we call this process of necessity blind. (1975:209)

According to Hegel, the process of necessity expresses "the true profound Notion of life, which must be considered as an end in itself — a self-identity that independently impels itself on, and in its manifestation remains identical with its Notion: thus it is the self-effectuating Idea". (1894:159) Something like Hegel's concept of the "self-effectuating Idea" appears, for example, in modern molecular biology where "the structure of the assembled molecules itself" is said to constitute "the source of 'information' for the construction of the whole". In fact the description of the development of living organisms provided by the French biologist Monod is identical to what Hegel

describes as the process of necessity. In the development of a living organism, states Monod,

The complete structure was never preformed; but the architectural plan for it ["the Idea"] was present in its constituents themselves, so enabling it to come into being spontaneously and autonomously, without outside help and without the injection of additional information. The necessary information was present, but unexpressed, in its constituents. The epigenetic building of a structure is not a creation, it is a revelation. (1972:86-87)

The process of necessity, Hegel argues, concerns the "inner necessary connection" of the parts within a whole, as well as "the immanent origination of distinctions" within the parts which ultimately transform the whole. (1954:192) This process of interdependence, self-development and reproduction occurs at three different levels or stages. Matter or inorganic nature exhibits the first and lowest stage of necessity; living, or organic nature represents the second, while conscious human activity and its creation, society, constitutes the third stage.

At the level of inorganic nature the connection between things is "the merely internal, and for that reason also merely the external connection of mutually independent existences". This stage of necessity refers to "matter, this universal basis of every existent form in Nature", which "not merely offers resistance to us, exists apart from our mind, but holds itself asunder against its own self, divides itself into concrete points, into material atoms of which it is composed". The planets, for example, are attracted to the sun and to each other; nevertheless, they "appear to be mutually independent of it and one another, this contradiction being represented by the motion of the planets around the sun". (1969:9)



In a process analogous to human history nature "advances through many stages, whose exposition constitutes the Philosophy of Nature". In this process nature "overcomes its externality ... liberates the Notion concealed in Nature from the covering of externality and thereby overcomes external necessity". (1969:13) The human mind represents the ultimate triumph of nature over externality, although even human consciousness is at first shackled to the "illusory appearance" that its natural and social environment is something utterly alien and external to it. But this final externality of alienation is abolished by nature which "is driven onwards beyond itself to mind as such, that is, to mind which by thinking, is in the form of universality, of self-existent, actually free mind". (1969:14)

Hegel has been criticized by many commentators, among them Lukács (1975:543) and Schmidt (1971:189), because according to them he does not mention the historical development or evolution of things in nature but refers only to human history. This criticism is misplaced; but there are many statements in Hegel which provide grounds for this misinterpretation and which should be explained. In the Phenomenology, for example, Hegel observes that "organic nature has no history" (1967:326) and in the Lesser Logic he states that "the world of spirit [society] and the world of nature continue to have this distinction, that the latter moves only in a recurring cycle, while the former certainly also makes progress". (1975:291) What Hegel is here concerned to do is to separate the history of men and women, which is the result of their conscious activity, from the history of nature which is unconscious or external to the natural existences within it.

The idea of evolution or natural history was a dominant motif of romantic thought, and the ideas of the thinkers within this tradition such as Schelling and Goethe were, as Lukács points out, "taken up and exaggerated and developed into a ... mystical cult of nature philosophy which threatened to engulf all efforts to achieve a really concrete analysis of the historical development of society ..." (1975: 545) The history of human beings, in other words, was treated as a mere branch of natural history as a whole. This tendency, although strongly resisted by Hegel, found expression in Engels's determination to collapse the laws of society into the more general "dialectical laws of nature" and reached its apotheosis in the teachings of orthodox dialectical materialism where everything is reduced to the natural and dialectical laws of moving matter. (Jordan, 1967:394) For Engels and the exponents of dialectical materialism, "the fact that human history is made by beings endowed with consciousness is nothing more than a factor which tends rather to complicate the matter". (Schmidt, 1971:191) Apart from the law of contradiction, Hegel never speaks of "dialectical laws" of any kind, whereas Engels found three: transformation of quantity into quality; inter-penetration of opposites, and negation of the negation (1954:83) and Marx mentions the first of these in Capital. (1976:423)

Hegel argues that human consciousness and society are at once part of and separate from nature; human consciousness developed out of nature, but it is no longer subject to natural laws in the same way, for example, as the solar system "where matter and movement ... have a manifestation all their own". (1969:7) Planetary life "is only a life of motion, in other words, is a life in which the deter-

mining factor is constituted by space and time (for space and time are the moments of motion)". Even for the simplest organisms, however, the laws of motion are "a completely subordinate factor; the individual as such makes its own space and time; its alteration is determined by its own concrete nature". (1969:38) As Monod puts it, writing from a tradition he believes to be opposed to Hegelian philosophy, "the organism effectively transcends physical laws", and "owes almost nothing to the action of outside forces". (1972:21, 81)

The course of plant life is determined to a degree by the movement of the planets (although this influence may be offset by the practical activity of human beings) but the internal development of plants is independent of the "abstract motion" that governs the solar system. The animal body is even more independent of natural forces than vegetable life: "the course of its development is quite independent of the motions of the planets and the period of its life is not measured by them; its health and the course run by its disease do not depend on the planets ... the determinant is not time as time, but the animal organism". For the human being "the abstract determinations of space and time, the mechanics of free motion, have absolutely no significance and no power". The laws of cause and effect, "the abstract determinations of juxtaposition and succession" which govern the "inner, necessary unity" of the solar system (1969:38, 163), are infinitely less substantial and less concrete than "the determinations of self-conscious mind". The concrete human individual, to be sure, "is indeed in a definite place and a definite time; but for all that is exalted over them". (1969:38)

Marx shares Hegel's view of the independence of human conscious-

ness from the abstract laws of time and space "and often quoted the following remark of Hegel's with approval: 'Even the criminal thought of a malefactor has more grandeur and nobility than the wonders of the heavens'". (Lukács, 1975:544) Lenin, however, who in many respects is undoubtedly Hegel's most perceptive student, suggests that by "referring time and space to something lower compared with thought", Hegel "allowed the ass's ears of idealism to show themselves ..."

(1963:228) Whether or not he is an idealist in Lenin's sense, Hegel is anxious to emphasize that "of course, the life of man is conditioned by a specific measure of difference, that of the Earth from the Sun; he could not live at a greater or less distance from the Sun; but the influence of the position of the Earth on mankind does not go beyond that". (1969:38)

According to Hegel, the inmost truth, the essence of men and women is to create society by acting on nature; mind's "manifestation is to set forth Nature as its world". But in creating their own social world, men and women "at the same time presuppose the world as a nature independently existing". (1969:18) At the highest stage of human consciousness even this semblance of externality, the notion that nature is independent of human beings and their society, disappears and nature "appears only as a means whereby mind attains to absolute being-for-self, to the absolute unity of what it is in itself and what it is for itself, of its Notion and its actuality". (1969:19) What Hegel has in mind is precisely the union of nature and humanity which for Marx constitutes the goal of communism: a society where the division between people and nature will be torn away because men and women will have learned to relate to her with all their human

faculties rather than through exploitation. "Need and enjoyment", writes the young Marx, "will have lost their egoistic nature and nature will have lost its mere utility in that its utility has become a human utility." (1971:151; also Grundrisse, 1973:542)

Hegel's observation that "Absolute mind ... is the creator of its other [society, and] of nature" (1969:19) has led many writers, starting with Feuerbach, to assume that for Hegel nature is merely some kind of fantastic production by Mind or the Idea. As Schmidt expresses it (using Hegelian terminology: a sure sign according to Marcuse that the writer is confused (1973:393)): "Nature [in Hegel's opinion] is not a being possessing its own self-determination but the moment of estrangement which the Idea in its abstract-general form must undergo in order to return to itself completely as Spirit".

(1971:23) Schmidt postulates that since Hegel begins the Encyclopaedia with Logic and only then goes on to the Philosophy of Nature that Hegel must have assumed the Idea comes first, followed in due time by Nature. "One of the strangest and most problematic transitions in the whole of Hegel's philosophy, criticized equally by Feuerbach and by Marx [in the Manuscripts of 1844 (1964:189-190)] is the transition from the Logic whose conclusion is the pure Idea, to the Philosophy of Nature, that is to say from thought to sensuous being ..." (1971:23)

The full reason for this admittedly queer transition can only be given by considering both Hegel's critique of Kantian philosophy as well as Hegel's dialectic method which are the concern of the final chapters of this work. A preliminary response is simply that the essence of dialectical exposition is to start from the most abstract

categories and to advance from there to the most concrete determinations. "... We ... must start", writes Hegel, "from [the] most inappropriate reality." (1969:21) Accordingly, the exposition of Hegel's system in the Encyclopaedia begins with "being" — a category that applies as well to "a stone ... as [to] a thinking man", (1975:132) — proceeds through to nature, then to human consciousness and society, ending with philosophy and science.

No less than for its beginning, the Encyclopaedia (and the Phenomenology with it (Lukács, 1975:546)) has been criticized for its ending, which for the young Marx represents "the self-consciousness, self-comprehending, philosophic or absolute (i.e., superhuman) abstract mind ..." (1964:174) By ending with philosophy and science, however, Hegel is simply trying to point out that history and society cannot be understood until they are created; and, moreover, that the transformation of society must await its being understood in theory. The same notion is expressed by Marx in the Grundrisse:

... individuals cannot gain mastery over their own social interconnections before they have created them ... This bond [money] is their product. It is a historic product. It belongs to a specific phase of their development. The alien and independent character in which it presently exists vis-à-vis individuals proves only that the latter are still engaged in the creation of their social life, and that they have not yet begun, on the basis of these conditions, to live it. (Quoted in Rosdolsky, 1977:417)

It is a measure of the distance Marx travelled from the Manuscripts that he adopts Hegel's mode of exposition in his 1865-66 plan for Capital. Here Marx advances from the commodity in Volume 1 — the "being" of capitalist production — through to the "Forms of the process in its totality" (Volume 3) and finally to the "history of

the theory" of capital in Volume 4. (Mandel, 1976:28)

Hegel's notion that reason is prior to nature merely expresses Kant's idea that human consciousness approaches the outside world with certain a priori categories through which, as it were, the mind gives the law to nature. "The understanding", writes Kant, "draws its laws (a priori) not from nature, but prescribes them to it." (1883:67-68)

Neither Kant nor Hegel is trying to say that the laws of nature are there only because reason put them there. They are saying that as a product of nature, human consciousness shares its rational structure and has the capacity to go beneath the surface of things and comprehend their inner relations. "Laws", writes Hegel, "are determinations of the intellectual consciousness inherent in the world itself; therefore, the intellectual consciousness finds them in its own nature and thus becomes objective to itself." (1969:163) If the laws inherent in nature are first expressed in human consciousness they also have a different form in reality than they do in the mind.

"What belongs to Nature as such lies at the back of mind; it is true that mind has within itself the entire filling of Nature, but in mind the determinations of Nature exist in a radically different manner than their existence in Nature." (1969:15)

The epistemology of Kant and its extension in Hegel is rejected by Feuerbach, who goes back to the materialism of the Enlightenment according to which ideas proceed from sense perception. The basic principle of Feuerbach's philosophy "is in the highest degree positive and real. It generates thought from the opposite of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses; it has relation to its object first through the senses, i.e., passively, before defining it

in thought." (Feuerbach, 1957:xxxv) This theory of knowledge influenced the young Marx's formulation in the Manuscripts of 1844: "Science is only genuine science when it proceeds from sense perception and sensuous need, i.e., only when it proceeds from nature." (Quoted in Schmidt, 1971:29) But in the 1845 Theses on Feuerbach Marx turns away from this account of the origin of knowledge. "Feuerbach ... appeals to sensuous contemplation; but he does not conceive sensuousness as practical, human sensuous activity." (1969, I:14)

As Lenin indicates in the Philosophical Notebooks (1963:212) — and as I will show in the following chapters — the Theses on Feuerbach are derived from Hegel's Logic or at least deeply affected by it; and clearly Marx is aware that a theory of knowledge which views thought as a product of sense perception is incompatible with the view that human practice does not merely reflect but also creates reality. Nevertheless there is no complete theory of knowledge in Marx, who even in his later writings sometimes wrote as though consciousness were a passive reflection of reality: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." (1970b:21) Obviously this dictum is wildly incompatible with the third thesis on Feuerbach: "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating." As Marx himself observes, the materialist doctrine has ominous overtones since it "necessarily arrives at dividing



society into two parts, of which one is superior to society ..."

(1969, I:13)

The absence of a consistent theory of knowledge has had disastrous effects on Marxist theory. For Lenin, the presentation of an epistemology which "already denotes man's ever deeper cognition of the objective connection of the world ... is ... the true meaning and significance of Hegel's Logic". Lenin counsels a "return to Hegel for a step-by-step analysis of any current logic and theory of knowledge" in order to get beyond the "vulgar-materialistic standpoint" of early twentieth-century Marxism. This programme was never fulfilled and much of contemporary Marxism continues in a vein which, as Lenin points out, is "more in the manner of Feuerbach ... than of Hegel". (1963:178-179) Even for "Hegelianized" Western Marxism Hegel's critique of Kantian epistemology remains largely a closed book. Further, the dominant motifs of so-called Hegelian Marxism such as alienation, humanism, negative dialectic and so on, have their origin in Feuerbach and the young Marx, not Hegel. Lukács's notion that the proletariat is the "identical subject-object of history" and that the individual, by contrast, has no access to truth (1971:39, 51) owes nothing to Hegel but terminology and is a gift from the skies to authoritarian Marxism.

Hegel's contention that there are three levels of necessity in nature has profound but usually unnoticed implications for his concept of contradiction and the role of the individual in nature and society. Contradiction in the sphere of inorganic nature is better referred to as a real opposition in Kant's sense, according to which "matter [is] the unity of repulsion and attraction". (Hegel, 1975:144; also

Colletti, 1975:6-7) As Hegel puts it in the Larger Logic, "Contradiction which emerges in Opposition, is no more than developed Nothing; and this is already obtained in Identity, and occurred in the expression that the law of identity states nothing." (Quoted in Lenin, 1963:138-139) Hegel traces the law of identity to the Eleatic school of Greek philosophy which held that, "The nothing is like nothing and does not pass into Being or conversely; thus nothing can originate from like." The Eleatics were nothing if not consistent and advanced from this proposition to conclude that "as Being is presupposed, change in itself is contradictory and inconceivable". (Hegel, 1892 : 245-246)

While recognizing its usefulness in the sphere of inorganic nature, Hegel is not impressed with the status of identity as a supreme law of thought for formal logic. "... The maxim of Identity reads: Everything is identical with itself,  $A=A$ : and negatively, A cannot be at the same time A and not A. This maxim, instead of being a true law of thought, is nothing but the law of abstract understanding." Hegel mocks the notion that while the law of identity cannot be proved, it nevertheless expresses the way people think. "... No mind thinks or forms conceptions or speaks in accordance with this law, and ... no existence of any kind whatever conforms to it. Utterances after the fashion of this pretended law (A planet is a planet; Magnetism is magnetism; Mind is mind) are, as they deserve to be, reputed silly." (1975:167) Identity and other laws of thought such as the law of the excluded middle are "not without ... value in such abstractions as number, direction, &c.," but they are inappropriate when applied to human consciousness or even organic

life. (1975:147) Mathematics, for example, is concerned with quantity, a category which "plays, so to say, a more prominent part in the inorganic world ... than in the organic. Even in organic nature, when we distinguish mechanical functions from what are called chemical, and in the narrower sense physical, there is the same difference". (1975:147)

For Hegel, external contradiction or a real opposition between non-living things results in equilibrium; contradiction within inorganic materials, on the other hand, completely destroys them. "What belongs to external Nature is destroyed by contradiction; if, for example, gold were given a different specific gravity from what it has, it would cease to be gold ... The non-living ... is incapable of enduring contradiction, but perishes when the Other of itself forces its way into it." (1969:15, 167) A contradiction within the atom, for example, gives off prodigious energy, but the thing of which it is a part ceases entirely to exist. According to Hegel, inorganic nature is potentially or "virtually the same as what life is actually". The living being confronts inorganic nature and consumes it: "The result of assimilation is not, as in the chemical process, a neutral product in which the independence of the two confronting sides is merged; but the living being shows itself as large enough to embrace its other which cannot withstand its power." The inorganic (or non-living) material is assimilated into the living body so that the conscious being "only coalesces with itself". Upon death the objective laws of nature feast on the organic being until finally only the abstract laws of motion have jurisdiction over it. "... When the soul has fled from the body, the elementary powers of objectivity

begin their play. These powers are, as it were, continually on the spring, ready to begin their process in the organic body; and life is the constant battle against them." (1975:281)

Contradiction in organic nature is the source of life and self-preservation for the natural individual or being. Identity here for Hegel is precisely the positing of difference. That is, the living creature, the self-identical individual, is also an active, transforming power; and its power lies in its ability to meet and overcome contradiction. Even the plant represents a certain self-development from within outwards and contains an "urge" to overcome contradiction. If something is in the way of the plant, it attempts to get around it; if it is shaded it strives to reach the sunlight. But the plant lacks the unity of animal life — as Althusser would say it consists of "decentred circles" (1969:102) — "because the plant's process of articulating itself is a coming-forth-from-self of the vegetable subject, each part is the whole plant, a repetition of it, and consequently the organs are not held in complete subjection to the unity of the subject". (1969:10) In contrast with the plant, every element of the higher animal's body is in absolute subjection to a single centre: to its consciousness. "... This leading back of all the members to the negative, simple unity of life, is the ground of the origin of self-feeling in the animal ..." (1969:58)

The unitary consciousness, the single centre, the self-identical being both contains and withstands the thrust of contradiction. "The subjectivity of the animal", writes Hegel, "contains a contradiction and the urge to preserve itself by resolving this contradiction, this self-preservation is the privilege of the living being and, in a still

higher degree, of mind." (1969:10) By feeling or becoming aware of the contradiction within it, the living being "removes its own defect, its diremption into a distinctionless I=I ... and gives its subjectivity objectivity no less than it makes its object subjective". In this way even a cow overcomes the externality of the real world, transcends the sensuous contemplation so much talked of by materialist philosophy, falls upon its object and eats it up. (1969:169) At birth the animal leaves the "simple ... unity of feeling" which it enjoyed in the womb and "is forced out of its simple self-relation into opposition to External nature". The contradiction which compelled it to separate from its mother is replaced by a fresh contradiction it feels within itself: the desire for warmth and shelter, the pangs of hunger and thirst. The resolution of this contradiction "is effected by the animal consuming what is destined for it in external nature and preserving itself by what it consumes. Thus by annihilation of the Other confronting the animal, the original, simple self-relation and the contradiction contained within it is posited afresh". (1969:10)

Hegel argues that the true resolution of contradiction within the animal can only be achieved when the Other which confronts the animal is similar to it. This resolution, therefore, is available only in the sexual relation. "... Here each sex feels in the other not an alien externality but its own self, or the genus common to both." (1969:10) The sexual relation represents the pinnacle of animate nature because in it external necessity is banished and the individual achieves a concrete unity with its other. But this unity is flawed; it is the unity only of one individual with another. The

universal or social interests promoted by the sexual relation in the self-conscious and purposeful human being are unavailable to the animal. "The animal soul is still not free; for it is always manifest as a one ... as tied to one determinateness." True, the sexual relation in animals preserves and develops the species, but for the animal the result of its own activity is unknown. Moreover, the unity arrived at in the sexual relation results not in the general production of the species in the sense of the development of economy and culture through the wilful activity of individuals in human society, but rather "what is produced in this process is again only the single individual". It is here that we arrive at Hegel's meaning when he suggests that "nature has no history": "Nature", he writes, "even at the highest point of its elevation over finitude, always falls back into it again and in this way exhibits a perpetual cycle." (1969: 10-11)

The importance of Hegel's observations on animal life for an understanding of his philosophy and social theory cannot be overstated. For in them lies the kernel of his view of the relationship between the individual and society. As I will show in the chapters which follow, the Hegelian dialectic always refers in the last analysis to the individual, not to an abstraction like class, nation or even the Idea. "The universal to be truly apprehended, must be apprehended as subjectivity [i.e., the practical activity of the living human being], as a notion self-moving, active and form imposing." (1975:290) Moreover, Hegel's equation of society with the achievement of freedom — a dominant theme throughout his writings — is stressed through his notion that the animal, the quintessentially "natural" individual,

cannot attain freedom simply because it is trapped in its individuality, lost as it were in the genus or species.

Biologists refer to the development of human society as "exosomatic evolution" where "exosomatic" refers to the tools and artefacts of the human species: in other words what Marx calls, the means of production. But the biologists are careful — as Marxists often are not — to point out that it is "the design of these instruments that undergoes the evolutionary change and not the instruments themselves, except in a quite unnecessarily figurative sense". There is now a trend among biologists to attribute the rapidity of exosomatic as opposed to ordinary organic evolution to "the subtlety, versatility and information-carrying capacity of language". (Medawar, 1977:52-53)

For Hegel, however, the great transformations in human society are the result of "ideality" — the creative nature of conscious human activity. If we interpret ideology in its broadest sense as the sum total of the manifested ideas, techniques and knowledge of men and women: the inheritance human individuals receive from earlier generations and pass on transformed and deepened into the future; then Althusser is right to observe that Hegel's "principle of explanation" refers to "consciousness of self (ideology)". (1969:111)

The animal possesses the privilege of inheritance from past generations only in its genetic structure; consequently its production is limited in the end only to the renewal of itself. The genetic code is the ideology of the species.

According to Hegel, the natural individual dies because it is a contradiction between the individual and the species. Implicitly the animal is a universal: it represents in its bodily structure the

truth as it were of the species. But it remains a single individual and produces only others like it. "Death shows the Kind to be the power that rules the immediate individual. For the animal the process of the Kind is the highest point of its vitality. But the animal never gets so far in its Kind as to have a being of its own: it succumbs to the power of the Kind." (1975:282) The human individual is no less a victim of this contradiction than the animal: the defeat of mortality remains an unrealized dream. But even this dream is already actualized by men and women in the production and reproduction of society.

The contradiction between the human individual and the genus or species is manifested as well as resolved in the sexual relation. The human individual achieves a being of its own, becomes a "concrete universal", by going out into society and manifesting its own ideals through work in the actuality of human culture. "In this manner", remarks Hegel, the individual "comes to itself, to its truth: it enters upon existence as a free Kind self-subsistent. The death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the 'procession' of spirit." (1975:282) The animal species remains one-sided; it is a negative power only which subdues with death the individuals which compose it. Similarly, the animal itself is one-sided because it is tied to its own particularity, its own individuality. Men and women overcome this one-sidedness and duality by achieving a concrete unity with the species in society. The procession of spirit "is not 'according to the flesh' but spiritual, is not to be understood as a natural procession but as the development of the Notion [human knowledge: ideology] ..." In other words, human consciousness imbued



with the desire for and the force of freedom and liberty strives to actualize this notion in society, and the result is human progress, the record of history. The duality and one-sidedness of the species are abolished by the "... individuality which is in and for itself universal or, what is the same thing, in the universal which exists for itself in a universal mode [society], which universal is mind [i.e., the consciousness of the individual]". (1969:14) Society, therefore, is not for Hegel "the denial of eros", the repression of the sexual instinct, as it is for Freud (1949) and Marcuse (1962), but rather it represents the ultimate fulfilment and realization of the sexual relation: society is the playground of the human spirit.

According to Hegel, human consciousness is "self-differentiating" and "self-mediating" and reduces difference or contradiction "to a moment". (1969:153) In the realm of theory and ideas this means that contradiction is a fact purely for the person who thinks about it and recognizes contradiction. (1967:68, 144) Awareness of a contradiction in turn leads to the thinker's attempt to resolve it by developing the idea further or abandoning it altogether. This meaning of contradiction is illustrated by Hegel in a note on the concept of irony in The Philosophy of Right. He observes that a colleague of his, Professor Solger, adopted the word "irony" from the Romantic theorist, Schlegel. But Solger rejected the reactionary content of Schlegel's concept "and seized upon, emphasized, and retained only that part of Schlegel's view which was dialectic in the strict sense, i.e., dialectic as the pulsating drive of speculative inquiry". (1976: 101) Marx is wrong therefore when he alleges in the Grundrisse that Hegel sees contradiction as "a product of the concept which thinks and

generates itself outside or above [human] conception". For Hegel as well as for Marx, "the concept as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, is a product of the thinking head, which appropriates the world in the only way it can ..." (Marx, 1973:101) As Hegel remarks, the theoretical concept of the concrete state and society, for example, "is only what the thinking mind comprehends there". (1976:101)

Marx's misrepresentation of Hegel is taken over directly from Feuerbach, who as Marx himself observes is partly responsible "for the neglect ... of the rational kernel of Hegel's method". (Hook, 1976: 273) Another part of the blame, however, must be borne by Marx and Engels. Thus Marx's advice that Hegel should be "turned upside down" — or right side up — has led to the grossest misunderstanding of Hegel. To refer only to the Logic, we have, for example, Martin Nicolaus suggesting naively that certain chapters in this work are wonderfully "materialistic". (1973:40) The profound ignorance of modern-day Marxists about what exactly German idealism is shines like a beacon through Nicolaus's prose — and that of numerous other Marxists. After all, the Logic is what it says it is: it is about logic, not sticks and stones and other things material. "In Logic", states Hegel, "there was thought, but in its implicitness, and as reason develops itself in this distinction-lacking medium." (1969: 226) Moreover, when Hegel refers in the Logic to the self-development of concepts and categories, he means their appearance in the history of philosophy, i.e., among the individual thinkers who created that history. "I maintain that the sequence in the systems of Philosophy in History is similar to the sequence in the logical deduction of the

Notion-determinations in the Idea." (Hegel, 1892: 30; Kaufmann, 1966:285)

The fact that the order of sequence in the Logic is not the same as it is in the history of philosophy concerns the dialectical mode of exposition which I shall explicate in the concluding chapter. In any case, as Lenin suggests, the little-noticed similarity between the sequence of the Logic and the sequence of ideas in the history of philosophy "gives still a new aspect to the whole Logic". (1963:114) To mention only the first three categories in the Logic, "being" is a category first discussed by the Eleatics, notably Parmenides (1975: 126); nothing or "non-being" is mentioned by Zeno and Melissus and developed by Gorgias (1892: 380-382); finally, "becoming", of course, was fully worked out by Heraclitus:

As the first concrete thought-term, Becoming is the first adequate vehicle of truth. In the history of philosophy, this stage of the logical Idea finds its analogue in the system of Heraclitus. When Heraclitus says 'All is flowing' ... he enunciates Becoming as the fundamental feature of all existence, whereas the Eleatics ... saw the only truth in Being, rigid processless Being. Glancing at the principle of the Eleatics, Heraclitus then goes on to say: Being no more is than not-Being ... ; a statement expressing the negativity of abstract Being, and its identity with not-Being, as made explicit in Becoming; both abstractions being alike untenable. This may be looked at as an instance of the real refutation of one system by another. To refute a philosophy is to exhibit the dialectical movement in its principle, and thus reduce it to a constituent member of a higher concrete form of the Idea. (1975:132)

The Logic, then, concerns the development of thought through the contradiction or refutation of one system of philosophy by another. But this development is not carried through by a fantastic abstraction called the Idea or the Concept, but by real living and thinking human

beings. The Idea "is only the Notion of cognition thought by us", not the immanent development of the Idea itself. (1969:8) For Hegel, human thinking, the creation of ideas and concepts is nothing but "metaphysics", and metaphysics appears nowhere but in the individual human mind. "The only mere physicists are the animals: they alone do not think; while man is a thinking being and a born metaphysician." (1975:144) Thus when Popper remarks that the "fertility of contradictions [in ideas or theories] is merely the result of our decision not to put up with them". (Quoted in Jordan, 1967:199) he is not — as Professor Jordan suggests — contradicting Hegel, but simply expressing the key to Hegel's notion. Human consciousness, writes Hegel, "endures contradiction because it knows that it contains no determination that it has not posited itself, and consequently that it cannot get rid of". (1969:16)

The development of mind or human consciousness, as well as society itself, is rooted in the contradiction between freedom, which is the essence of mind, and the various social structures which men and women create. History, therefore, "represents only mind's freeing itself from all its existential forms which do not accord with its Notion; a liberation which is brought about by the transformation of these forms into an actuality perfectly adequate to the Notion of mind". (1969:16) A similar idea is expressed by Marx: "the development of the contradiction of a given historical form of production is the only historical way it can be resolved and then reconstructed on a new basis." (1976:619) But only "men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out". (1970:21)

At the dawn of human development the notion of freedom is

unconscious or implicit: the society men and women create reflects their limited control over nature and the unconscious character of their relations with one another. "It is not mind itself that, at the outset, has already grasped its Notion: it is only we who contemplate it who know its Notion." (1969:21) The desire for independence and self-expression that Hegel assumes in his account of the stages of maturity of people in modern society is nowhere in evidence in earlier social forms. Where the freedom of the individual in contemporary society requires a strong awareness of the institutional structures within which he or she must operate, the ancient Greeks, for example, took these structures for granted, and made little distinction between personal and community life. (1969:61) The notion of an individual conscience which recognizes a law higher than that embodied in society and the state was unknown to the Ancients. (1976:302) By the same token, in Roman law "there could be no definition of 'man', since 'slave' could not be brought under it — the very status of slave indeed is an outrage on the conception of man". (1976:15) Consciousness in its modern form is the product of a long struggle for liberation and freedom. Consequently, to grasp the nature of consciousness the human mind should be examined in terms of its role "as the creator of freedom". (1969:16) The dynamics of this creation as they are seen by both Hegel and Marx is the subject of the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 3

## RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

1. Plato, the Idea, and the Social Individual

In his Marxism and Hegel, Lucio Colletti argues that Hegel's philosophy concerns "'the true infinite', the Christian Logos", and that Hegel's notion of contradiction "bears upon one precise topic: the problem of proving the existence of God". (1973:10, 25) Colletti's argument is not new; one of the first British Hegelians, J. H. Stirling, contended in his The Secret of Hegel, written in 1865, that God is "the secret origin and constitution of Hegel". (1865:144) The notion that Hegel is essentially a religious thinker is shared by Marxist and non-Marxist commentators alike. Marcuse, for example, observes that "Hegel's philosophy was deeply rooted [in] ... the Christian tradition ..." (1973:167) Similarly, C. J. Friedrich states that "Hegel was and wanted to be a Christian philosopher". (1956:3)

The conception of Hegel as a theologian is connected with the notion that Hegel sees the development of society as the progress of what he calls the World Spirit toward freedom. "This march of freedom is interpreted [by Hegel] as what the World Spirit wants, as it seeks to realize itself. And in the effort to realize itself it employs peoples, world-historical peoples to do its work." (Friedrich, 1956: 2) According to this view there is a place for God, but certainly not for the human individual, in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel's "subject", says Marcuse, "does not designate any particular subjectivity (such as man) but a general structure that might be best characterized by the

concept 'mind'. Subject denotes a universal that individualizes itself, and if we wish to think of a concrete example, we might point to the 'spirit' of a historic epoch". (1973:155) The World Spirit embodies the Hegelian "Absolute Idea" which Marcuse and other writers identify with the thought of God. "God in [the Hegelian] formula means the totality of the pure forms of all being, or, the true essence of being ... [Thus] the absolute idea has to be conceived as the actual creator of the world [i.e., as God]." (Marcuse, 1973:167)

Hegel's use of religious terms in his philosophy, and his notions of the World Spirit and the Absolute Idea have led many commentators to compare him with Plato. Colletti, for instance, suggests that Hegel embraces the "Platonic-Christian tradition" of the "negative conception of the sensible world". (1973:19) In other words, Hegel, like Plato, views the universe as the manifestation of a divine Mind; the world has no true reality — it only reflects the thought of God.

Hegel is indeed in the Platonic tradition, but his interpretation of Plato's philosophy bears no resemblance to that of Colletti. For Hegel, Plato's philosophy concerns nature and society as they are conceived in theory, in the theoretical concepts of men and women. Plato's thought, writes Hegel, "embraces in an absolute unity reality as well as thinking, the Notion [theory] and its reality in the movement of science, as the Idea of a scientific whole". (1894:1) Hegel denies, for example, that Plato's Republic is merely the ancient philosopher's notion of what the world should look like; a dream toward which reality will be made to correspond. Plato's ideal state "is not beyond reality, in heaven, in another place, but is the real world". (1894:29) Of course, Plato's state is not that of the

moderns, the one in which contemporary individuals find themselves; rather it concerns the "Greek morality according to its substantial mode, for it is the Greek state-life which constitutes the true content of the Platonic Republic". (1894:96)

Hegel's criticism of what he sees as common misinterpretations of Plato may be used just as well to controvert received but mistaken opinions about Hegel. The notion, for example, that according to Platonic dogma, "God made the world, that higher beings of a spiritual kind exist, and, in the creation of the world, lent God a helping hand ... stands word for word in Plato, and yet it does not belong to his philosophy." (1894:21) Hegel argues that Plato uses such notions as "pictorial conceptions" to explicate his philosophy; nevertheless, "all that is expressed in the manner of pictorial conception is taken by the moderns in sober earnest for philosophy." As if to anticipate current misconceptions of his own theories, Hegel goes on to say that "such a representation can be supported by Plato's own words; but one who knows what Philosophy is, cares little for such expressions, and recognizes what was Plato's true meaning". (1894:21)

According to Hegel, the greatest achievement of Plato's philosophy is its recognition of the intellectual and social world of men and women. Plato goes beyond the ordinary world of sense perception and constructs theories about the "idea world", that is, the world of science and society. "... What is peculiar in the philosophy of Plato is its application to the intellectual and supersensuous world, and its elevation of consciousness into the world of spirit [society]. Thus the spiritual element which belongs to thought obtains in this form an importance for consciousness, and is brought into consciousness." (1894:2)



For Plato, as for Hegel, men and women interact with each other on the basis of their shared beliefs of what the world is like, rather than in response to the blunt realities of ordinary sense perception. On this view, human consciousness takes an active role in the determination of social relationships. For example, the commonly held ideas people have of marriage sets before them their privileges and taboos, prepares their moral pitfalls and stimulates their joys and anguish, all in a manner the natural sexual relationship, if it were a simple reflection in consciousness, would be incapable of doing. Similarly, human thought is also the active force behind the construction of science and the entire social world. "... The State", for instance, "really rests on thought, and its existence depends on the sentiments of men, for it is a spiritual and not a physical kingdom." (1892:439)

No less than the state, natural science depends for its existence on the thinking activity of men and women. The findings of science are not a simple record of objects and relationships given to thought by the observation of external nature. If science were only that, its historical development would be incomprehensible; we would have to say that Newton did not formulate Einstein's relativity equation because he did not observe nature closely enough. To grasp the laws of nature, human thought must penetrate the superficial appearance of things and construct theories capable of making sense of what appear to be contradictory phenomena. Scientific theories are themselves a product of the general progress of human thought, and they hinge on the development of consciousness and society. Scientific theory, or what Hegel calls "the speculative", certainly deals with external

reality, with actuality: "We are wrong in representing the speculative to be something existent only in thought or inwardly, which is no one knows where." But it is equally incorrect to suggest that human thought and imagination take no independent role in the construction of science. The speculative "is really present", writes Hegel,

but men of learning shut their eyes to it because of their limited point of view. If we listen to their account, they only observe and say what they see; but their observation is not true, for unconsciously they transform what is seen through their limited and stereotyped conception; the strife is not due to the opposition between observation and the absolute Notion, but between the one Notion and the other. (1892:291)

When Hegel writes of the "Idea" or the "Notion" in Plato, or when he uses these terms in other contexts, he is not referring, as many commentators believe, to a religious image or to a logical construct somehow outside the thoughts and reality of living human beings. The Idea — even the Absolute Idea — is neither a logical construct nor the thought of God, but the scientific expression of society and nature as it has been developed by the thinking activity of individual human beings. "Philosophy in its ultimate essence is one and the same, every succeeding philosopher will and must take up as his own, all the philosophies that went before, and what falls specially to him is their further development." (1894:13) No less than that of any other philosopher, Plato's task was to take up, systematize and develop the ideas of those who came before him. In the Idea of Plato, "we see all manner of philosophic teaching from earlier times absorbed into a deeper principle, and therein united. It is in this way that Plato's philosophy shows itself to be a totality of ideas: therefore, as the result, the principles of others are comprehended in itself". (1894:14)

Hegel observes that the thinkers of his time, especially those

concerned with religion, were returning to Plato in order to understand their own epoch. But this return was misguided. Both Plato's philosophy and religion "have their due place and their own importance, but they are not the philosophy of our own time". (1894:10) The social reality of Hegel's period, the new industrial society arising from the cataclysm of 1789, demanded a new philosophy and a new way of looking at the world. "We must stand above Plato," advises Hegel, "i.e. we must acquaint ourselves with the needs of thoughtful minds in our time, or rather we must ourselves experience these needs." (1894:10)

Hegel is impatient with efforts to discover in Plato ideas which have a direct bearing on the constitution of modern states. Karl Popper, for example, identifies Plato as a precursor of the "enemies" of what Popper calls the "open society", or modern democracy. (1977, I) For Hegel, however, this is to read into Plato "the crude notions" of moderns who are "unable to conceive the spiritual spiritually". (1894:9) Anyway it "is foolish" and "a moral hypocrisy", notes Hegel, "to pretend to be better than others who are then called enemies". (1892:430) Hegel suggests that to understand Plato we should attempt to consider his thought with respect to the needs and reality of Plato's time. "Plato", Hegel suggests,

is not the man to dabble in abstract theories and principles; his truth-loving mind has recognized and represented the truth, and this could not be anything else than the truth of the world he lived in, the truth of the one spirit which lived in him as well as in Greece. No man can overleap his time, the spirit of his time is his spirit also; but the point at issue is, to recognize that spirit by its content. (1894:96)

Plato lived during a period when the original Greek democracy was crumbling and only "preponderating individualities or masters in

statesmanship" were able to hold it together. Not only Plato but the Greek people themselves "were then altogether dissatisfied with their democratic constitution, and the conditions resulting from it ..."

(1894:25) The disintegrating force was the development of private property and the demand for individual rights within the state. Plato denied both because he felt, rightly as it turned out, that these would end up destroying Greece. It is pointless, therefore, to attempt to consider modern democracy in terms of Plato's ideal state. "In modern states", writes Hegel, "we have freedom of conscience, according to which every individual may demand the right of following his own interests; but this is excluded from the Platonic idea."  
(1894:99)

The greatest shortcoming of Plato's philosophy is neither its opposition to private property nor its condemnation of democracy, since these may be explained within the context of Plato's epoch. What tends to undermine Plato's vision is his constant recourse to sensuous images and ordinary conceptions, like that of "God", to express what Hegel calls, "the speculative Notion". The Notion refers to the cumulative product of the development of human thought, the power of the theorist to separate out sensuous images and conceptions, and work with theoretical constructs alone. "... The merit of Philosophy consists ... in the fact that truth is expressed in the form of the Notion." (1894:19) Plato lacks the ability to express ideas purely in theoretical terms and as a result he frequently falls back on myths and allegories to convey his ideas.

The Platonic myth is useful in that it helps elucidate his thought. Nevertheless, the value of Plato's philosophy does not rest

in its employment of mythology; myth is superfluous to speculative thinking and adds nothing to its progress. Yet in the study of Plato's philosophy, "men often lay hold of nothing but these myths". (1892:88) Misconceptions about Plato led thinkers in Hegel's time to ignore precisely the speculative aspects of his thought, and concentrate on what belongs to the merely "pictorial" side of his philosophy. Accordingly, just as Colletti and other modern thinkers claim to discover religion in Hegel's system, Hegel's contemporaries evinced "an obstinate determination to lead back the Platonic Philosophy to the forms of our former metaphysic, e.g. to the proof of the existence of God". (1894:19)

Hegel argues that the most damaging misinterpretation of Plato concerns the meaning of the Platonic Ideas. In his account of the meaning of the Ideas, Hegel indirectly furnishes an explication of his own use of the term Idea. As pointed out above, most commentators interpret Hegel's Idea as the product of the Cosmic Spirit, or God, which realizes itself through the unintended consequences of the activities of large masses of people or nation-states. One of the most recent examples of this approach appears in Charles Taylor's Hegel: "... History", for Hegel, "is to be understood teleologically as directed in order to realize Geist[Spirit]. What happens in history has sense, justification, indeed, the highest justification. It is good, the plan of God." (1976:389) Although Marx — as I will argue below — insists that Hegel's philosophy should not be understood as a theology, he nevertheless puts forward a view that corresponds to that of Taylor and many others. "For Hegel", writes Marx, "the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent

subject, under the name of 'the Idea', is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the Idea." (1976:102) There is no doubt that Hegel often writes as though the Idea really is the thought of God, or of an independent logical construct. But as Hegel says regarding Plato's philosophy, these notions do not belong to his philosophy but rather to its method of presentation. (1894:20)

Hegel suggests that the misapprehension of Plato's thought takes two directions. First, the Ideas such as the "just" and the "beautiful" are taken as the sensuous image of something which exists outside of people's minds. "... The Ideas ... are made into ... transcendent existences which lie somewhere far from us in an understanding outside this world [i.e., in God's thought]." On this interpretation the Ideas are "liberated from the actuality of the individual consciousness" and the subject of these Ideas "even comes to be represented as something apart from consciousness". (1894:30-31) The second misconception is to see the Ideas as ideals in people's minds "which produce nothing that has reality now or can ever attain to it". (1894:31) In other words, the Ideas are mere fancies, very attractive in themselves, but impossible of attainment in the hard practical reality of society. "... They are defined as intellectual perceptions which must present themselves immediately, and belong either to a happy genius or else to a condition of ecstasy or enthusiasm. In such a case they would be mere creations of the imagination, but this is not Plato's nor the true sense." (1894:31) The received interpretation of Hegel's Idea resembles the first way in which Plato's ideas are usually seen, i.e., as something liberated

from the individual consciousness and existing apart from ordinary human beings.

Hegel's "Idea" as well as the Ideas of Plato "are not immediately in consciousness, but they are in apprehending knowledge; and they are apprehending knowledge comprehended in its simplicity and in relation to the result; in other words the immediate perception is only the moment of their simplicity". (1894:31) What Hegel means is that the Idea, as he interprets it, is something which is manifested in concrete social reality through human conscious activity and struggle, and later given theoretical form by philosophy. "... The past [is] something which has taken shape. For the past is the preservation of the present as reality ... From out of ... formlessness the universal first comes into form in the present." (1892:434) Hegel identifies the Idea with the notion of freedom; this notion, as it is actualized in modern society, is the product of centuries of human striving and conflict, although it appears to contemporary men and women as "immediate perception", as the "moment of its simplicity". The philosopher, in turn, gives the Idea theoretical form and then considers the history of human thought and society in terms of the development of this Idea. Hegel's notion of the Idea as it relates to the progress of human consciousness, history and society will be dealt with further in this and following chapters. There it will be argued that Hegel's conception is much closer to that of Marx than is believed even by Marx himself. But it is essential to put to rest at the outset some of the more popular views of Hegel, especially that he is in any way a religious thinker. To consider only Hegel's conception of the development of the Idea in history the following reflections are in order.

The most accessible way to illustrate Hegel's method of approach to history is to compare the Idea with, say, the automobile. To construct a history of the automobile, the first concern would be to consider its development in the late nineteenth century and then trace back all the elements in human history which eventually came together in this development. Inventions like the wheel and the discovery of the spark as a means to release energy and so on, would be treated as stages or moments in the development of the automobile. The approach to history, then, would be single-minded. The historian would not trouble to wonder whether the automobile should have been invented, or whether something else might have been invented instead. As Hegel puts it, "Philosophy indeed treats of nothing which is not and does not concern itself with what is so powerless as not even to have the energy to force itself into existence." (1895:79) Similarly, the historian would not be concerned with ages and peoples which added little or nothing to the advance of the automobile, even though they are no doubt worthy of study in other respects.

From the vantage point of the present the invention of the wheel may be seen as necessary to the invention of the motor car, but the historian would not suggest that the inventor of the wheel was seized by the Idea of the automobile, and was its unwilling creator, although the unreflecting observer might suppose that this was the historian's purpose. Certainly the invention of the wheel reflected its inventor's desire for freedom, for the ability to roam about the world more freely than he or she could without it, but the notion of freedom in this respect probably did not lead the inventor to comprehend that some day whole continents would be traversed effortlessly by single



individuals in their own automobile. For the historian, the wheel's invention would be seen in the context of the needs and desires of the people in whose society the inventor belonged. Because of these material aspects the inventor would put the wheel to other uses than those which might have assisted in the further development of the automobile. Nevertheless, his or her conscious activity was a necessary element behind the eventual emergence of the automobile.

For the religiously-minded, as many people were in Hegel's day, the development of the automobile might be seen as the wonderful work of an all-knowing God who puts His subjects to the divine task of creating modern transport. We moderns do not see the development of the automobile in quite this way; nor does Hegel imagine that this is the way the Idea is developed. The progress of the notion of individual freedom in the consciousness of men and women and its actualization in history and society is no doubt a more worthy object of historical reflection than is the history of the automobile. But this is only because the history of the development of machinery is only one aspect of the history of the development of human consciousness. That the material and social conditions of human existence are the product of the rational activity of men and women is the central message of Hegel's philosophy. Ideology in its broad sense as human thinking activity is, in Hegel's terminology, the divine creator of all human reality. It marks the alienation of consciousness in our day that the thought of men and women is considered by Marxists and their bourgeois opponents alike as merely the reflection of things and structures which in fact are created by the rational activity of people themselves.

In his discussion of Plato's Ideas, Hegel says that the Idea of freedom is "the absolute power", as such it "has certainly to realize itself; in other words, God rules in the world". When Hegel uses the term God or when he refers to religious conceptions, he almost always qualifies this use with phrases like "in other words", "in religious language", and so on.\* But it is important to point out that God is not for Hegel a "pictorial conception" only: God formed a part of the consciousness of the societies and peoples with which Hegel deals. Accordingly, he often speaks as though God does exist, or did exist, in the thought and times he discusses. In that God was a present and real entity for people, their actions and desires are incomprehensible unless He is treated as such; to allow people their religion is at once to respect and understand their culture. Hegel observes that "history is the Idea working itself out in a natural way", i.e., through the action of ordinary human beings, "and not with the consciousness of the Idea". The outcome of this action has certainly been "what is right, moral and pleasing to God"; that is, it has contributed to the increased rationality and freedom in modern society, "but we must recognize that action represents at the same time the endeavours of the subject for particular ends". (1894:24)

No less than Marx, Hegel recognizes that people must and do act in accordance with the material reality in which they exist. While in their activities people try to realize what for them appears to be

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\*Hegel, notes Kaufmann, "... never implies acceptance of the Christian faith in the supernatural ... he merely finds the Christian myths more suggestive and appropriate anticipations of his philosophy than the myths of other religions". (1978:272)

the just and the moral, their activities are, nevertheless, mixed up with purely personal desires, expectations and goals. "Men", observes Hegel, "must have brought forth from themselves the rational along with their interests and their passions, just as it [the rational] must enter into reality through the necessities, opportunities, and motives that impel them." (1894:115) The thought and ideas of human beings are not mere illusions, even when these ideas are of a religious nature, and even though they are conditioned by material existence. The ideology of men and women, no matter at what stage of civilization, contains an inner rationality; it is this rationality which survives every epoch and takes root in the succeeding one. It is precisely the lack of recognition of this kernel of rationality in the ideology of a people or group in society which mars certain Marxist accounts of historical change and transformation. This blind spot is particularly apparent, as I will show later in this, and the following, chapter, in Marxist notions about the function of religion in society.

According to Hegel, the Idea "is only on the one side produced through thoughts, and on the other through circumstances, through human actions in their capacity as means". It will be argued below that Hegel's famous notion of "the cunning of reason", which most commentators associate with a divine agency which achieves its ends independently of the thought and will of men and women, has nothing to do with a power outside and above individual human consciousness. Reason is the most essential aspect of human consciousness and it is realized both consciously and unconsciously by individuals in society. The ends pursued by individuals often seem opposed to the notion of freedom; and certainly the ruling powers of the world — what Marx

calls the ruling classes — are most often in no way concerned with the realization of freedom. "... But that does not really matter; all those particular ends are really only means of bringing forth the Idea, because it is the absolute power. Hence the Idea comes to pass in the world, and no difficulty is caused, but it is not requisite that those who rule should have the Idea." (1894:24)

In his critique of Plato's notion of the ideal state, Hegel observes that the rulers of the world are saddled with human subjects. They use the minds and activity of people to produce the wealth on which their power rests. But human rationality is an explosive material which must be handled delicately if it is not to turn against those who make use of it. And regardless of the efforts of the ruling powers, the progress they foster through the exploitation of their subjects will eventually lead to their own destruction. "Men", Hegel points out, "do not remain at a standstill, they alter, as likewise do their constitutions". Every nation or society is founded upon what its members consider to be right and just; but as people develop their society, they also change their notions about how society should be governed. "If a nation can no longer accept as implicitly true what its constitution expresses to it as the truth, if its consciousness or Notion and its actuality are not at one, then the nation's mind is torn asunder." When this occurs two things are possible. First, the nation may either change its laws "quietly and slowly", or it may "by a supreme internal effort dash into fragments this law which still claims authority". (1894:97-98)

These alternatives are obvious: reform or revolution. The other possibility is that the nation remains at a standstill or is absorbed

by "another nation [which] has reached its higher constitution". If the time for revolution is ripe, the constitution may be changed without a shot being fired. "Revolutions take place in a state without the slightest violence when the insight becomes universal; institutions, somehow or other, crumble and disappear, each man agrees to give up his right." But for this to happen the government must recognize that its time has come; if it does not, "that government will fall, along with its institutions, before the force of mind. The breaking up of a government breaks up the nation itself; a new government arises, — or it may be that the government and the unessential retain the upper hand". (1894:97-98)

In his youth, Hegel was a fervent supporter of the revolutionary principles of the Girondins; but he opposed the Terror on the belief that it jeopardized the achievements of the Revolution. (Harris, 1972:63, 114) In the account of revolution and reform he provides in his discussion of Plato, Hegel makes clear that he never lost his faith in the principles espoused by the revolutionaries in France; nor did he transfer his allegiance to reaction — the "unessential" — his heart remains on the side of revolution. Later I will show that the Hegelian notion of social change is not so very different from that of Marx; the difference is more of emphasis than it is of substance. In fact, the Hegelian theory embraces rather than contradicts Marx's historical materialism. But Hegel's theory centres on the nature of human consciousness, and to explicate this theory his attitude to religion is of extreme importance.

For Hegel, since the Ideas of Plato concern the social and intellectual world, they are "the True, that which is worthy to be known —

indeed, the Eternal, the implicitly and explicitly divine". (1894:30) Throughout his writings, Hegel uses terms with religious connotations like "divine", "eternal", "soul", "spirit", and so forth, to refer to the products, not of an omniscient creator, but of conscious human activity or "ideality". By using religious expressions to illustrate his argument, Hegel relates these intellectual productions to a social reality which exists apart from any one person, and which predates and will survive the particular individual. Hegel's treatment of Plato's discussion of the nature of human knowledge provides an example of Hegel's own approach to the relationship between individual consciousness and society. But it also demonstrates how Plato himself fails to extricate his philosophy from the sensuous images he uses to express his thought. By criticizing this imagery, Hegel clearly shows his own opposition to the religious conceptions most commentators take to be part and parcel of Hegel's philosophy.

For Plato, as for Hegel, human consciousness is immanent and self-determining. Therefore, the development of thought appears to be closer to the recollection of a content already in the mind than it is to the ordinary conception of learning for which mind is a mere tabula rasa on which external reality is imprinted. Hegel observes that in one sense Plato's "recollection ... is certainly an unfortunate expression, in the sense, namely, that an idea is reproduced which has already existed at another time". But Hegel contends that there is another sense of the term which brings out the actual nature of the development of individual consciousness, "namely that of making oneself inward, going inward, and this is the profound meaning of the word in thought". What Hegel means is that in the

process of learning the individual becomes familiar with external nature as it is comprehended by human thought, and with society, which is itself the product of the rational activity of men and women, as well as the object of their theoretical or speculative efforts. Moreover, the individual makes these thoughts his or her possession and develops them further. "In this sense, it may be undoubtedly be said that knowledge of the universal is nothing but a recollection, a going within self, and that we make that which at first shows itself in external form and determined as manifold, into an inward, a universal, because we go into ourselves and thus bring what is inward into consciousness." There is no doubt, however, that Plato himself interpreted recollection in the first sense of the term. Nevertheless, he was attempting to express what is in essence the genuine quality of human consciousness: his error lay in employing myth and sensuous images to propound "the true Notion that consciousness in itself is the content of knowledge ..." (1894:34)

Plato connects the notion of subjective or individual consciousness as recollection with the religious conception or picture image of the eternal nature of the human soul. However, "immortality has not ... the interest to Plato which it has to us [moderns] from a religious point of view ..." (1894:37) The idea of immortality, of course, is an essential element in Christianity. As a result, Colletti among others ascribes belief in immortality to Hegel's philosophy, "in precisely the same sense that for the Christian death is the beginning of the true life, which commences when one passes from the here and now over to the beyond". (Colletti, 1973:27) Neither Plato nor Hegel, however, entertain the belief in immortality.

Plato confused the universal nature of human thought, its conceptual and active power, with the popular notion of recollection as mere memory, the dredging up of a previously given content. He then added to the confusion by suggesting that each individual soul is preformed, and belongs to an earlier period before the birth of the determinate individual. In modern times, something resembling Plato's notion is retained in the theory of genetic inheritance. But genetic theory was unavailable to Plato, and so he illustrated the idea of preformation by comparing it to the doctrine of immortality. Historians of philosophy, observes Hegel, have seized upon Plato's allusion "to what really is an [early] Egyptian idea, and a sensuous conception merely, and say that Plato has laid down that such and such was the case". But the notion of immortality was not put forward by Plato at all; nor does it have anything to do with his philosophy, "anymore than what afterwards is said about God". (1894:36)

For Hegel, the doctrine of immortality expresses "in the simple language of the religious mind" the real relationship between the individual and society; a relationship which Hegel calls the "passage from subjectivity to objectivity" or "the genuine Infinity". (1975: 209, 245, 139) The individual comes into a social world constructed independently of his or her effort and will; but the development of the individual and the actualization of the person's thought and ideas in society through work prepares the ground for immortality: long after the individual has disappeared from the earth, his or her activity will be reflected in the development and continuity of social existence. As Hegel puts it, "work is just this moment of activity concentrating itself on the particular, which nevertheless goes back



into the universal, and is for it". (1894:103) The social bond which holds society together is found nowhere else but in the consciousness and activity of each individual within it, and in the striving of the "social individual" to carve out a personal identity in the universal or society. "... The bond", says Hegel, "is the subjective and individual, the power which dominates the other, which makes itself identical with it." (1894:75)

Society can exist only so long as it satisfies the conscious needs and desires, the rationality, of the individuals who make it up. "... The universal is living spirit only in so far as the individual consciousness finds itself as such within it ..." Society is not a mere assembly of individuals externally held together like cogs in a wheel; a mob of mindless automatons bounced back and forth by alien causal laws. "... The universal is not constituted by the immediate life and being of the individual, the mere substance, but formed of conscious life." Just as society is constituted of rational or social individuals with their own interests and goals, each individual is also dependent on society, and can find a place only within it. "... Individuality which separates itself from the universal is powerless and falls to the ground, the one-sided universal, the morality of individuality cannot stand firm." (1892:323-324) In a paragraph in the Lesser Logic, which is almost universally interpreted by commentators as an expression of Hegel's "Christian belief" in the immortality of the soul, Hegel sums up the relationship between the individual and society. "... Something [the individual] in its passage into the other [society] only joins with itself. To be thus self-related in the passage, and in the other, is the genuine Infinity." (1975:139)

Hegel denies that his own and Plato's idealism has anything to do with the "false idealism" according to which "the individual produces from himself all his ideas, even the most immediate". But the notion that "knowledge comes entirely from without" is just as incorrect as the one which holds that all knowledge comes from within. The conception that knowledge comes from education and learning only is "found in empirical philosophies of a quite abstract and rude kind ... Carried to an extreme, this is the doctrine of revelation" where God reveals all to the virgin minds of believers. (1894:43, 44) What both Plato and Hegel oppose, of course, is the same materialist doctrine criticized by Marx in the third of his Theses on Feuerbach, already quoted in Chapter 2:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating.

And, Marx adds, in a passage which, as I will show, captures the inner meaning of Hegel's philosophy:

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionising practice. (1969, I:14-15)

According to Hegel, Plato is always careful to separate myth from reality; Plato uses myth and religious imagery to explicate his philosophy and never descends to the grave speculations of modern theologians about such topics as the immortality of the soul and the Fall of Man and Woman. Since Hegel went to great lengths to extract the rational dimension of Plato's thought, he would doubtless be appalled at the hash made of his own philosophy by most commentators.

In a passage on Plato available to anyone wishing to look, Hegel exposes the dynamic element behind his and Marx's notion of "revolutionising practice":

... What Plato expressed as the truth is that consciousness in the individual is in reason the divine reality and life; that man perceives and recognizes in pure thought, and that this knowledge is itself the heavenly abode and movement. (1894:41)

Truth lies neither in Cosmic Mind nor, as contemporary Marxists suggest it does, in the reified consciousness of a social class: it can only be found in the consciousness of the social individual.

## 2. Hegel's Atheism

"There is no mode of intelligent being higher than life in which existence would be possible." (Hegel, 1976:252)

As John Plamenatz observes, "it has been both asserted and denied that Hegel was an atheist." (1976:178) The question of atheism, of course, is important for the consideration of Hegel's work in a way it is not for that of most other writers. Hegel's use of religious imagery has led, as I have suggested, to interpretations of his thought based entirely on the notion that he is a religious thinker. After his death in 1831, the Hegelian school:itself split over the question of Hegel's attitude to religion. Right-wing Hegelians felt that "Hegel's philosophy justified Christianity" (Brazill, 1970:47), while the Young Hegelians of the left argued that Hegel opposed religion. Even among the Young Hegelians themselves there was dissension about Hegel's religious beliefs. In 1841, Marx and Bruno Bauer

"began to write a book with the intriguing title The Last Trump over Hegel the Antichrist". (McLellan, 1971:xiv) Marx's contribution to the work never appeared, but in this and other publications Bauer tried "to prove that Hegel was an atheist and ... that his own atheism ... could be traced to Hegel". (Brazill, 1970:30)

Two works published by Feuerbach in 1843 established his "intellectual leadership of the [Young Hegelians]" (McLellan, 1971:xxi) and "admitted validity to the claim of the Hegelians of the right that they could use Hegel's philosophy to justify Christianity as the absolute religion". (Brazill, 1970:143) Deeply influenced by Feuerbach, Marx attacked Bauer and accepted Feuerbach's proclamation that "The Hegelian Philosophy is the last refuge, the last rational support of theology". (Quoted in Hook, 1976:233) Marx, however, soon returned to the view that Hegel's philosophy is atheistic and not Christian. He came to see Feuerbach's own attack on religion as a continuation of "certain points ... which Hegel had left in mystic semi-obscurity". (PP:186) For the mature Marx, Hegel along with Leibnitz, "laboured to dethrone God" (1971a:64), and his philosophy "reduced ... all things" including "religion and law ... to a logical category". (PP:103)

Sydney Hook remarks that the relationship between Hegel and Marx "is ... one of the most challenging problems in the history of thought". (1976:15) It is certainly a central problem for Western Marxism. But the evolution of Marx's attitude to the Hegelian philosophy, particularly with respect to its religious (or atheistic) character, has not been satisfactorily elucidated by most Marxists. After 1844, Marx no longer refers to Hegel as a theologian: just as

Marx turns against Feuerbach's epistemology in the Theses on Feuerbach (1969, I:13-15), he also rejects Feuerbach's reading of Hegel. In the Manuscripts of 1844, Marx lends qualified support to Feuerbach's notion of Hegel as a theologian: "Hegel's ... merely apparent criticism" is based on "what Feuerbach calls the positing, negation and re-establishment of religion or theology, but which has to be considered in a more general way". (1964:210; my emphasis).

The "more general way" of considering Hegel's philosophy is worked out by Marx and Engels in The Holy Family; this book — which was written after the Manuscripts — furnishes a secular interpretation of Hegel, an interpretation to which Marx and Engels will adhere in all their subsequent writings. Hegel, they observe,

thinks [he] has overcome the objective world, the sensuously perceptible real world, by transforming it into a "Thing of Thought", a mere determinateness of self-consciousness instead of making self-consciousness the self-consciousness of man, of real man, i.e., of man living also in the real, objective world and determined by that world. He stands the world on its head and can therefore in his head also dissolve all limitations, which nevertheless remain in existence for bad sensuous consciousness, for real man. (1975:192)

For Engels and the mature Marx, Hegel is not a theologian but simply an idealist who believes that "eternal truth is nothing but the logical, or the historical process itself". (Engels, 1969, III:340) Hegel asserts "the primacy of spirit to nature" and assumes "world creation in some form or other", but Hegel's notion of creation is not a religious one and "often becomes still more intricate and impossible than in Christianity". (Engels, 1969, III:346)

The nature of Hegel's absolute idealism will be dealt with in the following chapters, where I will argue that Marx and Engels are incorrect in their assessment of it. But where Marx and Engels deny

that Hegel is a Christian thinker, the approach of twentieth-century Marxists is either to contend — as do Hook (1976), Marcuse (1973) and Colletti (1973) — that Hegel is a theologian, or, alternatively, to ignore altogether — as do Lenin (1963) and Althusser (1972) — the religious aspects of his thought. Both these approaches tend to underestimate the impact of Hegel on Marx, and overlook the contributions Hegel's thought could make to the further development of contemporary Marxism. As I will demonstrate in this and later chapters, Hegel's Absolute Idealism, which culminates in the absolute Idea or freedom, is concerned precisely with the unity of theory and practice urged by Marx in the Theses on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." (1969, I:15) Far from being original to Marx, this statement simply paraphrases a similar aphorism in Hegel's Lesser Logic: "While Intelligence merely proposes to take the world as it is, Will takes steps to make the world what it ought to be." (1975:291)

Hegel's absolute idealism is the product of his critique both of Christianity and of Kant's "subjective idealism"; Marx's historical materialism is its direct descendant. Nevertheless, the meaning of Absolute Idealism is not an object of study for Western Marxism. Thus Marcuse, on approaching what he considers to be Hegel's religiously-minded notion of Absolute Idealism, throws up his hands and admits that "we cannot follow the Doctrine of the Notion beyond the point we have reached", since it "is ... overwhelmed by the ontological conceptions of absolute idealism". (1973:161) Lenin's estimate of Hegel's philosophy is close to the one I will outline below; in spite of this, however, Lenin confuses the speculative and revolutionary content of

Hegel's thought with religion. "I cast aside, for the most part," Lenin explains, "God, the Absolute, the Pure Idea, etc." (1963:104) The standpoint of Western Marxism with regard to Absolute Idealism may be traced back to Marx and Engels themselves: "... The absolute idea", mocks Engels, "... is only absolute in so far as [Hegel] has absolutely nothing to say about it." (1969, III:340)

The mistaken notions about Hegel fostered by Marx and Engels lead Lenin, for example, to dismiss the "Introduction" to Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy. (1892) The "Introduction", claims Lenin, is "extremely lengthy, empty and tedious on the relation of philosophy to religion, in general, an introduction of almost 200 pages — impossible!" But the "Introduction" is crucial to an understanding of Hegel; moreover, had Lenin carefully followed it, he would have come across the following remark:

... Philosophy has placed itself in opposition to religion ... Of their relations ... we must not hesitate, as if such a discussion were too delicate, nor try to help ourselves by beating about the bush; nor must we seek to find evasions or shifts, so that in the end no one can tell what we mean. This is nothing else than to appear to wish to conceal the fact that Philosophy has directed its efforts against Religion. (1892:65; my emphasis)

Far from considering himself a Christian philosopher, Hegel reckons Christianity to be inferior to all secular philosophy, including, of course, his own. While philosophy has a rich history of continual development and progress, "The content of Christianity, which is the Truth, remained unaltered as such and has therefore little history or as good as none." (1892:9) What Hegel regards as "the Truth" of Christianity will be considered in detail in the next section; but this truth, for Hegel, is lower than that attained by philosophy:

It was in the Christian religion that the doctrine was advanced that all men are equal before God, because Christ has set them free with the freedom of Christianity. These principles make freedom independent of any such things as birth, standing or culture. The progress made through them is enormous, but they still come short of this, that to be free constitutes the very idea of man. (1892:49)

Hegel argues that through the centuries Christianity has been "an impelling power which has brought about the most tremendous revolutions, but the conception and knowledge of the natural freedom of man is a knowledge of himself which is not old". (1892:49) For Hegel, the modern notion of freedom is derived not from Christianity, but from the principles developed by Rousseau and later given theoretical form by Kant. (1896:402) The doctrine of Rousseau formed the basis for the ideals of the great Revolution of 1789; ideals then incorporated into philosophy by German idealism: "In Germany this principle [freedom] has burst forth as thought, Spirit, Notion; in France in the form of actuality. In Germany what there is of actuality comes to us as a force of external circumstances, and as reaction against the same." (1896:409) Philosophy reflects developments in the real world, rather than the autonomous development of a logical Idea. Hegel sees his own philosophy as a continuation in theory of the French Revolution: philosophy owes no debt to religion. In fact, Hegel's formulation of the relationship of German philosophy with the French Revolution corresponds to that of Marx, who is also no Christian. "In politics the Germans have thought what other nations have done. Germany was their theoretical conscience." (Marx, 1970: 137) Hook makes a grave error when he suggests in his influential From Hegel to Marx that "Marx was probably the first thinker to characterise the philosophy of Kant as 'the German theory of the French



revolution'". (1976:78) But Hook's error is symptomatic of current Marxist thinking which sees Hegel either as a religious mystic or as a hopeless idealist.

There is little question that a great deal of Hegel's philosophy appears to substantiate the thesis that he is a theologian, just as there are passages in Plato which may be interpreted in this manner. One problem, as I have suggested above, is that Hegel often does not separate religious thinking from philosophy. Human thought for Hegel is a unity and should be treated that way; religion merely expresses in picture-thought ideas which are brought to full rationality in science and philosophy. But there is an additional problem which dogs especially the writings he published in his lifetime, and — though to a lesser extent — his lectures and the notes he prepared for them. Anticipations of censorship by the Prussian authorities were never far from Hegel's mind. (Avineri, 1972:117) Doubts about Hegel's theological orthodoxy had already lost him a place in the Academy of Sciences. An outright declaration of atheism would have placed his career as a professor in considerable jeopardy; a similar avowal of unorthodoxy had earlier cost Fichte his academic chair. (Hegel, 1896: 480) The result of these pressures on Hegel is recalled by Heine, who was one of Hegel's students:

I stood behind the maestro as he composed it [the music of atheism — G.L.] of course he did so in very obscure signs so that not everyone could decipher them — I sometimes saw him anxiously looking over his shoulder, for fear that he had been understood ... It was not until much later that I understood why he had argued in the Philosophy of History that Christianity was an advance if only because it taught of a God who had died, while Pagan gods were immortal. What progress it would be, then, if we could say that God had never existed at all! (Quoted in Lukács, 1975:462)

Lukács observes that the authenticity of Heine's account "has often been questioned by bourgeois scholarship". (1975:462) This interpretation of Hegel, however, need not rest on Heine's testimony alone. The assumption that God and religion have no place in Hegel's philosophy is the only one consistent with Hegel's direct statements on the matter. Further, if — as I have shown above — Hegel denies the existence of religious conceptions in Plato, there is no reason at all to suppose that he would then import these conceptions into his own philosophy. Hegel's depiction of Plato's attitude toward God and philosophy indirectly corroborates Heine's testimony about Hegel's feelings toward religion. According to Hegel, Plato

expresses the most exalted ideas regarding Philosophy, as also the deepest and strongest sense of the inferiority of all else ... in a manner such as nowadays we should not venture to adopt. There is in him none of the modest attitude of this science towards other spheres of knowledge, nor of man towards God. Plato has a full consciousness of how near human reason is to God and indeed of its unity with Him. [my emphasis — D.M.]

As though looking over his shoulder in just the way Heine describes, Hegel goes on:

Men do not mind reading this in Plato, an ancient, because it is no longer a present thing, but were it coming from a modern philosopher [i.e., Hegel himself] it would be taken much amiss. Philosophy to Plato is man's highest possible possession and true reality; it alone [not God] has to be sought of man. (1894:22)

In his discussion of the philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle, Hegel alludes to the division between exoteric and esoteric philosophy which was traditionally supposed to apply to their writings. Exoteric philosophy deals with non-controversial and conventional issues, but esoteric philosophy explores dangerous and subversive ideas and, therefore, the philosopher must be careful how much and to whom he or

she reveals any esoteric thoughts. Hegel rejects this division and observes that thinkers are driven by the desire to communicate their ideas to others: "they cannot keep them in their pockets". (1894:11)

But in his discussion of the relationship between religion and philosophy in the Encyclopaedia, Hegel falls back on the distinction between esoteric and exoteric philosophy. He cautions that this discussion, which attempts to refute the charges of pantheism and atheism levelled against his philosophy, is "exoteric", since "exoteric discussion is the only method available in dealing with the external apprehension of notions as mere facts — by which notions are perverted into their opposite". (1969:313) Hegel's meaning is clear: the accusations of atheism and pantheism concern pictorial conceptions only; accordingly they are dealt with on the exoteric level to keep the Philistines happy. But "the esoteric study of God and identity, as of cognitions, and notions, is philosophy itself" — and if this esoteric study, Hegel implies, indicates the non-existence of God, then so much the better. For Hegel, freedom of thought is the first condition of philosophy, and this freedom means that neither religious philosophy nor God are its proper object: "the philosophy which we find within Religion does not concern us," and further, "the simple existence which ... the Jews thought of as God (for all Religion is thinking), is ... not a subject to be treated of by Philosophy ..." (1892:91, 94)

According to Hegel, the exoteric notion of God is the simple image that belongs to religious faith; but the esoteric notion, the philosophical conception of God does not concern a Supreme Being, rather the real object of this esoteric conception is the human

individual. The various definitions of God found in religion and philosophy represent the attempt by human thought to grasp its own nature: "Without the world", i.e., the natural and social world of men and women, "God is not God." (Hegel quoted in Hook, 1976:17) The notion of freedom and the conception of the individual which Hegel finds in the doctrine of Christianity is the subject of the next section; before turning to Hegel's discussion of Christianity, however, it is necessary to touch on a final point concerning Hegel's personal religious belief or lack of it. "I am a Lutheran," Hegel declares in the "Introduction" to the History of Philosophy, "and will remain the same." (1892:73) Although this admission need not affect anyone's ability to construct a secular theory of history and society, it does throw considerable doubt on the conjecture that Hegel is an atheist. As I will show in the next chapter, however, Luther is not so much a religious figure for Hegel as he is the, admittedly limited, proponent of a new and revolutionary conception of the human individual: "It was with Luther first of all that freedom of spirit began to exist in embryo, and its form indicated", continues Hegel ironically, "that it would remain in embryo." (1892:148)

Hegel's estimate of Luther is taken up by the young Marx: "... Germany's revolutionary past is theoretical — it is the Reformation. In that period," continues Marx,

the revolution originated in the brain of a monk [Luther], today in the brain of a philosopher ... Luther, without question, overcame servitude through devotion but only by substituting servitude through conviction ... He liberated the body from its chains because he fettered the heart with chains. (1964a:52-53)

Hegel's understanding of the "Lutheran faith without any accessories" reveals his own (atheistic) standpoint: "God is ... in spirit alone, He is not a beyond but the truest reality of the individual." (1892: 159) The subversive content of Hegel's depiction of God is seized by Marx:

To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man the root of man is himself. What proves beyond doubt the radicalism of German theory, and thus its practical energy, is that it begins from the resolute positive abolition of religion. The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man. It ends, therefore, with the categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions in which man is an abased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being ... (1964a:52)

Marx, it is true, wrote this passage while still a disciple of Feuerbach. (Kamenka; 1970:117) But both he and Feuerbach were then engaged in battering down a door already thrown open by Hegel, a point later recognized by the mature Marx. "Compared with Hegel," admits Marx, "Feuerbach is extremely poor." (1965:151)

### 3. The Idea of Christianity

Hegel's attitude toward religion is complex and foreign to modern notions like that for which religion and theology deal largely with mythology and therefore should be regarded as quaint if beautiful expressions of fantasy. The contemporary view of religion is an inheritance from the Enlightenment which sought to banish religion entirely from its new-found realm of science and technology. For Feuerbach and the young Marx, as for the Enlightenment thinkers, religion is merely myth and fantasy, the alienated expression of the

human desire to escape the realities of an imperfect world. On this view, religion is merely ideology or false consciousness: "It is the opium of the people." (Marx, 1964:43-44) In their approach to religion, both Feuerbach and the young Marx make use of Feuerbach's "'genetic-critical' method. This consists simply in tracing conceptions and beliefs back to their origin in the experience and attitudes of men". (Kamenka, 1970:94) The genetic-critical method reduces religion to the "natural experiential phenomenon or set of phenomena which it takes over and transports into what is allegedly another world". (Kamenka, 1970:62) This method, Kamenka observes, "has become one of the standard ways of dealing with 'ideologies' as opposed to theories — we show how they arose and what needs they satisfy or what longings they appeal to". (1970:37)

The trick of treating human thought as ideology, where ideology is seen as false consciousness, and reducing it to its "material base" is easy to master; it is more difficult, however, to discover the positive or rational elements in thought through study of the reality from which it originates. "We get to know the affirmative side later on both in life and in science," Hegel remarks, "thus we find it easier to refute than to justify." (1892:38) The genetic-critical approach to religion is careful to conceal — even from itself — the elements of human rationality in religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that this approach finds little in religious notions which appeal to modern men and women. This sort of history of ideas, notes Hegel, "occupies itself with truths which were truths — namely, for others, not with such as would come to be the possession of those who are occupied with them". Practitioners of

the reductionist method "know as little of God as a blind man sees of a painting, even though he handles the frame ... Much is told of the history of the painter of the picture, and of the fate of the picture itself, what price it had at different times, into what hands it came, but we are never permitted to see anything of the picture itself".

Hegel suggests that to understand religion, the investigator should "enter ... into an inner relation" with it and attempt to absorb the truths religion expresses. "For here it is with the value of his own spirit that man is concerned, and he is not at liberty to remain outside and to wander about at a distance." (1895:41-42) The point in the investigation of religions is

to recognise the meaning, the truth, and the connection with truth; in short, to get to know what is rational in them. They are human beings who have hit upon such religions, therefore there must be reason in them, amidst all that is accidental in them a higher necessity. (1895:78)

Hegel argues that religions must be justified by research; that is, the rational elements in religions should be brought out even if they represent a fairly elementary form of truth.

We must do them this justice, for what is human, rational in them, is our own too, although it exists in our higher consciousness as a moment only. To get a grasp of the history of religions in this sense, means to reconcile ourselves even with what is horrible, dreadful, or absurd in them, and to justify it.

The justification of religion, however, in no sense implies our acquiescence to it. "We are on no account", Hegel emphasizes, "to regard it as right or true, as it presents itself in its purely immediate form — there is no question of doing this — but we are at least to recognise its beginning, the source from which it has originated as being in human nature." (1895:78-79)

In his treatment of religion, then, Hegel is not occupied, as are Feuerbach and the young Marx, with a search only for its negative aspects. In his Early Theological Writings (1948) which contain "what must be one of the harshest accusations ever to have been levelled against the Church", (Avineri, 1972:30; also, Kaufmann, 1966:59) Hegel had already dealt with this side of religion. Nor did he lose his awareness of the negative aspect of Christianity. In the History of Philosophy, for example, he writes: "All the passions [the Church] has within itself — arrogance, avarice, violence, deceit, rapacity, murder, envy, hatred — all these sins of barbarism are present in it, and indeed belong to its scheme of government." (1896:50)

Moreover, Hegel is also aware of the function of religion as what Marx calls "the opium of the people". Accordingly, Hegel observes in the Philosophy of Right that "it may seem suspicious that religion is principally sought and recommended for times of public calamity, disorder, and oppression, and that people are referred to it as a solace in face of wrong or as a hope in compensation for loss". (1976: 165) Since religion is often used to justify tyranny, Hegel continues,

"... we ought not to speak of religion at all in general terms and ... we really need a power to protect us from it in some of its forms and to espouse against them the rights of reason and self-consciousness." (1976:165)

For Hegel, as for Marx, religion of any kind has absolutely no place in the constitution of a rational society. (1976:169-174, 283-285) Nevertheless, "it is of course open to it [religion] to remain something inward, to accommodate itself to government and law, and to



acquiesce in these with sneers and idle longings, or with a sigh of resignation." (1976:167)

Hegel's approach to religion, as I will show, is precisely the one recommended by the mature Marx in a passage where he rejects the genetic-critical method applied earlier by Feuerbach and himself:

... A history of religion that is written in abstraction from ... the material basis of ... society ... is uncritical. It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly kernel of the misty creations of religion than to do the opposite, i.e. to develop from the actual, given relations of life the forms in which these have been apotheosized. (1976:494)

This passage comes from Capital, but Marx had previously rejected Feuerbach's method in his Theses on Feuerbach:

Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious, imaginary world and a real one. His work consists in a dissolution of the religious world into its secular basis. He overlooks the fact that after completing this work, the chief thing remains to be done. (1969, I:14)

Marx's early critique of religion was written at precisely the point when he still thought Hegel's emphasis on economics and civil society was misguided. "The 'one-sidedness' and 'limit' of Hegel consist ... in the fact that his 'standpoint is that of modern political economy' ..." (Marx, quoted in Colletti, 1973:222) Later Marx ruefully admits that his study of Hegel "led me to the conclusion that ... legal relations ... political forms [and even religion — D.M.] originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel ... embraces with the term 'civil society'; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy". (1970:20)

The method Hegel applies to the study of religion is the same as the one he employs in the investigation of Plato's philosophy. As I

have outlined above, Hegel separates the rational and "eternal" aspects of Plato's thought from its mythological expression. Further, he demonstrates that the elements in Plato which are alien to modern conceptions, such as Plato's attack on democracy, are rooted in the material and political realities of Plato's time, i.e., the development of private property and the "subversive" notion of individual rights. "It is thus", writes Hegel, "a substantial position on which Plato takes his stand, seeing that the substantial of his time forms his basis, but this standpoint is at the same time relative only, in so far as it is but a Greek standpoint, and the later principle [of individual freedom] is consciously banished." (1894:99) Similarly, in his examination of the Christian religion, Hegel shows that Christianity has its beginnings within a certain material framework, namely slave society, and that it incorporates the rational elements of Greek philosophy. In fact, according to Hegel, Christianity is precisely the existential or social form which carried the thought of the ancient Greek philosophers into the realm of reality. "... The Greek philosophy ...", he declares, "entered, in the Christian world, into actuality." (1892:55)

For Hegel, modern philosophy and science arose in opposition to the teachings of Christianity. Thus Christianity is the central object of Hegel's critique of religion. Hegel suggests that Christianity is at once the most rational of all world religions, and also the chief opponent of reason and philosophy. The rational character of Christianity provides its own justification and accounts for its survival in the modern age; but the limits of its rationality indicate the necessity of its eventual decline. Despite these limits,

which will be discussed below, "philosophy indeed can recognize its own forms in the categories of the religious consciousness, and even its teachings in the doctrines of religion — which therefore it does not disparage". Religion, however, fails to extend the same courtesy to science and philosophy; ignorance of its own nature leads it to oppose philosophy: "... the religious consciousness does not apply the criticism of thought to itself, does not comprehend itself, and it is therefore, as it stands, exclusive." (1969:304) Since Hegel's time, of course, Christianity has learned to adapt itself to science; the outburst in the 1920's against Darwinism and the current opposition of the Roman Catholic Church to the birth control pill may prove to be the last gasps of Christian opposition to science. But the compromising attitude of the modern Church stems not from the nature of Christianity, but from its loss of support in the consciousness of men and women. As Hegel's student Heine puts it: "Religion, when it can no longer burn us alive, comes to us begging." (1892:109)

For Hegel, a negative critique of religion, such as that of Feuerbach and the young Marx, can furnish no answer for the continued existence of religion. Nor can it penetrate beneath the illusions of religion and grasp its rational core. "... Though philosophy must not let itself be overawed by religion, or accept the position of [God's] existence on sufferance, she cannot afford to neglect these popular conceptions. The tales and allegories of religion, which have enjoyed for thousands of years the veneration of nations, are not to be set aside as antiquated even now." (1975:42) The inner rationality of the Christian religion is a product of its historical development. Christianity incorporates the discoveries of neo-Platonist philosophy

and these in turn "are ... not only moments in the development of reason, but also that of humanity; they are the forms in which the whole condition of the world expresses itself through thought".

(1894:376) The neo-Platonist thought which flourished in Rome reflected "the development of private rights relating to the property of individual persons". (1894:375) The evolution of merchant and trading fortunes, which threw into question the Greek polity and influenced the thought of Socrates and Plato, continued apace in Rome and found expression in its philosophy.

Roman power crushed national life and showed "itself as the withdrawal into the aims and interests of private life". (1894:376) Just as "abstract Christians only care for their own salvation", the people of Rome lost the feeling of unity with society which existed in Greece, and attended only to their own personal interests.

In this condition of disunion in the world, when man is driven within his inmost self, he has to seek the unity and satisfaction, no longer to be found in the world, in an abstract way. The Roman world is thus the world of abstraction, where one cold rule was extended over all the civilized world. The living individualities of national spirit in the nations have been stifled and killed; a foreign power, as an abstract universal, has pressed hard upon individuals. In such a condition of dismemberment it was necessary to fly to this abstraction ... to this inward freedom of the subject as such. (1894:235)

Along with the renewed, if abstract, interest in the individual, the industrial achievements of Rome brought with them "contempt for nature ... inasmuch as nature is no longer anything in itself, seeing that her powers are merely the servants of man, who, like a magician, can make them yield obedience, and be subservient to his wishes". (1894:377) These aspects of Roman thought — the supreme importance of individual consciousness and the nullity of external nature — were

annexed by Christianity. But where neo-Platonist philosophy was unable to discover concrete truth in the consciousness of the individual, i.e., the unity of the free individual with society, this hurdle was overcome by Christianity.

... within Christianity the basis of Philosophy is that in man has sprung up the consciousness of the truth ... and then that man requires to participate in this truth. Man must be qualified to have this truth present to him; he must further be convinced of this possibility. The first point of interest in the Christian religion thus is that the content of the Idea should be revealed to man; more particularly that the unity of the divine and human nature should come to the consciousness of man ... (1896:2-3)

According to Hegel, the absolute unity between the individual and society or "the divine" is posited by Christianity in its notion of the relationship of the individual with God. Christianity teaches the oneness of men and women with God, "so that God ... ceases to be for them mere object, and, in that way, an object of fear and terror ..." The notion of Christ, "who revealed himself to men as a man among men and thereby redeemed them ... is only another way of saying that the antithesis of subjective and objective is implicitly overcome ..." (1975:260-261) But because Christianity finds the truth of individual consciousness only in the existence of God and Jesus Christ, it fails to recognize the real, concrete human individual and puts Christ in the place of man and woman. "... Christianity ... revealed to man what absolute reality is; it is a man, but not yet Man or self-consciousness in general." (1894:377)

Moreover, by abstracting from the neo-Platonist doctrine of the nullity of the external world, or rather by neglecting to notice that nature is an objective reality which can be made to conform to the will of men and women, Christianity fostered the "bad idealism" for

which everything, including nature, is merely the creation of thought:

"... Spirit, if complete in every aspect, must have also the natural aspect, which in this form of philosophy [Christianity] is lacking."

(1894:378) By seeing everything as the product of God's thought, Christianity set the stage for its opposition to and supersession by science and philosophy:

In Christianity the root of truth ... was not only the truth against the heathen gods, but ... against Philosophy also, against nature, against the immediate consciousness of man. Nature is there no longer good, but merely a negative; self-consciousness, the thought of man, his pure self, all this receives a negative position in Christianity. Nature has no validity and affords no interest; its universal laws, as the reality under which the individual existences of nature are collected, have likewise no authority; the heavens, the sun, the whole of nature is a corpse.  
(1896:41)

Another aspect of the historical development of Christianity is of supreme importance. The Christian religion was above all a cosmopolitan religion; it united "the free universality of the East and the determinateness of Europe", simply because "its origin happens to be the country where East and West have met in conflict". (1894:380) Further, it reflected the imperial power of Rome over all other nations; nationality lost its importance for religion just as it had for Rome. As Rome was a world power, Christianity became a world religion. Rome enslaved the world and as the antagonist of Roman slavery, Christianity united all races and nations against its power. Sixty years after Hegel's death, Engels notices the parallels between Christianity and socialism.

The history of early Christianity has notable points of resemblance with the modern working-class movement. Like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor

people deprived of all rights, of peoples subjected and dispersed by Rome. Both Christianity and the workers' socialism preach forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery; Christianity places this salvation in the life beyond, after death, in heaven; socialism places it in this world, in a transformation of society ... Three hundred years after its appearance Christianity was the recognized state religion in the Roman world empire, and in barely sixty years socialism has won itself a position which makes its victory absolutely certain. (1959:168-169)

The parallels between Christianity and socialism, however, go even deeper than Engels imagines. Hegel suggests that Christianity forms the basis of his own absolute idealism; and this philosophy, as I will show, constitutes the foundation of Marx's historical materialism. Hegel argues that through Christianity men and women "attain to the consciousness of heaven upon earth, the elevation of man to God"; absolute idealism, in turn, recognizes that the social and natural world as comprehended by science and philosophy, "has its root in God, but only the root". (1896:3) Before men and women can understand their own relation to nature and society, they must conceptualize this relation in picture thought as the relation of God to the world; later they will recognize that God is no one else but themselves:

The manner in which man represents to himself his relation to God is more particularly determined by the manner in which man represents to himself God. What is now often said, that man need not know God, and may yet have the knowledge of this relation, is false. Since God is the First, He determines the relation, and therefore in order to know what is the truth of the relation, man must know God.

The notion of God represents a necessary stage in the historical development of human consciousness: just as many children in modern society are at first attracted by the idea of a Supreme Being, but then abandon it when they achieve a mature consciousness of themselves, so too do earlier men and women form an image of God. "The idea which a

man has of God", notes Hegel,

corresponds to that which he has of himself, of his freedom ... when a man knows truly about God, he knows truly about himself too: the two sides correspond with each other. At first God is something quite undetermined; but in the course of the development of the human mind, the consciousness of that which God is gradually forms and matures itself, losing more and more of its initial indefiniteness, and with this the development of true self-consciousness advances also. (1895:80)

Hegel argues that Christianity "brings about the whole revolution that has taken place in the world's history"; the truth of Christianity is its recognition of the supremacy of individual human consciousness and activity as expressed in the life of the mortal Christ. No less than Christianity, of course, other religions have adopted an anthropomorphic concept of God. The Greeks, for example, imagined gods who were like men and women, but "they were not anthropomorphic enough". The Greek gods retained the trivial aspects of the human character as well as its divine or creative qualities, but for the Greeks, "man is not divine as man, but only as a far-away form and not as 'this', and subjective man". Christianity conceives of God as He has become in the flesh, in Christ; and Christ bears this resemblance to man and woman: He is mortal. Paraphrasing Hegel and without distorting his meaning, we can say, "that God Himself is dead ... constitutes the great leading Idea of Christianity". (1896:4-5)

Another fundamental truth of Christianity is that men and women find their true nature in society. The individual can prove him or herself to God only through action in society: "the animal is by nature what it ought to be", but not the human individual. The animal never attains to real individual freedom because it lacks a social framework within which to manifest its individuality; the



individuality or divinity of men and women, however, is accomplished in society. Through worship and the repentance of sin, Christianity teaches the individual the absolute desirability of proving his or her worth in society.

... The natural will is not the will as it ought to be, for it ought to be free, and the will of passion is not free. By nature Spirit is not as it ought to be; by means of freedom only does it become such. That the will is by nature evil is the form under which this truth is presented [in Christianity]. But man is only guilty if he adheres to this his natural character.

Justice, morality, are not the natural will, for in it a man is selfish, his desire is only toward his individual life as such. It is by means of worship, accordingly, that this evil element is to be annulled. (1895:244)

For Hegel, then, the principle of Rousseau according to which "man was born free, but is everywhere in chains" is incorrect, and had already been confuted by Christianity. In Christianity "the natural man is represented as evil" (1895:244); it is only in and through society that freedom and morality are attained. Thus Marx's notion that human nature is "the ensemble of the social relations" (1969, I:14), simply expresses a basic truth of Christianity.

Hegel denies that the truths of the Christian religion "were so to speak ready made in the mind of God": Christianity is nothing other than a stage in the autonomous development of human consciousness. But Christianity can be grasped in this way only from the standpoint of modern times. In the same way as the inventor of the wheel could not see his or her invention as a moment in the development of the motor car, the early Christian was unaware that the Christian Idea represents a step in the progress of individual human consciousness. "... History", Hegel remarks, "is the process of mind itself, the revelation of itself from its first enshrouded consciousness, and the

attainment of this standpoint of free self-consciousness ..." The notion that society is the platform on which human players fulfil and realize themselves belongs to Christianity, and informs the development of the "natural individual" through the stages of maturity, no less than it does the progress of modern society. It is the basis of Marx's and Hegel's notion of revolutionizing practice: "... Mind", says Hegel, "is the living moment, proceeding from its immediate existence to beget revolutions in the world, as well as in individuals." (1896:7-8)

Hegel argues that Christianity "has made the intelligible world of Philosophy the world of common consciousness". Through the teachings of the Church the ordinary person arrives at a knowledge of the nature of God (and therefore of the human individual) previously known only by the greatest thinkers of antiquity. In the doctrine of original sin, for example, "what is said of him as such, what every member of the human race really is in himself, is represented in the form of the first man, Adam ..." The individual learns about good and evil, and comes to realize that evil is natural and can be eradicated only through knowledge of God and self-development in society. This concept of the benefit of education seems elementary to us moderns, but it was not an idea easily arrived at by humankind as a whole.

The abrogation of mere naturalness is known to us simply as education, and arises of itself; through education subjection is brought about, and with that a capacity for becoming good is developed. Now if this appears to come to pass very easily, we must recollect that it is of infinite importance that the reconciliation of the world with itself, the making good, is brought about through the simple method of education. (1896:10)

According to Hegel, the very notion of sin and repentance encourages independent and rational thought in the popular mind. The individual

is from the beginning involved in a contradiction: the believer is reputed sinful by nature, and can reach the divine only by proving him or herself worthy before God. "Yet I am at the same time referred into myself, for thought, knowledge, reason are in me, and in the feeling of sinfulness, and reflection upon this, my freedom [to overcome evil and sin] is plainly revealed to me ... Rational knowledge, therefore, is an essential element in the Christian religion itself ... [because] this subjectivity, this selfness (not selfishness) is just the principle of rational knowledge itself." (1895:17)

Two principal consequences naturally follow the propagation of Christianity. The first is the recognition of the infinite rights and worth of the ordinary individual. Each person, regardless of birth or class, is made in God's image; every human soul is divine and of equal importance for God. Thus to take up the principle of Christianity is to deny forever the right of someone to take another into slavery. Christianity teaches "that the human being is actually free", and, writes Hegel in a remarkable passage,

When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength, just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality. Whole continents, Africa and the East, have never had this Idea, and are without it still. The Greeks and Romans, even the Stoics, did not have it ... It was through Christianity that this Idea came into the world. According to Christianity, the individual as such has an infinite value as the object and aim of divine love, destined as mind to live in absolute relationship with God himself, and have God's mind dwelling in him: i.e. man is implicitly destined to supreme freedom. (1969:239-240; my emphasis)

Sydney Hook, who suggests that both Marx and Hegel assert "the priority of the group over the individual", and deny "natural rights,

or conscience", also criticizes as a "mere abstraction" (1976:47, 37) Hegel's notion that Christianity was instrumental in making freedom an essential and active principle in the formation of individual consciousness and society. But Christianity is itself a product of the material framework of ancient society, and once installed in the consciousness of men and women it had irrevocable consequences for the secular as well as the religious realm. "If, in religion as such," writes Hegel,

man is aware of this [free] relationship to the absolute mind as his true being, he has also, even when he steps into the sphere of secular existence, the divine mind present with him, as the substance of the state, of the family, etc. These institutions are due to the guidance of that spirit [of freedom], and are constituted after its measure; whilst by their existence the moral temper comes to be indwelling in the individual, so that in this sphere of particular existence, of present sensation and volition, he is actually free. (1969:240)

Christianity is merely a stage or moment in the historical development of humanity. Christianity, and religion generally, is only necessary so long as people do not realize that both nature and society can be made subject to their conscious and rational will. Writes Hegel,

... Because thinking consciousness is not the outward universal form for all mankind, the consciousness of the true, the spiritual and the rational, must have the form of Religion, and this is the universal justification of this form. (1892:81)

Exactly the same position is held by Marx, who observes in Capital that

The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. This, however, requires ... a long and tormented historical development. (1976:173)

To recognize the limits of Christianity, however, is not to deny its role in making the notion of freedom a kind of "second nature" for men and women. "Christianity in its adherents", writes Hegel,

has realized an ever-present sense that they are not and cannot be slaves; if they are made into slaves, if the decision as regards their property rests with an arbitrary will, not with laws or courts of justice, they would find the very substance of their life outraged. This will to liberty is no longer an impulse which demands its satisfaction, but the permanent character — the spiritual consciousness grown into a non-impulsive nature. (1969:240)

The second great result of the spread of Christianity concerns the development of the independent and rational state. Christianity, it is true, guarantees heaven in the beyond, and therefore relegates freedom to another world instead of making it a principle of state and government. But from the teachings of Christianity it occurred to men and women that heaven should be constructed on earth, in a rational state which would protect the rights of the individual.

On the appearance of Christianity it is first of all said: "My kingdom is not of this world;" but the realization has and ought to be in the present world. In other words the laws, customs, constitutions, and all that belongs to the actuality of the spiritual consciousness should be made rational.

According to Hegel, the development of the modern state during the Middle Ages was neither the unintended consequence of mindless human action guided by "the cunning of reason", nor was it the result, as some Marxists would have it, of the endless shuffle of modes and relations of production across the stage of history. The modern state "cannot be in the beginning, but must come forth after being worked upon by mind and thought". And it was "in Christianity [that] these absolute claims of the intellectual world and of spirit had become

the universal consciousness". (1896:21-22) Accordingly,

even under the feudal system ... justice, civil order, legal freedom gradually emerged. In Italy and Germany cities obtained their rights as citizen republics, and caused these to be recognized by the temporal and ecclesiastical power; wealth displayed itself in the Netherlands, Florence and the free cities on the Rhine. In this way meh gradually began to emerge from the feudal system ... (1896:105)

## CHAPTER 4

## FROM THEOLOGY TO ABSOLUTE IDEALISM

1. Theology, Enlightenment, and Absolute Idealism

According to Feuerbach, religious speculation or theology is mere fantasy; it is worse than dreaming, for "where dreams can illuminate reality, once they are properly interpreted, theology obscures reality by resisting such interpretation, by treating the fantasies that constitute religion as direct representations of (another) reality". (Kamenka, 1970:62) "All religious speculation is vanity and lying," claims Feuerbach, " — a lie against reason and a lie against faith ..." (Quoted in Kamenka, 1970:60) Somewhat the same notion is put forward by Engels, although he extends it to include philosophy as a whole. "As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air — religion, philosophy, etc. — " writes Engels in one of his letters on historical materialism, "these have a prehistoric stock ... of what we should today call bunk." (1959:405)

The conjecture that theology, especially early Christian theology is, as Feuerbach puts it, a "swindle", (Quoted in Kamenka, 1970:60) has become part of received wisdom. For Hegel, however, this view is utterly mistaken. It is true that theology is merely exegesis — it must work on a given form, i.e., the Bible — nevertheless, each person brings to the Bible his or her own notions and opinions. These, in turn, derive from, or concern, reality, "what is given by the senses". No one can merely expound a doctrine without slipping into it his or her personal conceptions. "We find what we look for, and

just because I make it clear to myself, I make my conception, my thought, a factor in it; otherwise it is a dead and external thing, which is not present for me at all." To make something clear to ourselves is simply to recognize ourselves in it. Just as different people in modern times can make diverse readings, say of Marx, earlier thinkers found a myriad of opposed ideas and notions in the Bible. "Thus men have made of the Bible what may be called a nose of wax." (1896:13-14) Hegel's problem, then, is to find in speculative theology the elements of sensuous reality which the theologians put into it. For, as Hegel suggests, "commentaries on the Bible do not so much make us acquainted with the content of the Scriptures, as rather with the manner in which these things were considered in the age in which they were written". (1895:28) Hegel's method of approach to theology, therefore, like his approach to religion generally, is precisely the "materialist ... and scientific one" recommended by the mature Marx. (1976:494)

Arguments about the nature and existence of God are in reality arguments about the nature of the human individual and his or her relation to society: they represent the attempt by earlier generations to come to grips with the social reality in which they found themselves. (1895:2-3) Accordingly, the problems of theology are precisely the problems of philosophy and modern social science. This is Hegel's meaning when he writes, "a reason derived knowledge of God is the highest problem of philosophy", and "God", in turn, "is our true and essential self". (1975:57, 261) The theological arguments of the Fathers of the Church, and those of the mediaeval schoolmen such as Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, were alienated and external to



their real content — the life activity of the human individual — simply because of the undeveloped and alienated nature of their own society. In the world of the schoolmen, for example,

life as a whole fell into two parts, two kingdoms. Directly opposite the spiritual world kingdom there stands the independent worldly kingdom, emperor against pope, papacy and Church ... There the world beyond, here the world beside us ... The culture which now shows itself is confronted by this incomplete reality, as an actual world in opposition to the world of thought; and it does not recognize the one as present in the other. It possesses two establishments, two standards of measure and weight, and these it does not bring together but leaves mutually estranged. (1896:51)

The estranged and irrational character of feudal society found political expression in the Crusades which exhibited all the "frenzy, foolishness and grossness" characteristic of the society which spawned them. The Crusaders, with "utter lack of judgement and forethought, and with the loss of thousands on the way", reached Jerusalem it is true; but why did they go there? The Christians clearly "did not understand themselves"; they went in search of holy spots which had absolutely no relevance to their immediate needs. "Barbarians all the time, they did not seek the universal, the world-controlling position of Syria and Egypt, this central point of the earth, the free connection of commerce ..." "Bonaparte", Hegel wryly continues, "did this when man became rational." The Crusaders were forced "by the Saracens and by their own violence and repulsiveness" to admit that they had "deceived themselves. This experience taught them that they must hold to the actual reality which they despised, and seek in this the realization of their intelligible world". (1896:104) No less than the Crusaders, the schoolmen themselves were reluctant to consider anything in the world of experience to be worthy of real interest. The arts and

sciences alike were banished from the universities; and "law and right, the recognition of actual man, were not esteemed as pertaining to the social relationships of life, but to some other sphere". The rationality of ordinary existence yielded to the "utter barbarism of thought" which "keeps to another world, and does not have the Notion of reason — the Notion that the certainty of self is all truth".

(1896:43)

The alienated form of theology, however, did not prevent it from expressing some fundamental truths — truths which Hegel incorporates into the philosophy of absolute idealism. But before considering these ideas, an alternative conception of Hegel's notions about religion and theology deserves a brief discussion. An example of this alternative conception is available in Charles Taylor's Hegel. Taylor rejects arguments, such as the one I have made above, that Hegel is an atheist for whom "man as a natural being is at the spiritual summit of things". (1976:494) Instead, he sees Hegel as an (unorthodox) Lutheran Christian who is somehow unable to recognize his own heresy. (1976:486) Hegel's "is a genuine third position" between orthodoxy and Enlightenment atheism, "which is why it is so easy to misinterpret". (1976:494) For Taylor, this "third position" means that "... God comes to knowledge of himself through man's knowledge of him". (1976:481) This is correct as far as it goes, except that Taylor does not draw what seems to be the obvious conclusion: if God is only human self-knowledge, then God himself must be human. For what kind of God is He if He cannot even get to know Himself? As Hegel puts it, "... God's becoming man is an essential moment of religion ..." (1895:70); and: "philosophy is knowledge, and it is through

knowledge that man first realizes his original vocation, to be the image of God." (1975:44) Pressed to its conclusion, Taylor's understanding of what he calls Hegel's "bizarre" doctrine (1976:571) is bizarre indeed. "... This process of self-knowledge", writes Taylor,

is one which is slowly and painfully realized through history; for it is part of the self-realization of Geist [or "cosmic spirit" (1976:387)]. And in the early stages, God's self-consciousness will be very rudimentary and inadequate, very distorted one may say. But even in this primitive form, it is recognizably a consciousness of God ..." (1976:481)

It may be "recognizably a consciousness of God", but is it recognizable to anyone as God's consciousness?

Taylor's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of religion has many adherents. Its justification is usually considered to be found in the following passage from the Encyclopaedia:

God is God only so far as he knows himself, his self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God. (1969:298)

Andrew Seth, in a work published in 1892, comments on a similar passage in Hegel, and arrives at an entirely different conclusion from that of Taylor — one which, in fact, corresponds with Marx's idea on the subject.

"God is not a Spirit beyond the stars," says Hegel, "He is Spirit in all spirits." — a true thought finely expressed. But if the system leaves us without any self-conscious existence in the universe beyond that realized in the self-consciousness of individual philosophers, the saying means that God, in any ordinary acceptation of the word, is eliminated from our philosophy altogether." (Seth, 1892:196)

For Seth, as well as for Marx, the conclusion is unavoidable: the Hegelian system "sacrifices ... the best interests of humanity ... to a logical abstraction styled the Idea, in which both God and man disappear". (1892:242)

"God, in any ordinary acceptation of the word", certainly does disappear from Hegel's philosophy, but the human individual does not. It is worth repeating that the individual is the central focus of Hegel's thought: the "very essence" of the absolute "is ... in the individual consciousness". (1894:401) For Hegel, "God" as the absolute essence is definitely an object of philosophy; but "the Absolute ... has not on that account the same signification as is implied in the term God." (1895:25) The pictorial notion of God, in other words, simply concerns the nature of the human individual. The Enlightenment thinkers who argued that God is merely the creation of men and women and that religion should be viewed as "a means, and something practised with a definite end in view" were very close to Hegel's view, but they left out of consideration the actuality of religion, its role as a reflection of, and an active force in society and in the consciousness of the individual. "The true view" of God and religion, remarks Hegel, "and the false one [of the Enlightenment] are here very close together, and the obliquity or error in the latter appears to be only a slight displacement, so to speak, of the former." (1895:102)

Hegel opposes the Enlightenment notion that Christianity in its modern form is merely a foreign mode of thought foisted on the people by a devious Church to protect its own interests and that of the ruling powers. "Such ideas as that the priests have framed a people's Religion in fraud and self-interest are completely absurd; to regard Religion as an arbitrary matter or a deception is as foolish as it is perverted." (1892:62) To be sure, the Church itself is no stranger to corruption and greed; but religion as a form of thought is the

reality as well as the reflection of the society from which it emerges. Religion is an alienated form of consciousness because it represents its object, i.e., God, as something apart from the conscious life and social activity of the human individual. The alienated quality of the religious consciousness explains its reliance on pictorial images and expressions to convey ideas; unable to conceive the world as the product of the thinking activity of human beings, the believer creates a world in the beyond which is then furnished with characters and relationships found in the real, social world. Thus "the pictorial thought of the religious communion ... brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son." (1967:767) Because it appeals to external authority, religion becomes "wooden and unspiritual" (1892:80); its external character, its alienation from the life of the individual, exposes religion to "the will of the deceiving priesthood and the oppressive despot". (1967:562) Lacking the ability to find their real life in their own consciousness and life activity, the faithful are subject to the manipulation of the existing powers.

According to Hegel, the terrific struggle between the Enlightenment and the Church merely represented the split in society between the rising middle class and its aristocratic and religious opponents.

Hegel describes this battle in the Phenomenology:

The sphere of spirit [consciousness and society] at this stage breaks up into two regions. The one is the actual world, that of self-estrangement, the other is that which spirit constructs for itself in the ether of pure consciousness, raising itself above the first. This second world, being constructed in opposition and contrast to that of estrangement, is just on that account not free from it; on the contrary, it is only the other form of that very estrangement, which consists precisely in having a conscious existence in two sorts of worlds, and embraces both. (1967:513)

Marx captures the essence of Hegel's position in his Theses on Feuerbach: "... the fact that the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is really only to be explained by the self-cleavage and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis." (1969, I:14) In later chapters I will deal more closely with Hegel's notion of alienation and its relation to the work of the young and the mature Marx. For now it is only necessary to point out that the religious critique of Feuerbach and the young Marx owes everything to Hegel and contributes little of its own. The following passage from the writings of the young Marx simply repeats Hegel's critique in the Phenomenology:

Man is the human world, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion which is an inverted world consciousness, because they are an inverted world. Religion ... is the fantastic realization of the human being inasmuch as the human being possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly a struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. (1964a:43)

What both Feuerbach and the young Marx fail to grasp is the positive or constructive aspect of religion and alienation; moreover, they overlook the fact that, no less than its religious opposition, the Enlightenment consciousness is also alienated. Marx will later gain access to these Hegelian positions in The German Ideology (1968); they form the foundation of his mature work.

Although Taylor is incorrect in his depiction of Hegel's philosophy of religion, he is right in saying that Hegel takes up a genuine third position between Enlightenment atheism (and Deism) and religious orthodoxy. In what follows, I shall sketch out the main elements in this position and show their connection to what Hegel calls the truths of religious speculation or theology. Hegel defines consciousness as

"the relation of knowledge to its object". (1895:205) Because the religious consciousness arises from the "severance or division of consciousness", it is by definition an alienated consciousness. For Hegel, religion, even in its earliest forms, is symptomatic of the divided or alienated consciousness, because religion always separates the everyday life activities of men and women from the higher realm of divine existence and thought. "In their simple relation", religion and everyday life, observes Hegel,

already constitute two kinds of pursuits, two different regions of consciousness, and we pass to and fro from one to the other alternately only. Thus man has in his actual worldly life a number of working days during which he occupies himself with his own special interests, with worldly aims in general, and with the satisfaction of his needs; and then he has a Sunday, when he lays all this aside, collects his thoughts, and, released from absorption in finite occupations, lives to himself and to the higher nature which is in him, to his true essential being. (1895:7)

According to Hegel, when men and women think about God and religion they are actually thinking about spirit, about social life. When people raise their thoughts to God they are really reflecting on the infinite relations of the intellectual and social world.

In religion man places himself in relation to this centre, in which all relations concentrate themselves, and in doing so he rises up to the highest level of consciousness and to the region which is free from relation to what is other than itself, to something which is absolutely self-sufficient, the unconditioned which is free, and is its own object and end. (1895:2)

For Hegel, thought about the intellectual and social realm is free thought; for it is thought which has itself for an object. The intellectual and social world is the creation of men and women; to conceive this world in all its infinite relations is to engage in absolutely free endeavour.

... Thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one's self. It means a liberation, which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not as something else, but as its own being and creation, in the actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity. (1975:222)

The Enlightenment consciousness denies the existence of this higher (social) realm posited by religion. As suggested above, Rousseau, for example, sees reality in terms of "the arbitrary choice of the individual" (1894:115); he has no notion of the unity of the individual with the higher realm of society, what Hegel calls the unity of the finite and the infinite. Similarly, Kant's philosophy has no social basis; the morality of the individual is conceived in terms of an abstract moral law, the postulate of practical reason. (Hegel, 1895:228) Religion at least retains this concept even if in an alienated form:

A present and actual church is an actuality of the kingdom of God upon earth, in such a way that this last is present for every man — every individual lives and must live in the kingdom of God. In this disposition we have the reconciliation of every individual; thereby each becomes a citizen of this kingdom, and participates in the enjoyment of this certainty. (1896:53-54)

Hegel's philosophy of absolute idealism is aimed precisely at uniting the social dimensions of religion with the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment:

Philosophy demands the unity and intermingling of these two points of view; it unites the Sunday of life when man in humility renounces himself, and the working-day when he stands up independently, is master of himself and considers his own interests. (1892:92)

It was Luther who first expressed the absolute unity of the individual's life activity with worship of the divine; Hegel's philosophy had then only to conceive this unity in rational (non-religious) terms. And it is this unity, as I will argue below, that is carried



forth into the world by Marx and his followers.

What Hegel calls "the highest concrete content of absolute idealism" is precisely the unity of the individual with society.

It is the power which unites in itself what appears to consciousness infinitely removed from one another — the mortal and the absolute. This absolute is itself 'this' first of all concrete, not as abstraction, but as the unity of the universal and the individual; this concrete consciousness [of absolute idealism] is for the first time truth. (1896:42)

But the unity of the individual with society is above all a creative relationship; in their concrete social relations men and women create a social and intellectual world, no less than they create a world of the mind, a world of art, literature and science. Sydney Hook is wrong, therefore, when he expresses an opinion shared by many contemporary Marxists: "Hegel and Marx are agreed that consciousness plays an active role in knowing. They differ as to the nature of consciousness and the degree of its activity. For Marx all thought is human, not absolute; it transforms but it does not create." (1976: 32) Hegel, of course, agrees with Marx that there is a world which exists independently of the mind. For both thinkers, the question is not whether the world is there, but rather how it can be changed.

... Philosophy has to recognize that mind is only for itself by opposing to itself material being, and by leading back what is thus differentiated into unity with itself, a unity mediated by the opposition of material being and the overcoming of it. (Hegel, 1969:145)

With a striking image Hegel elucidates the creative relationship between the individual and society. "The reality of my mind", he writes,

is thus in my Mind itself and not outside of it; it is my real Being, my own substance, without which I am without existence. This reality is, so to speak, the combustible material which may be kindled and lit up by the universal reality as such as objective [i.e.,

society]; and only so far as this phosphorus is in men, is comprehension, the kindling and lighting up, possible. (1892:75)

The problem with both the consciousness of the Enlightenment and that of theology is that they cannot comprehend the creative nature of the relationship of the individual with society. In these two types of thought the consciousness of the individual is essentially passive in relation to the external world. Theology, for example, separates the consciousness of the believer from its object, from God. "The Spirit which bears witness is further distinguished from me as an individual; my testifying spirit is another, and there only remains to me the empty shell of passivity." (1895:42) Hence when Anselm declared he had proved the existence of God by showing that He must be something greater than what can merely be thought, Anselm overlooked the fact that thought itself is the property of the individual human being. Thus the unity of thought and being is found not in God, but in the human being and his or her relation with society.

Though I see the truth of [Anselm's] proposition, I have not attained to the final point, the object of my desire; for there is lacking the I, the inner bond, as awareness of thought. This lies only in the Notion, in the unity of the particular and the universal, of Being and thought. (Hegel, 1896:98)

Before going on to consider further the relationship between absolute idealism and the opposing thought forms of Enlightenment and theology, a point should be made to which I will return in further chapters. If Hegel believes that the freedom of the individual can only be realized in society, he does not suggest that bourgeois or capitalist society can offer the total freedom urged by absolute idealism. Bourgeois society is an advance over earlier social forms but it is not the final answer for humanity: it offers only the

possibility not the reality of freedom. In fact, the abstract principle of the Enlightenment, "the idea of abstract man outside of any relation to others", is simply an expression of the nature of bourgeois society. (1894:209-210) The same connection is made by Marx in a passage in the Grundrisse where he refers to Hegel's notions of the "natural individual", and "civil society".

In this society of free competition, the individual appears detached from the natural bonds etc. which in earlier historical periods make him the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate. Smith and Ricardo still stand with both feet on the shoulders of the eighteenth-century prophets, in whose imaginations this eighteenth-century individual — the product on the one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century — appears as an ideal, whose existence they project into the past. Not as a historic product but as history's point of departure. As the Natural Individual appropriate to their notion of human nature, not arising historically, but posited by nature ... Only in the eighteenth century, do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity. But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is also precisely that of the hitherto most developed social ... relations. (1973:83-84)

Hegel compares the "abstract right" of the isolated individual in modern society "which allows of his acting as such, and yet, as an individual spirit, holds all parts together", with the operation of a factory, which is also an analogy favoured by Marx. For no one in bourgeois society, writes Hegel,

is there properly speaking the consciousness of, or the activity for the whole; but because the individual is really held to be a person, and all his concern is the protection of his individuality, he works for the whole without knowing how. It is a divided activity, in which each has only his part, just as in a factory no one makes a whole, but only a part, and does not possess skill in other departments, because only a few are employed in fitting the parts together.

Hegel is in no danger of confusing bourgeois society with a completely free state where the development of each leads to the development of all, such as in the communist society recommended by Marx. "It is free nations alone", observes Hegel, "that have the consciousness of and activity for the whole; in modern times the individual is only free for himself as such, and enjoys citizen freedoms alone — in the sense of that of a bourgeois and not a citoyen." (1896:209) Capitalism is a necessary stage in the development of human culture; it constitutes an advance over earlier societies and prepares the way for a "communist society", which in Hegel's own words, will give "to each according to his need or in equal portions ..." (1967:447) In a passage worth quoting in full, Hegel outlines an argument that will later be given more concrete expression by Marx.

The freedom of citizens in this signification [bourgeois] is the dispensing of universality, the principle of isolation; but it is a necessary moment unknown to ancient states. It is the perfect independence of the points, and therefore the greater independence of the whole, which constitutes the higher organic life. After the state received this principle into itself, the higher freedom could come forth. These [earlier] states are sports and products of nature which depend upon chance and the caprice of the individual, but now, for the first time, the inward substance and indestructible universality, which is real and consolidated in its parts, is rendered possible. (1894:210)

True freedom cannot exist wherever there is exploitation and inequality as there is in modern day bourgeois society. "The true dominion of spirit", Hegel remarks,

cannot ... be a dominion in the sense that its opposite is in subjection to it; spirit in and for itself cannot have the subjective spirit to which it relates confronting it as an externally obedient slave, for this last is itself also spirit. The dominion which exists must take up this position, that spirit is in subjective spirit in harmony with itself." (1896:47-48)

Nor can freedom exist if one's occupation and class are the result of external circumstances rather than of free and rational choice.

Everyone may make the experiment for himself; he must be allowed to decide regarding his own affairs as subject in a subjective matter, by his own free will, as well as in the consideration of external circumstances; and nothing must therefore be put in his way if he says, for instance: 'I should like to apply myself to study.'  
(1894:110)

The distance between real individual freedom and its inadequate expression in bourgeois society is suggested by Hegel in the Philosophy of Right. "... the concrete concept of freedom", urged by absolute idealism, writes Hegel,

we already possess in the form of feeling — in friendship and love, for instance. Here we are not inherently one-sided, we restrict ourselves gladly in relating ourselves to another, but in this restriction we know ourselves as ourselves. In this determinacy a man should not feel himself determined; on the contrary, since he treats the other as other, it is there that he first arrives at the feeling of his own self-hood. Thus freedom lies neither in indeterminacy nor in determinacy; it is both of these at once. The will which restricts itself simply to a this is the will of the capricious man who supposes that he is not free unless he has this will ... Freedom is to will something determinate, yet in this determinacy to be by oneself and to revert once more to the universal.  
(1976:228-229)

The concept of freedom in absolute idealism is also the one incorporated into Marx's historical materialism. "Only in community [with others]", writes Marx in the German Ideology,

has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only in so far as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one

class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association. (1971:295-296)

According to Hegel, Enlightenment thought, which he also refers to as "finite thought" or the "understanding consciousness", develops out of and in relation to religious consciousness and theology. Although the religious consciousness is alienated or divided within itself, there is at first no realization of this division in the mind of the believer. The religious person in the Middle Ages, for example, accepts religion along with the personal conditions of life "as a lot or destiny which he does not understand. It is so". The individual simply subordinates his or her life to the higher region of God and heaven. But with the development of society and the social relations of the individual, the individual becomes ever more acutely aware of a social and intellectual world of his or her own creation.

Although he sets out from what is, from what he finds, yet he is no longer merely one who knows, who has these rights; but what he makes out of that which is given in knowledge and in will is his affair, his work, and he has the consciousness that he has produced it. Therefore these productions constitute his glory and his pride, and provide for him an immense, an infinite wealth — that world of his intelligence, of his knowledge, of his external possession, of his rights and deeds. (1895:8)

Without being conscious of the process, the individual is building a realm which begins to eat into the world of religion and God. The universe takes on a more and more divided aspect: on one side the individual is free and self-determining; on the other, he or she must submit to what seems now to be an alien power. Gradually the individual comes to distinguish between the human world of knowledge and society, and the other, alien, realm of God. "Its religion is accordingly distinguished from what we have in that region of indepen-

dence [society] by this, that it restricts knowledge, science, to the worldly side, and leaves for the sphere of religion, feeling and faith." (1895:10)

Despite the illusion of independence, however, the relations of the individual in the developing bourgeois society are subject to chance and arbitrariness; furthermore, the individual is acutely aware that he or she is conditioned and determined by society. This feeling of being conditioned is reflected in science and knowledge generally.

Man demands his right; whether or not he actually gets it, is something independent of his efforts, and he is referred in the matter to an Other. In the act of knowledge he sets out from organisation and order of nature, and this is something given. The content of his sciences is a matter outside of him.

The feeling of outward determination, of an order external to the will of the individual, led the thinkers of early bourgeois society, like Descartes, Malebranche and Spinoza (Hegel, 1969:33), to suggest that everything is the creation of God, hoping thereby to get on with the pursuit of science and knowledge. "... The matter", writes Hegel, "is settled with the one admission, that God has made everything, and this religious side is thereby satisfied once for all, and then in the progress of knowledge and the pursuit of aims nothing further is thought of the matter." (1895:10)

At this point there is simply no adequate theory about the relation of religion and God to the social and natural universe: "the relation of God to the other side of consciousness is undetermined and general" and is expressed simply as "God has created all things". But this attitude is "cold and lifeless"; it does not do justice to the fact that everything which constitutes the interests of the individual

are only the objects and products of his or her self-conscious activity. Moreover, if everything is created by God for certain divine ends, how is it that there is so much evil and conflict in the world? "The idea of God and of His manner of operation as universal and necessary is contradicted by this inconsistency, which is even destructive of that universal character." (1895:13) This contradiction leads to the abandonment of God altogether; nothing is recognized except that which can be demonstrated to the consciousness of the individual. Everything is looked at in terms of the categories of cause and effect, and these categories are applied to the universe of individual things and their relations with one another.

... It is no longer sufficient to speak of God as the cause of lightning, or of the downfall of the Republican system of government in Rome, or of the French Revolution; here it is perceived that this cause is only an entirely general one, and does not yield the desired explanation. What we wish to know ... is ... not the reason which applies to all things, but only and exclusively to this definite thing ... Therefore this knowledge does not go above or beyond the sphere of the finite, nor does it desire to do so, since it is able to apprehend all in its finite sphere, is conversant with everything, and knows its course of action. In this manner science forms a universe of knowledge, to which God is not necessary, which lies outside of religion, and has absolutely nothing to do with it ... Of the infinite and eternal, nothing whatever is left. (1895:15)

For this type of thought — the origins of which Marx suggests are to be found in "the men and women of the court of Charles II, Bolingbroke, the Walpoles, Hume, Gibbon, and Charles Fox" (1963:240) — the world has lost its absolute connection in the mind of the individual. God and religion have shrivelled up into an empty kingdom of the Eternal. Everything is seen to be connected one to another, but a unified theory of the universe has died along with God. The opposition between Enlightenment and theology is complete.



If the Enlightenment is a tremendous advance over the religious consciousness, it achieved its position at a terrible cost to the unity of human thought. The Enlightenment consciousness is alienated and divided because it sees the objects of thought as something independent of and given to individual consciousness. The central aim of Hegel's absolute idealism is to recover the unity sacrificed by the understanding consciousness; the truth of reality has to be seen as the product and the result of the conscious activity of individual human beings. Further, the progress and realization of the infinite qualities of the individual have to be apprehended as the chief end and goal of all social development. "While the finite required an Other for its determinateness, the True has its determinateness, the limit, its end in itself; it is not limited through an Other, but the Other is found in itself." (1895:22) The central aim of absolute idealism is also that of Marx's historical materialism. "Communism", declares Marx,

... consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organization is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, in so far as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves ... By the overthrow of the existing state of society by the communist revolution ... and the abolition of private property which is identical with it, this [alien] power will be dissolved; and ... then the liberation of each single individual will be accomplished ... Only then will the separate individuals be liberated from the

various national and local barriers, be brought into practical connexion with the material and intellectual production of the whole world and be put in a position to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth (the creations of man). All-round dependence ... will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them. (1971:294-295)

Hegel argues that religion at least retains the unity of the individual with the universe in the notion of God, who is conceived as the image of the individual. "It is this speculative element which comes to consciousness in religion." (1895:22) Where the Enlightenment thinkers retain a religious consciousness it is only to conceive God as a Supreme Being in the Beyond, "as the Infinite, with regard to which all predicates are inadequate, and are unwarranted anthropomorphisms. In reality, however, it has, in conceiving God as the supreme Being, made him hollow, empty, and poor". (1895:30) Even modern theology has followed the lead of the Enlightenment and has pushed the knowledge of God to the background. "It no longer gives our age any concern that it knows nothing of God; on the contrary, it is regarded as the mark of highest intelligence to hold that such knowledge is not even possible." (1895:36) For Hegel, ignorance of the nature of God "must ... be considered as the last stage in the degradation of man". (1895:36) The degeneration has reached the point where anyone who tries to investigate the nature of religion and God will be either opposed or ignored. Yet Hegel sees it as the duty of absolute idealism to rescue the dogmas of the Church from the awkward hands of the theologians and oppose these dogmas to the finite consciousness of the Enlightenment.

But why is a study of the nature of God so important? The reason is simple: the nature of God is the nature of men and women; to apprehend the qualities of God is to grasp the infinite qualities of the human individual.

... There cannot be two kinds of reason and two kinds of Spirit; there cannot be a Divine reason and a human, there cannot be a Divine Spirit and a human, which are absolutely different. Human reason — the consciousness of one's being — is indeed reason; it is the divine in man, and Spirit, in so far as it is the Spirit of God, is not a spirit beyond the stars, beyond the world ... God is a living God, who is acting and working. (1895:33)

The "acting and working ... living God", of course, is no one other than the real, concrete human individual.

For Hegel, there are three fundamental truths in Christian theology: the notions of redemption and resurrection, and the concept of the Holy Trinity. The first two were treated in detail in the last chapter. The doctrine of redemption for sin is discussed in the section on the Idea of Christianity where it was shown that the doctrine simply expresses the unity of the individual with society and the absolute importance of education and self-development. The doctrine of resurrection and immortality is dealt with in the section on Plato: the idea of everlasting life concerns the eternal nature of human social activity.

Hegel calls the notion of the Trinity, which is derived from Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy, "absolute reality" (1894:383); it "constitutes the essential nature of God" (1894:76). The theological conception of the Trinity is simply "picture thinking", but "in a rational conclusion, however, the main point of its speculative content is the identity of the extremes which are joined to one another; in this," Hegel continues, "it is involved that the subject presented

in the mean is a content which does not join itself with another, but only through the other and in the other with itself". (1894:76) What the notion of the Trinity expresses, then, "in the bare form of ordinary conception" (1894:379) is the essentially creative character of the relation of the individual with society. For Hegel, the human individual — like the Christian God — is

not ... something quiescent, something abiding in empty identicalness but [is] something which necessarily enters into the process of distinguishing itself from itself, of positing its Other [through work in society], and which comes to itself only through this Other, and by positively overcoming it — not by abandoning it. (1969:12)

In other words, the individual in society is the absolute "identity which posits difference".

In the following passage Hegel outlines the conception of the Trinity, but to grasp Hegel's meaning it is important to keep in mind that when he speaks of God creating nature, he is referring only to Kant's notion that the human being comes to nature with certain a priori categories through which the individual is able to comprehend and elucidate its structure.

Theology, as we know, expresses this process [the relationship of the individual with external world] in picture-thinking by saying that God the Father (this simple universal or being-within-self) [i.e., the individual], putting aside his solitariness creates Nature (the being that is external to itself, outside of itself), begets a Son (his other 'I') but in the power of his love beholds in the Other himself, recognizes his likeness therein and returns to unity with himself; but this unity is no longer abstract and immediate, but a concrete unity mediated by the moment of difference [i.e., the unity is that of the individual with nature and society through his or her conscious activity]; it is Holy Spirit which proceeds from the Father and the Son, [the individual in his or her relations with others] reaching its perfect actuality and

truth in the community of Christians [society]; and it is as this that God must be known if He is to be grasped in his absolute truth, and the actual Idea in and for itself [as conscious individual human activity], and not merely in the form of the pure Notion, of abstract being-within-self [the "bad idealism"] or in the equally untrue form of a detached actuality not corresponding to the universality of His Notion [the isolated individual of Enlightenment thinking], but in the full agreement of his Notion and his actuality [the unity of individual consciousness and social being]. (1969:12-13)

The rational form expressed by the Christian notion of the Trinity is outlined in the Lesser Logic, where Hegel discusses the relation between the individual and civil or bourgeois society. It is important to note, however, that for Hegel this relation is only what he calls the "Absolute Mechanism". Bourgeois society has yet to achieve the organic relation between the individual and society which will be achieved only in the rational, or as Marx calls it, the communist state. "... The state", says Hegel,

is a system of three syllogisms. (1) The individual or person, through his particularity or physical or mental needs (which when carried out to their full development give civil society), is coupled with the universal, i.e. with society, law, right, government. (2) The will or action of the individuals is the intermediating force which procures for these needs satisfaction in society, in law, etc., and gives to society, law, etc. their fulfilment and actualization. (3) But the universal, that is to say, the state, government, and law, is the permanent underlying mean in which the individuals and their satisfaction have and receive their fulfilled reality, intermediation, and persistence. Each of the functions of the notion, as it is brought by intermediation to coalesce with the other extreme, is brought into union with itself and produces itself; which production is self-preservation. (1975:264-265)

Hegel puts the relationship between his philosophy of absolute idealism and theology as follows:

Absolute idealism ... though it is far in advance of vulgar realism, is by no means merely restricted to philosophy. It lies at the root of all religion; for

religion too believes the actual world we see, the sum total of existence, to be created and governed by God.

But the God Hegel speaks of is the human individual. Hegel contrasts absolute idealism with Kant's "subjective idealism" for which "the things we know about are to us appearances only, and we can never know their essential nature, which belongs to another world we cannot approach". As Hegel points out, "plain minds have not unreasonably taken exception to this subjective idealism, with its reduction of the facts of consciousness to a purely personal world, created by ourselves alone". (1975:73) Hegel, as I have observed above, accepts Kant's notion that the human mind comes to the outside world with certain a priori categories: "it is a mistake", writes Hegel, "to imagine that the objects which form the content of our mental ideas come first and that our subjective agency then supervenes and frames notions of them." (1975:73) But Hegel carries Kant's argument a step further and suggests that not only do human beings confront nature and reality with a rational consciousness which is self-determining and independent of the action of external objects, men and women also transform nature and create a reality all their own in society. "Nature", writes Hegel, is for man "only the starting point which he has to transform". (1975:44) Kant fails to grasp the social nature of individual human consciousness and therefore constructs an epistemology, as well as a moral theory, based entirely on the Enlightenment notion of the isolated individual. This aspect of Kant's philosophy is criticized by Marx no less than it is by Hegel. Notes Marx,

The characteristic form which French liberalism, based upon real class interests, took in Germany, we find in Kant. Neither he nor the German bourgeoisie whose ideological apologist ... he was, observed that

at the root of these theoretical ideas of the bourgeoisie lay material interests and a class will conditioned and determined by the material relations of production. Kant consequently separates the theoretical expression of these interests from the interests themselves. He transforms the materially motivated will of the French bourgeoisie into a pure self-determination of the free will, of the will in-and-for itself, of the human will. In this way he converts it into a purely ideological determination and moral postulate. (Quoted in Hook, 1976:310)

According to Hegel, the history of religion is the story of the struggle of men and women to overcome external authority and alienation; with the victory over external power won by Christianity, which teaches that "man and God — are one" (1892:105), theology cleared the way for science and philosophy. The stages of religion reflect the stages of society, and the notion of God reflects the position of the individual in society. "In the East only one individual is free, the despot; in Greece the few are free; in the Teutonic world ... all are free, that is, man is free as man." (Hegel, 1892:100) In Eastern society the subjection of the individual is almost complete: "In the brightness of the East the individual disappears." (1892:99) Consequently, the Oriental God is only an abstract spirit in the beyond who inspires the individual with fear in the same way as society itself is based on fear. "The man who lives in fear, and he who rules over men through fear, both stand upon the same platform; the difference between them is only in the greater power of will which can go forth to sacrifice all that is finite for some particular end." (1892:97) The relation between the social subjugation of men and women in Oriental society and Eastern religion is also noted by Marx.

Oriental despotism ... restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional

rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies ... These little communities [which made up Indian society] were contaminated by distinctions of caste, and by slavery, ... they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man into the sovereign of circumstances ... they transformed a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of Hanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow. (1959:480)

By contrast, the Greeks grasped as human consciousness "what they opposed to themselves as the Divine". But, enmeshed in the relations of slave society, the ancients were unable to recognize the absolute creativity and worth of the individual, and urged the subordination of the individual to the state and society. (Hegel, 1969:2) The Greek gods are not apprehended in thought; they are given content through sensuous images and are subject to the limits of this medium itself. The gods are jealous, war among themselves and are prey to the natural forces that influence men and women: "... The medium of sense", Hegel observes, "can only exhibit the totality of mind ... as a circle of independent, mental or spiritual shapes; the unity embracing all the shapes remains, therefore, a wholly indeterminate, alien power over against the gods." (1969:20) In a famous passage, which is undoubtedly much influenced by Hegel, Marx connects Greek mythological art to the undeveloped character of ancient society.

Is the view of nature and social relations on which the Greek imagination and hence Greek [mythology] is based possible with self-acting mule spindles and railways and locomotives and electrical telegraphs? What chance has Vulcan against Roberts & Co., Jupiter against the lightning rod and Hermes against Credit Mobilier? All mythology overcomes and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in the imagination and by the imagination; it therefore vanishes with the advent of real mastery over them. (1973:110)



Unlike the deities of the Orientals and the Greeks, "the Christian God", says Hegel, "is God not known merely, but also self-knowing; he is a personality not merely figured in our minds, but rather absolutely actual." (1975:211) For Hegel, theological arguments about the existence of this "actual" God turn precisely on the nature of the human individual. Accordingly, when theologians began to consider the character of God they found that certain categories like "substance", "necessary essence", "cause which regulates and directs ... according to design" and so on, were appropriate enough for things in the material world like stones, wheelbarrows and watches, but "inadequate to express what is or ought to be understood by God". These concepts refer to "a subordinate level of facts", i.e., inorganic nature and its "merely contingent" qualities. Even the properties of organic nature — "the organic structures, and the evidence they afford of mutual adaptation ..." — even these properties are "incapable of supplying the material for a truthful expression to the idea [of] God." (1975:83-84) Thus religious thinkers were forced to go beyond these categories and adopt ones which approximate the concepts which Hegel applies to the nature of the human mind.

The highest definition of the Absolute is that it is not merely mind in general but that it is mind which is absolutely manifest to itself, self-conscious, infinitely creative mind ... Just as in philosophy we progress from the imperfect forms of mind's manifestation ... to the highest forms of its manifestation, so, too, world history exhibits a series of conceptions of the Eternal, the last of which shows forth the Notion of absolute mind. (1969:19-20)

The Christian notion of the Triune God, "the highest definition of the Absolute", captures the essence of what Hegel calls, "the distinctive determinateness of the Notion of mind, ideality".

(1969:9) Ideality, in turn, is the fundamental category of absolute idealism, for what it expresses is that "Mind ... should not merely be pure thought, but that it should be thought which makes itself objective, and therein maintains itself and is at home with itself."

(1894:382) Ideality concerns the active and creative nature of human thought, what Marx will later call, "revolutionising practice": "the fundamental idea", remarks Hegel, is "Thought which is its own object, and which is therefore identical with its object, with what is thought; so that," as in the Trinity formula, "we have the one and the other, and the unity of both". (1894:382-383) It is through ideality, through the practical activity of men and women in society, that "liberty and happiness are attained for the subject". (1894:385) The concept of ideality expresses the absolute identity of the individual with society; but this identity is creative and transforming — it "is absolute negativity ..." (1969:8)

In Christian theology "God is conceived as making himself an object to Himself, and further, the object remains in this distinction in identity with God; in it God loves Himself." (1895:30) The abstract, differentiating consciousness of the Enlightenment abandons entirely this theological notion of an "identity which posits difference" and settles for pure, lifeless identity, I=I. Absolute idealism, on the other hand, "which is no longer abstract, but which sets out from the faith of man in the dignity of his spirit [my emphasis], and is actuated by the courage of truth and freedom, grasps the truth as something concrete, as fullness of content, as Ideality, in which determinateness — the finite — is contained as a moment". (1895:30) Transforming, creative human practice remains a mystery for

the Enlightenment consciousness, or to what Hegel also calls, the "understanding", or "materialized conception".

To materialized conception existence stands in the character of something solely positive, and quietly abiding within its own limits: though we also know ... that everything finite (such as existence) is subject to change. (Hegel, 1975:137)

The very nature of human individuals — their consciousness and the contradictions contained within it — forces them out of themselves and spurs them on to change and improve their environment. "Such changeableness", Hegel declares,

is to the superficial eye a mere possibility, the realization of which is not a consequence of their own nature. But the fact is mutability lies in the notion of existence, and change is only the manifestation of what implicitly is. The living die, simply because they bear within themselves the germ of death. (1975:137)

According to Hegel, the supreme defect of the understanding consciousness, a term he applies to modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant, is its "obstinacy ... which views the finite as self-identical, not inherently self-contradictory". (1975:165) Later I will show that what Hegel calls the "understanding" is precisely what Marx calls "bourgeois thought", and "bourgeois consciousness". It is a state of mind unable to comprehend that reality is in a state of flux and doomed to be washed away by the future: by the self-conscious activity of individual human beings, by "revolutionising practice". This is what Marx means in Capital when he writes that the Hegelian dialectic,

in its rational form ... is a scandal and an abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinaire spokesmen, because it includes in its positive understanding of what exists a simultaneous recognition of its negation, its inevitable destruction; because it regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion, and therefore grasps its transient aspects as

well; and because it does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary. (1976:103)

## 2. Ideality and Absolute Idealism

Hegel's notion of ideality has been entirely overlooked by Western Marxism, no less than by non-Marxist commentators. The concept of ideality appears in the Phenomenology variously as alienation, estrangement or externalization: but it is precisely the same concept Hegel uses in his later works. "The world", writes Hegel in the Phenomenology, "is objectively existent spirit, which is individual self, that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other, as world, from itself". (1967:770) Similarly the concept of human work or externalization developed in the Phenomenology is simply an aspect of the wider concept of ideality. The poverty of current Western Marxist commentary on Hegel is illustrated by the work of Colletti. According to this writer, absolute idealism means nothing but the union of God with human beings and the world. For Colletti,

The meaning of [Hegel's] argument could not be clearer: God becomes real in the world ... the civil and political institutions of modern bourgeois society ... which to us seem to be historical institutions ... to Hegel appear ... as the presence itself of God in the world — not profane realities but 'mystical objects', not historical institutions but sacraments. (1973:269)

Like Marx, Colletti is indebted to Feuerbach for the basic assumptions of his critique of Hegel. "Pantheism", remarks Feuerbach, "makes God into a present, real and material being ..." and therefore, Hegel's

philosophy "is pantheistic idealism". (1966:24, 30) Feuerbach's reading of Hegel is indeed, as Marx suggests, "extremely poor" (1965:151); and Marx's own failure to question many of the aspects of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel which he absorbed as a young man has left an unfortunate legacy in the writings of Western Marxism. Nevertheless, as I have argued above, Marx — unlike Colletti and others — came to reject Feuerbach's assumption that Hegel is in any way a religious thinker. Marx's reason for doing so, especially regarding Hegel's "pantheism", is a good one; while Hegel never responded directly to the accusation of atheism, except to observe that what is regarded as atheism and what is not is culturally relative (1975:106), he rejects in the strongest terms that his philosophy is a form of pantheism. "To impute Pantheism", Hegel declares,

... is part of the modern habit of mind — of the new piety and new theology. For them philosophy has too much of God: — so much so that, if we believe them, it asserts that God is everything and everything is God. (1969:304)

According to Hegel, pantheism — this "all-one doctrine ... this stale gossip of oneness or identity" (1969:313) — is much more invidious than the charge of atheism.

The imputation of Atheism presupposes a definite idea of a full and real God, and arises because the popular idea does not detect in the philosophical notion the peculiar form to which it is attached [i.e., the creative consciousness of the human individual]. (1969:304)

For the naive critic of absolute idealism, writes Hegel, "each and every secular thing is God. It is only his own stupidity and the falsification due to such misconception, which generates the imagination and allegation of pantheism". (1969:305) Charles Taylor observes that Hegel's system "breaks asunder" and yields "an impossible

conclusion" because Hegel cannot decide between "romantic pantheism" and "orthodox theism". (1976:349) In contrast with Colletti, Taylor at least recognizes the existence of this contradiction, if indeed God, on the ordinary meaning of the term, is present at all in Hegel's philosophy. But the contradiction lies in Taylor's interpretation of Hegel, not in Hegel's philosophy. Notes Hegel,

If any difficulty emerge in comprehending God's relation to the world, [the critics of absolute idealism] at once and very easily escape it by admitting that this relation contains for them an inexplicable contradiction; and that hence, they must stop at the vague conception of such relation, perhaps under the familiar names of e.g. omnipresence, providence, etc. Faith in their use of the term means no more than a refusal to define the conception, or to enter into a closer discussion of the problem. That men and classes of untrained intellect are satisfied with such indefiniteness, is what one expects; but when a trained intellect and interest for reflective study is satisfied, in matters admitted to be of supreme interest, with indefinite ideas, it is hard to decide whether the thinker is really in earnest with the subject. (1969:312)

Colletti observes that the problem of Hegel's philosophy is to get past the abstract notions of finite and infinite which impair the ordinary conception of the relation of God with the world. For this conception, God is at once an object, a finite thing, and also a spirit who resides in the beyond, an infinite being. "The terms of the problem to be solved by idealism", says Colletti,

are all here ... In order to comprehend the infinite in a coherent fashion, the finite must be destroyed, the world annihilated ... [But] once the finite is expunged ... the infinite can pass over from the beyond to the here and now, that is, become flesh and take on earthly attire. (1973:12)

This is how Colletti arrives at the conclusion that absolute idealism is actually pantheism.

The 'principle' of idealism has been actualized. In place of the world now annihilated, one has substituted

the 'true' reality. It is not, however, the Revolution that has taken place but the <sup>1</sup>transubstantiation.  
(Colletti, 1973:19)

The problem of absolute idealism — once it is recognized that for Hegel God is the human individual — is here correctly posed: to posit the unity between God and the world left open both by the Enlightenment thinkers and by a theology which makes God at once finite and infinite — a unity, as Hegel observes, "to be called incomprehensible by the agnostic". (1969:311) Absolute idealism, he writes, "certainly has to do with unity in general, it is not however with abstract unity, mere identity, and the empty absolute, but with concrete unity (the notion) ..." In other words, Hegel's philosophy is concerned with unity as contradiction, as "the unity which posits difference": "... Each step in [the] advance [of philosophy] is a particular term or phase of this concrete unity, and ... the deepest and last expression of unity is the unity of absolute mind itself."  
(Hegel, 1969:311)

The unity of absolute mind or reason is precisely the unity of theory and practice urged by Marx in his Theses on Feuerbach: "Theoretical and practical mind", states Hegel,

reciprocally integrate themselves ... Both modes of mind are forms of Reason, for both in theoretical and practical mind what is produced, — though in different ways — is that which constitutes Reason, a unity of subjectivity and objectivity. (1969:185-186)

Ideality — the key term in Hegel's absolute idealism and the basis of what he calls the unity of theory and practice — makes its first appearance in the "Doctrine of Being" in the Lesser Logic where Hegel indirectly explains why he calls his philosophy absolute idealism. Hegel claims that there is no distinction between the finite and the

infinite, or at least the distinction between them as comprehended by the Understanding is incorrect. "... The truth of the finite is rather its ideality ... This ideality of the finite is the chief maxim of philosophy; and for that reason every genuine philosophy is idealism." (1975:140) For Hegel,

... the assumption of a rigid opposition between finite and infinite is false ... in point of fact the infinite eternally proceeds out of itself, and yet does not proceed out of itself ... the finite itself is the first negative, the non-finite is the negative of that negation, the negation which is identical with itself and thus at the same time the true affirmation. (1975:138)

Translated into prose, this means that the individual in society is at once determined by and creates through his or her work — or negativity — the actuality of society. "... The concrete [the individual in society] is the universal which makes itself particular, and in this making of itself particular and finite yet remains eternally at home with itself." (Hegel, 1894:381)

Earlier in the Lesser Logic, Hegel declares that

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, idealized. (1975:69; my emphasis)

Here is the true meaning for "idealize" and "ideality" which Colletti mistakes for the notion that "the world has disappeared. That which seemed finite, in reality is infinite. An independent material world no longer exists". (Colletti, 1973:19) According to Hegel, "when reality is explicitly put as what it implicitly is, it is at once seen to be ideality"; in other words, ideality is the unity of theory and practice achieved by concrete human sensuous activity. "Hence", observes Hegel,



ideality has not received its proper estimation, when you allow that reality is not all in all, but that an ideality must be recognized outside it. Such an ideality [i.e., God] external to it or it may be even beyond reality, would be no better than an empty name. (1975:141)

For Hegel, ideality — active human consciousness and practice — exists not outside the world but in it; its presence is felt everywhere in nature as well as society. But ideality without human sensuous activity, as expressed in the "bad idealism" which sees everything in terms of non-materialized thought, is abstract and void — a nullity. "Ideality", Hegel declares, "only has a meaning when it is the ideality of something: but this something is not a mere indefinite this or that, but existence characterized as reality, which if retained in isolation, possesses no truth." (1975:141)

As the fundamental category of mind or human consciousness, ideality is what separates human beings from the rest of nature. "The distinction between Nature and Mind is not improperly conceived, when the former is traced back to reality, and the latter to ideality as the fundamental category." Ideality is the expression of human self-consciousness or being-for-self: "Being-for-self may be described as ideality, just as Being there-and-then was described as reality." The 'I' of the human being is, according to Hegel, "the reference to self which is infinite and at the same time negative"; in other words, the 'I' stands for a particular person and also his or her active relationship with other individuals, nature and society. "Man", says Hegel,

is distinguished from the animal world, and in that way from nature altogether, by knowing himself as 'I'; which amounts to saying that natural beings never attain a free Being-for-self, but as limited to Being-there-and-then, are always and only a Being-for-another. (1975: 141)

Hegel's notion of Being-for-self and ideality is related to "Being Determinate" which he calls, "the truth of ... Alteration". (1975: 145) Alteration, in turn, refers to work, to the transforming power of human practice. "Alteration ... exhibits the inherent contradiction which originally attaches to determinate being, and which forces it out of its bounds." (1975:137)

Ideality is the truth of identity, a truth, as we have seen, first arrived at by theology which sees God not only as the One God (the individual), but also as the infinitely creative and transforming power. "Identity in its truth, as an ideality of what immediately is, is a high category for our religious modes of mind as well as all other forms of thought and mental activity." The notion of God as ideality "is to see that all the power and the glory of the world sinks into nothing in God's presence, and subsists only as a reflection of his power and glory". (Hegel, 1975:168) To view God as ideality is precisely to grasp the true nature of human "revolutionising practice": "In the same way Identity, as self-consciousness, is what distinguishes man from nature, particularly from the brutes which never reach the point of comprehending themselves as 'I', that is, pure self-contained unity." (Hegel, 1975:168) The revolutionizing potential of human self-conscious activity is captured in the phrase of the Church, "sic transit gloria mundi", no less than it is by Shelley:

I met a traveller from an antique land  
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert ...  
 And on the pedestal these words appear:  
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(P. B. Shelley: "Ozymandias")

For Hegel, the activity of the 'I', the activity of the self-identical human being is what stands in the way of absolute authority, as well as the abstract identity of the Enlightenment or the Understanding. Identity and the other so-called laws of thought, such as that of the "excluded middle", are important and indeed vital for the finite, non-human, sciences and other branches of knowledge. But they are unable to account for the creative movement, the inner dialectic, of human thought and activity. In formal logic, notes Hegel,

... the identity of the understanding which allows nothing to contradict itself is fundamental. However little this logic of the finite may be speculative in nature, yet we must make ourselves acquainted with it, for it is everywhere discovered in finite relationships. There are many sciences, subjects of knowledge &c., that know and apply no other forms of thought than these forms of finite thought, which constitutes in fact the general method of dealing with the finite sciences.  
(1975:222-223)

A recent writer is wrong, therefore, when he suggests that Hegel lacks "a clear understanding of the nature of logic and theories, and between logics and the interrelated causal patterns of the world". (Mussachia, 1977:273) It is not that Hegel misunderstands formal logic, it is simply that he believes it can play no valid role in the comprehension of human consciousness and society. Consequently, Hegel's Logic is aimed precisely at constructing a methodology and a theory of human social activity. Lenin makes this point in his commentary on Hegel: "When Hegel endeavours — sometimes even huffs and puffs", remarks Lenin,

— to bring man's purposive activity under the categories of logic, saying that this activity is the "syllogism" ... that the subject (man) plays the role of a "member" in the logical "figure" of that "syllogism", and so on,

— THEN THAT IS NOT MERELY STRETCHING A POINT, A MERE GAME. THIS HAS A VERY PROFOUND, PURELY MATERIALISTIC CONTENT. (1963:190; Lenin's capitals)

Failure to grasp the "materialist" content of Hegel's philosophy, or rather, the inability to see that absolute idealism and ideality are concerned precisely with human theory and practice, has led to much confusion in Marxist and non-Marxist accounts of Hegel. One aspect of this confusion is that when certain writers actually manage to comprehend the meaning of particular passages in Hegel, they see these passages as somehow discontinuous with the thread of his argument. Thus Mussachia, the writer quoted above, interprets Hegel's "absolute idea" as "the Universal of universals, a pure conscious-conceptual essence which is the source of all and which reunites with itself in the historical development of man's religio-philosophical thought". (1977:273) This interpretation of Hegel leads Mussachia to note that

In reading Hegel it is fascinating to see how his rationality brings systematization to his irrationality by stretching and twisting the meanings of practically every one of his philosophical concepts. In other words, it appears that the struggle between an implicit rationality and an overt irrationality was an underlying, cognitive cause of much of the obscurity and ambiguity of Hegel's philosophy. (1977:273-274)

There is no denying the difficulty of Hegel's thought, and especially his peculiar manner of expressing it. Yet it is hard to resist the observation that many interpreters of Hegel take it as a higher mark of intellectual achievement to dismiss his philosophy as obscure and irrational, than to attempt to discover its actual meaning and coherence.

Aristotle developed the ordinary logic of the Understanding, but Hegel attributes to him also the discovery of the significance of

ideality. In his discussion of what he sees as Aristotle's development of the notion of ideality, Hegel emphasizes the element of human labour-power; a concept later to be made the foundation of Marx's Capital. For Aristotle, "the energy of thinking and the object of thought are the same"; but this identity "is ... no dry identity of the understanding". (Hegel, 1894:148-149) According to Aristotle, thought alone is the "unmoved mover"; thought is the ultimate source of activity. But thought also constitutes the unity between the activity itself and the content and object of activity. Aristotle lived in the bustling trade and manufacturing city-state of Athens. His problem in searching for an unmoved mover, as he called it, was to explain the nature and characteristics of human activity in connection with the simple tools and machinery employed in the products of Greek artistry and design.

Aristotle argues that activity is imperfect if it does not contain its end in itself. That is, activity as true or perfect activity is the action of self-identical human beings guided by their own rational consciousness. Men and women use tools to change and transform their external environment — tools are employed to serve the particular ends of those who invent and use them. But tools themselves lack in their inner nature what makes them tools: they cannot act of themselves, but require a human master and designer. Hegel quotes Aristotle as follows:

... "Suppose that an instrument, such as an axe, were the natural body, this form, this axehood, would be its substance, and this its form would be its soul, for if this were to be taken away from it, it would no longer be an axe, the name only would remain. But soul is not the substantial form and Notion of such a body as an axe, but of a body [the human individual — D.M.] which has

within itself the principle of movement and rest."  
(Hegel, 1894:183)

What is true of the tool or instrument of production is equally true of the raw material on which it is employed. "'Brass'", notes Aristotle,

'is in capacity a statue; yet the motion to become a statue is not a motion of the brass so far as it is brass, but a motion of itself, as the capacity to become a statue. Hence this activity is an imperfect one ...' i.e. it has not its end within itself, 'for mere capacity whose activity is movement is imperfect'.  
(Quoted in Hegel, 1894:163)

Human thought and purposive activity — ideality — constitutes the energy which links the subject and object of labour into the unity of the product. Hegel observes that for Aristotle

Thought, as being the unmoved which causes motion, has an object, which, however, becomes transformed into activity, because its content is itself something thought, i.e. a product of thought, and thus altogether identical with the activity of thinking. The object of thought is first produced in the activity of thinking, which in this way separates the thought as an object.  
(1894:147)

What this means is simply that thought as the design or purpose of the human subject is brought into reality as a product of labour through the machine- or tool-assisted activity of the person on the object of that activity. Hegel makes this concept of human thinking activity the programmatic basis of his whole philosophy: "The Act", writes Hegel,

thus is really one, and it is just this unity of difference which is the concrete. Not only is the act concrete, but also the implicit [the inner plan or design], which stands to action in the relation of the subject which begins, and finally the product is just as concrete as the action or as the subject which begins. (1892:24)

The absolute Idea, the notion of freedom, is "concrete" precisely because it is this "unity of difference": it is the ideal men and

women carry around in their heads, and also the reality they construct and strive to realize in society through their concrete, sensuous activity, their ideality. "Thus the Idea", notes Hegel, "is in its content concrete within itself, and this in two ways: first it is concrete potentially, and then it is its interest that what is in itself should be there for it." (1892:26)

The echoes of Hegel's notion of ideality and his discussion of Aristotle reverberate throughout the whole of Capital. Consider, for example, the following passage in Chapter VII of Volume I, "The Labour Process and the Valorisation Process":

In the labour process, man's activity via the instruments of labour effects an alteration in the object of labour which was intended from the outset. The process is extinguished in the product. The product of the process is a use value, a piece of natural material adapted to human needs by means of a change in form. Labour has become bound up in its object: labour has been objectified, the object has been worked on. What on the side of the worker appeared as unrest ... now appears, on the side of the product, in the form of being ..., as a fixed immobile characteristic. The worker has spun, and the product is a spinning. (1976:287)

Aristotle taught that machinery and tools, no less than the raw materials as they are transposed into the finished product of labour, are nothing but the result of human practice or ideality. Men and women, then, have the power and ability to create through thought the tools and machinery which then operate directly on the object of labour. For Hegel, the modern factory, with its complex machinery which operates directly on the raw material of production under the guidance of the human operator, is the historical culmination of Aristotle's ruminations on the unmoved mover. Marx shares Hegel's view, but he also points out the less desirable features of the employment of machinery under capitalism. Writes Marx,

"If", dreamed Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, "if every tool, when summoned, or even by intelligent anticipation, could do the work that befits it, just as the creations of Daedalus moved of themselves, or the tripods of Hephaestus went of their own accord to their sacred work, if the weavers' shuttles were to weave of themselves, then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master craftsmen, or of slaves for the lords." And Antipater, a Greek poet of the time of Cicero, hailed the water-wheel for grinding corn, that most basic form of all productive machinery, as the liberator of female slaves and the restorer of the golden age. Oh those heathens! They understood nothing of political economy and Christianity ... They did not, for example, comprehend that machinery is the surest means of lengthening the working day. They may perhaps have excused the slavery of one person as a means to the full human development of another. But they lacked the specifically Christian qualities which would have enabled them to preach the slavery of the masses in order that a few crude and half-educated parvenus might become "eminent spinners", "extensive sausage-makers" and "influential shoe-black dealers". (1976:533)

According to Hegel, the modern factory which developed under the impetus of the British industrial revolution is an expression of "the cunning of reason". As he puts it in the Lesser Logic,

... Purposive action, with its Means [of production], is still directed outwards, because the End [the plan for the finished product of labour] is also not identical with the object, and must consequently first be mediated with it. The Means in its capacity as object stands, in this second premise, in direct relation to the other extreme of the syllogism, namely, the material or objectivity which is presupposed [i.e., the raw material]. This relation is the sphere of chemism and mechanism [i.e., the chemical and mechanical processes now understood and brought into practical use by modern science], which have now become the servants of the Final Cause [the human individual], where lies their truth and free notion. Thus the Subjective End [the purpose or plan of the individual], which is the power ruling over these processes [of production], in which the objective things wear themselves out on one another, contrives to keep itself free from them, and to preserve itself in them. Doing so, it appears as the Cunning of reason. (1975:272)



It is an expression of the state of Hegelian scholarship, and especially that of Western Marxism, that Marx's use in Capital of the following quotation from Hegel on the "cunning of reason" to refer to the labour process has gone unexplained.

Reason is as cunning as it is powerful. Cunning may be said to lie in the intermediate action which, while it permits the objects to follow their own bent and act upon one another till they waste away, and does not itself directly interfere in the process, is nevertheless working out its own aims. (Quoted in Marx, 1976:285)

Marx uses the quotation as a reference for a passage directly influenced by Hegel's account of the labour process in the Lesser Logic. "An instrument of labour", observes Marx,

is a thing, or a complex of things, which the worker interposes between himself and the object of his labour and which serves as a conductor, directing his activity onto that object. He makes use of the mechanical, physical and chemical properties of some substances in order to set them to work on other substances as instruments of his power, and in accordance with his purposes. (1976:285)

Although this reference to Hegel by Marx is of utmost importance, Marcuse (1973) and Colletti (1973) do not even refer to it, and Hook in From Hegel to Marx only observes that it is "in an interesting connection" (1976:37) — which connection, however, Hook neglects to discuss. Charles Taylor fails to notice that the passage from Hegel has to do with the labour process and provides a nonsensical interpretation of its meaning. Hegel, says Taylor,

invokes here ... his famous image of the "cunning of reason" by which the higher purpose makes use of the lower level principles in encompassing its end. Rather than working directly on its object, the higher purpose slips another object between itself and what it wants to transform. If it were to enter directly into the interaction of things, it would be a particular thing itself and would go under like all such things. But it cunningly saves itself from

this fate by having its work done for it by the mechanical interaction of things in the world.  
(1976:326)

In his reference to Hegel's "cunning of reason", Marx omits the last few sentences of the passage which refer to the meaning commonly associated with Hegel's use of the term:

With this explanation, Divine Providence may be said to stand to the world and its processes in the capacity of absolute cunning. God lets men do as they please with their particular passions and interests; but the result is the accomplishment of — not their plans, but his, and these differ directly from the ends primarily sought by those whom he employs. (Hegel, 1975:273)

But Hegel is no more suggesting that God is the reason behind history, than that God is the moving force behind the labour process. As I will show in the concluding chapter, the cunning of reason, in this meaning of the term, simply refers to the historical process through which the ideality of men and women eventually creates the possibility and actuality of freedom in modern society. Again, it is useful to recall the analogy of the Idea of the automobile used in Chapter 3. The automobile was in no way the actuating force behind the invention of the wheel; but seen from the standpoint of the present, the wheel was a necessary element in the "divine plan" of the automobile.

For Hegel, the means of production and the raw material on which they are employed are only "ideal" — that is, the result and object of human ideality, or human labour-power. Through the development of industry men and women exercise their dominion over chemical and mechanical processes: science is employed rationally in the productive processes under capitalism. Further, the tremendous productive forces developed under the bourgeois mode of production, including its employment of science and technology, make possible for the first

time in human history the final subjugation of nature to human design.

"Through this process," states Hegel,

... there is made explicitly manifest what was the notion of design: viz. the implicit unity of subjective and objective is now realized. And this,

Hegel continues, "is the Idea." (1975:274) Like Hegel, Marx also recognizes the historical impact of the development of the bourgeois mode of production. "The bourgeoisie", writes Marx in the Communist Manifesto,

during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour? (1959:12)

In following chapters I will discuss more fully what Hegel means by the Idea or truth, but his notion of truth means more than the mere correspondence between a thing and our image of it. On Hegel's definition, truth means the unity of thought and being as obtained through human practice or ideality. "... Truth", as Hegel says, "can only be where it makes itself its own result." (1975:274) Thus, the Idea is precisely the union of theory and practice obtained through ideality.

The definition which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute. All former definitions come back to this. The Idea is the Truth: for Truth is the correspondence of objectivity with the notion — not, of course, the correspondence of external things with my conceptions, for these are only correct conceptions held by me, the individual person. (1975:275)

The Idea of absolute idealism is dialectical, that is, it is the

dynamic self-creation of human self-conscious activity: "... it is the free notion giving character to itself, and that character, reality." (1975:275)

No less than the categories of human thought, the stages of human development and the modes of production belonging to them are the creations of human ideality. This is why Hegel in the Lesser Logic connects the emergence of the absolute Idea with the development of the bourgeois mode of production. But as creations of ideality, the forms of society are subject to unrest and progressive change in the same manner as the human consciousness which gives rise to them. "The stages ... are not, when so distinguished, something permanent, resting upon themselves. They have proved to be dialectical; and their only truth is that they are dynamic elements of the idea." (1975:276) The Idea is the formative element of society, but only because it is also the possession of each living individual within it. As Hegel puts it, "When we hear the Idea spoken of, we need not imagine something far away beyond this mortal sphere. The idea is rather what is completely present; and it is found, however confused and degenerated in every consciousness." (1975:276) Somewhat the same notion is expressed by Marx in the German Ideology, although Marx is here unaware of its similarity with that of Hegel.

The ideas and thoughts of people were, of course, ideas and thoughts about themselves and their relationships, their consciousness of themselves and of people in general — for it was the consciousness not merely of a single individual but of the individual in his interconnection with the whole of society and about the whole of the society in which they lived. (1968:198)

For Hegel, and — as I will argue — for Marx as well, the social individual is the identical subject-object of history; he or she is

both determined by and the creator of society and its objective forms.

"Only the notion itself", writes Hegel, referring to the human individual,

is free and the genuine universal: in the Idea, therefore, the specific character of the notion is only the notion itself — an objectivity [i.e., society] into which it, being the universal, continues itself, and in which it has only its own character, the total character. The Idea is the infinite judgement, of which the terms are severally the independent totality; and in which, as each grows to the fullness of its own nature, it has thereby at the same time passed into the other [i.e., into society]. (1975:278)

### 3. Protestantism, Absolute Idealism and "Revolutionising Practice"

According to Hegel, knowledge of the human mind is "the highest, hardest, just because it is the most 'concrete' of sciences". The goal of this science explains its difficulty: "the aim of all genuine science is just this, that mind shall recognize itself in everything in heaven and earth. An out-and-out Other simply does not exist for mind." (1969:1) The forms of religion are also the forms of human ideality; they are the creations of men and women in their endeavour to comprehend the absolute. The aim of religion, like all forms of human knowledge, "is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is, to find ourselves at home in it: which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the notion — to our innermost self". (1975: 261) For Hegel, the Protestant religion is the highest form of the religious consciousness; through it, philosophy as well as industry

and commerce were given freedom and added impetus in the modern world. With the defeat of the Roman Catholic Church by Protestantism in northern Europe and the advent of secular government, writes Hegel, in a passage which anticipates Weber's argument in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1958; originally published 1904-5) by almost a century,

With this commerce and the arts are associated. It is implied in the arts that man brings what is divine out of himself; as artists were at one time so pious that as individuals they had self-abnegation as their principle, it was they from whose subjective abilities these representations [of the nascent bourgeoisie] were produced. With this is connected the circumstance that the secular knew that it had in itself the right to such determinations as are founded on subjective freedom. In his handicraft the individual is taken in reference to his work, and is himself the producer. Thus men came to the point of knowing that they were free, and insisting on the recognition of that freedom, and having the power of exercising their activity for their own objects and interests ... The man who was moved to seek what was moral and right ... looked round about him ... The place which was pointed out to him is himself, his inner life, and external nature. (1896:106)

The Christian doctrine in its original form, with its emphasis on the individual's unity with Christ, "first gave to human consciousness a perfectly free relationship to the infinite and thereby made possible the comprehensive knowledge of mind in its absolute infinitude". (1969:2) But in the Roman Catholic Church as it was constituted in the Middle Ages, this "perfectly free relationship" was impossible; Christian doctrines were interpreted for the individual by the priests in the name of the Church. The Bible, written in Latin and available only to the initiated, was unknown to the common people except from on high. The revolution effected by Protestantism concerned precisely the presentation of religion to the ordinary

individual. The principle of Protestantism "is simply this, that it led man back to himself, and removed what was alien to him, in his language especially". (1894:114)

Protestantism everywhere cleared away the barriers which separate the individual from God; the Saints and the priesthood were alike overthrown; the Virgin was pushed from Her place as the mediator between the believer and God. But the greatest revolution was to make available the teachings of Christianity in the language of the faithful. For Luther "to have translated the book on which their faith is grounded, is one of the greatest revolutions that could have happened". (1896:114) It is interesting to observe that Marxism itself, the most influential and revolutionary doctrine in human history, itself owes a great debt to Luther's translation of the Bible, since — as Praver informs us — "the vocabulary, phrasing, rhythm, and characters of Luther's Bible are recalled again and again in Marx's own prose". (1976:316)

Nor was this revolutionary transformation — reflected and encouraged as it was by Luther's Bible — limited to religion alone. "Italy", writes Hegel, "in the same way obtained grand poetic works when the vernacular came to be employed by such writers as Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch." But, Hegel adds significantly, "Petrarch's political works were ... written in Latin." (1894:114) The abolition of the believer's estrangement from God meant also that servitude in religion disappeared. Men and women no longer prostrated themselves before God, or fell upon their knees. Mumbling unknown prayers in a foreign tongue no longer characterized religious worship in the same way as men and women ceased "to study the sciences in such". (1896:150)

Consciousness of their oneness with God led people to question the authority of rulers who claimed that they were responsible to God alone. The overthrow of the priests led to the overthrow of kings. As Hegel observes with regard to the seventeenth-century English Revolution,

the distinction between priests and laymen does not exist among Protestants, and priests are not privileged to be the sole possessors of divine revelation, and still less does there exist any such privilege which can belong exclusively to a layman. To the principle of the divine authorisation of the ruler there is accordingly opposed the principle of this same authorisation which is held to be inherent in the laity in general. Thus there arose a Protestant sect in England, the members of which asserted that it had been imparted to them by revelation how the people ought to be governed, and in accordance with the directions thus received from the Lord, they raised the standard of revolt, and beheaded their king. (1895:249)

The birth of Protestantism, which in turn reflects the development of individual consciousness, finds its basis for Hegel in the development of private property along with the social relations of the individual in the Middle Ages. "Possession, personal property, is ... a part of what pertains to man; it is by his own will"; as such, it is connected with the evolution of "Freedom, conscience [which] belong also to man". (Hegel, 1895:245) The dialectical relationship of the development of the notion of freedom with the emergence of capitalism and free enterprise is emphasized, of course, by Marx:

... Greek society was founded on the labour of slaves, hence had as its natural basis the inequality of men and of their labour powers. The secret of the expression of value, namely the equality and equivalence of all kinds of labour because and in so far as they are human labour in general, could not be deciphered until the concept of human equality had already acquired the permanence of a fixed popular opinion. This however becomes possible only in a society where the commodity-form is the universal



form of the product of labour, hence the dominant social relation is the relation between men as possessors of commodities. (Marx, 1976:152)

Hegel argues, as we have seen, that the revolution in language was one of the major achievements of the Reformation. Language is the vehicle of consciousness, the means for its manifestation. "Manifestation", Hegel explains, "is Being for Other ... What is for an 'Other', exists for this reason in a sensuous form ... thought is only capable of being communicated by the one to the other through the sensuous medium of sign or speech, in fact, by bodily means." (1895:81) By liberating the Bible for all men and women, Protestantism liberated the whole world of literature, politics, science and philosophy for the individual. "In speech", notes Hegel,

man is productive; it is the first externality that he gives himself, the simplest form of existence that he reaches in consciousness. What man represents to himself he inwardly places before himself as spoken. This first form is broken up and rendered foreign if man is in an alien tongue to express or conceive to himself what concerns his highest interest. This breach with the first entrance of consciousness is accordingly removed; to have one's own right to speak and think in one's language really belongs to liberty. This is of infinite importance, and without this form of being-at-home-with-self subjective freedom could not have existed. (1896:150)

Hegel's observations on the importance of language are taken up by Marx in The German Ideology. "Language", says Marx,

is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. (1968:42)

After this passage, Marx crosses out the following words, probably to avoid any truck with "idealism": "My relationship to my surroundings is my consciousness." (1968:42) But Hegel's influence crops up again further on; "neither thoughts nor language in themselves form a realm

of their own ... they are only manifestations of actual life."

(1968:504)

The social and revolutionary significance Hegel finds in the Reformation has become an object of modern historical science. Engels, in his classic Peasant War in Germany was among the first after Hegel to grasp this significance, although he presents Protestantism and Christianity as external forms which almost by coincidence can be used to express real concepts like liberty and freedom. According to Engels, for example, Thomas Munzer preached his radical doctrines "mostly in a covert fashion under the cloak of Christian phraseology". (1967:46) Engels's interpretation of the relationship between religion and reality is embraced by Christopher Hill, who contrasts the "materialist" with the "theological" aspects of Winstanley's writings, and describes Winstanley's "astonishing", because radical, interpretation of Biblical sources as "a remarkable feat". (1975:139, 142, 148) Hegel, however, rejects this account of the relationship between religion and reality. Christianity, like other forms of popular conception, is not a "cloak", but an integral aspect of the believing consciousness: to see it as such requires insight as well as imagination. Greek mythology, for instance,

is not a mere cloak ... it is not merely that the thoughts were there and concealed. This may happen in our reflecting times; but the first poetry does not start from a separation of prose and poetry. If philosophers used myths, it was usually the case that they had the thoughts and then sought the images appropriate to them. (Hegel, 1892:87)

If men and women use religious images to express thoughts, it is only because their consciousness has not developed to the point at which they can express themselves purely in the form of theoretical concepts.

In his discussion of Christianity and Protestantism, Hegel is simply pushing the materialist thesis that people's consciousness is determined by their environment to its logical conclusion: if the relationship is valid, then even the Bible — this most mystical of mental productions — must have reference to reality, and must speak even now to the real concerns of concrete, living human beings.

Hegel's interpretation of religion has the advantage over more orthodox views in that it better explains the tenacity with which religion has gripped, and continues to exert influence over, the human mind.

Recently S. S. Praver has noted the connection between Marxism and religion:

... As philosophers of religion have increasingly come to recognize, Marx is himself working out a system that draws a good deal of its strength, its grandeur, and its pathos, from a recollection of the eschatological pattern that underlies the great religions of Europe and Asia ... It is not difficult to discern in Marx's later work — with its demand for righteousness, its stern judgement of existing society, the vision of the battle between Good and Evil, its hope of an absolute end to historical processes as we know them — a return to the tradition of the Hebrew prophets. (1976:287)

Marxism, however, is in no way a "return" to the "deeper and truer spirit of Judaism". (Praver, 1976:328) Marxism simply expresses the rational core of the myths and images through which earlier men and women manifested their thoughts.

Hegel's contention that Protestantism represents the highest point reached by the religious consciousness in expressing the freedom and infinite rights of the individual has drawn criticism of his "Protestant bias" from Plamenatz\* and other scholars. Hegel, however,

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\* Plamenatz writes that "In England, and more particularly in Oxford, we are not trained to make the best of such a thinker as Hegel. We are easily put off by his arrogance and obscurity, and we are

is simply referring to the world-historical role of Protestantism, not its current form. Marx, who has never been accused of a bias toward Protestantism, echoes Hegel's analysis in a passage where he compares the Protestant critique of Catholicism with the struggle of the bourgeoisie with the forces of feudalism.

In so far as the bourgeois economy did not mythologically identify itself altogether with the past, its critique of the previous economies, notably of feudalism, with which it was still engaged in direct struggle, resembled the critique which Christianity levelled against paganism, and also that of Protestantism against Catholicism. (1973:106)

Far from glorifying the Protestant Church, Hegel sees the development of Protestantism "partly, no doubt, as a separation from the Catholic Church, but partly as a reformation from within. There is a mistaken idea that the Reformation only effected a separation from the Catholic Church; Luther just as truly reformed the Catholic Church". (1896:158) Moreover, for Hegel, Protestant theology is much inferior to that of Catholicism precisely because Protestantism has been shorn of the rich Roman Catholic heritage of Greek philosophy and its principle of subjective freedom.

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disgusted by the poverty or (as it seems to us) the dishonesty of his arguments. His faults strike us first and blind us to his virtues." (1976:202) It must come as a surprise to those familiar with the institution of Oxford and its products that "arrogance and obscurity" are foreign to its temperament. But Plamenatz is probably right about its blindness, and over-sensitivity to the faults of writers with whom it disagrees. Plamenatz, who has written one of the few books in the English language which manages to make some sense out of Hegel, brings to mind something Marx once wrote about John Stuart Mill: "On a level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the insipid flatness of our present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its 'great intellects'." (Marx, 1976:654)

Even to the present day we shall find in the Catholic Church and in her dogmas the echoes, and so to speak the heritage of the philosophy of the Alexandrian school; in it there is much more that is philosophic and speculative than in the dogmatism of Protestantism ... (Hegel, 1896:152)

In this connection, Hegel counsels against a merely "critical, philological and historical exegesis" of the writings of the New Testament. Such treatment is "perfectly barren" and assumes the content of the Bible "were really retained only in the form of history". The New Testament contains a speculative or theoretical treatment of the nature of the human mind and its relation to society: to approach it as simply an historical account, therefore, "is a wrong beginning of a wooden and unyielding exegesis". (1896:152-153) Hegel observes that there are two ways to treat the life of Jesus; the first is to see him as a supernatural spirit present in everyone. The second is to view him as an historical personage only: "... Here this present, indwelling Christ retreats two thousand years to a small corner of Palestine, and is an individual historically manifested far away at Nazareth or Jerusalem." The second point of view, according to Hegel, is undoubtedly closest to the truth; but it misses in the notion of Christ the actual spirituality and divinity of reason in the individual human being that his image was meant to express.

The man who speaks of the merely finite, of merely human reason, and of the limits to mere reason, lies against the Spirit [the actual social quality and power of human consciousness and its knowledge], for the Spirit as infinite and universal, as self-comprehension, comprehends itself not in a "merely" nor in limits, nor in the finite as such. It has nothing to do with this, for it comprehends itself within itself alone, in its infinitude. (Hegel, 1892:74)

Christ as a mere godhead, "is not the true relation; it will disappear". (Hegel, 1892:73) But as the living image of the social and

rational character of the actual human being he is eternal.

Hegel's approach to religion has been contrasted with that of Marx, and there is no doubt, as I have argued in this and the preceding chapter, that a wide gulf separates the writings of the young Marx on religion from those of Hegel. The case is different with the mature Marx. In Capital, for example, Marx observes that there is a strong relationship between the form of a society and the nature of its religion. This relationship is easily discerned in bourgeois society where the abstract character of human labour as it is embodied in the commodity is matched by the Christian concept of the individual. "For a society of commodity producers", writes Marx,

whose general social relations of production consist in the fact that they treat their products as commodities, hence as values, and in their material ... form bring their individual, private labours into relation with each other as homogeneous human labour, Christianity with its religious cult of man in the abstract, more particularly in its bourgeois development, i.e. in Protestantism, Deism, etc., is the most fitting form of religion. (1976:172)

For Hegel, the Christian religion advanced hand-in-hand with private property and both phenomena are associated with the development of individual human consciousness. The suitability of Christianity for capitalist society with its basis in private property is therefore to be expected.

Marx is certainly aware of the parallels between his account of religion and that of Hegel, for the above-quoted passage from Capital simply reproduces a similar argument in the Phenomenology. Here Hegel discusses the concept of the individual in the bourgeois theory of utility according to which the individual's "characteristic function" is to be "of use to the common good, and serviceable to all". Writes Hegel,

Different things are serviceable to one another in different ways. All things, however, have this reciprocity of utility by their very nature, by being related to the Absolute in the two-fold manner, the one positive, whereby they have a being all their own, the other negative, and thereby exist for others. The relation to Absolute Being, or Religion, is therefore of all forms of profitableness the most supremely profitable; for it is profiting pure and simple; it is that by which all things stand — by which they have a being all their own — and that by which all things fall — have an existence for something else. (1967:579-580)

According to Hegel, the triumph of Protestantism in northern Europe and the separation of philosophy from theology meant at first the rejection of the speculative or theoretical content of religion. "... As for the enrichment of Christian conceptions through the treasures of the philosophy of the ancient world," he observes, "and through the profound ideas of all earlier oriental religions, and the like — all this is set aside." (1896:154) While the theology of the mediaeval schoolmen shut itself up "in the centre point of the individual", i.e., God (1896:157), "man became conscious of his will and his achievements, took pleasure in the earth and its soil, and also his occupations". The invention of gunpowder made the individual heroism of the feudal period more dangerous than sublime, and men and women of adventure turned their thoughts to "the exploration of the earth, or the discovery of the passage to the East Indies. America was discovered, its treasures and people — nature, man himself; navigation", Hegel continues, "was the higher romance of commerce". (1896:158-159)

The same juncture is isolated by Marx:

The circulation of commodities is the starting-point of capital. The production of commodities and their circulation in its developed form, namely trade, form the historic presuppositions under which capital arises. World trade and the world market date from the sixteenth

century, and from then on the modern history of capital starts to unfold. (Marx, 1976:247)

Hegel argues that religion reflected this new direction toward the external world, and as a result, "the Reformation of Luther had inevitably to come ..." The Lutheran faith focused attention on the present, on experience, and goaded men and women "to understand laws and forces, i.e. to transform the individual of perceptions into the form of universality". The "works" of the individual were now the object of faith and God was conceived "in spirit alone, He is not a beyond but the truest reality of the individual". (1896:159) Lutheranism encouraged the individual to be "satisfied in his activity, to have joy in his work and to consider his work as something permissible and justifiable ... Art and industry receive through this principle new activity, since now their activity is justified". The search for profit and the inclination of men and women to improve themselves through work and labour "receive ... highest confirmation, and that is sanctification through religion". (Hegel, 1896:148-149)

The new philosophy, stimulated by its release from theology through the Reformation, turned its attention to the self-consciousness of the individual and the understanding of what was taken to be "the pre-supposed object". (Hegel, 1896:160) The separation of theology from philosophy spelt the death of theology as a theory of the individual, nature and society: theology's "home and private metaphysics, are thus [now] frequently quite uncultured, uncritical thought — the thought of the street". True, Christianity retains its "particular subjective conviction" — its historical truth — "but these thoughts which constitute the criterion are merely the reflections and opinions which float about the surface of the time". (Hegel, 1896:160-161)



Thus, the Reformation brought about the utter dissolution of theology: "... When thought comes forth on its own account," declares Hegel, referring to modern philosophy, "we thereby separate ourselves from theology." (1896:161)

The unity of thought and being constitutes the chief problem of the new philosophy, and in the eighteenth century philosophy itself broke into two opposed sides: realism or materialism, and idealism. Materialism supposes thought to be caused by the action of external objects on the mind, while idealism sees the categories of thought as independent of the external world. Materialism is concerned with experience or reality as it appears in nature and society as well as in the activity of the human being. Its paramount concern is with what exists — the present. As the young Marx puts it, with regard to the French enlightenment,

the downfall of seventeenth-century metaphysics can be explained by the materialistic theory of the eighteenth century only as far that theoretical movement itself is explained by the practical nature of French life at the time. That life was turned to the immediate present, worldly enjoyment and worldly interests, the earthly world. Its anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, and materialistic practice demanded correspondingly anti-theoretical, anti-metaphysical and materialistic theories. (1971:77)

The method of materialism is that of "finite", or natural science; the method of observation and deduction, the formation of universal laws, and so on. According to Hegel, the empirical sciences are "finite, because their mode of thought, as a merely formal act, derives its content from without. Their content therefore is not known as moulded from within through the thoughts which lie at the ground of it, and form and content do not thoroughly interpenetrate each other". (1975:190) For Hegel, materialism marked a great advance over

scholastic or mediaeval philosophy which set aside the human power of observation and approached arguments respecting nature from the vantage point of abstruse and abstract hypotheses. Moreover, the development of all science and philosophy depends on the findings of empirical science, "for mind is essentially a working on something different". (Hegel, 1896:177) The young Marx shares Hegel's positive evaluation of materialism, but he is as yet unaware of what Hegel sees as the negative or finite aspects of materialist philosophy. "Materialism", says the young Marx,

is the son of Great Britain by birth ... [And] the real founder of English materialism and all modern experimental science was Bacon. For him natural science was true science and physics based on perception was the most excellent part of natural science ... According to his teaching the senses are infallible and are the source of all knowledge. Science is experimental and consists in applying a rational method to data provided by the senses. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation and experiment are the principal requisites of rational method. The first and most important of the inherent qualities of matter is motion, not only mechanical and mathematical movement, but still more impulse, vital life spirit, tension ... The primary forms of matter are the living, individualizing forces of being inherent in it and producing the distinctions between the species.

In Bacon, its first creator, materialism contained latent and still in a naive way the germs of all-round development. Matter smiled at man with poetical sensuous brightness. (1971:78-79)

No less than to the world of nature, materialism applies itself to the study of nations and the relationships between individuals in society. Where the rule of law was based in feudal times on the maxims of the Old Testament, and guilt or innocence in criminal proceedings was decided by divine intervention as expressed in trial by torture, "now ... right", says Hegel, "was sought for in man himself, and in history ..." The method of observation was utilized to determine "the

desires which could be satisfied in the state and the manner in which satisfaction could be given them, in order thus from man himself, from man of the past as well as the present, to learn what is right".

(Hegel, 1896:163) Hegel's observations on this aspect of materialism are taken up by the young Marx, who connects materialist philosophy to the development of communism:

There is no need of any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, the empirical world must be arranged so that in it man experiences and gets used to what is really human and that he becomes aware of himself as man ... If man is shaped by his surroundings, his surroundings must be made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of separate individuals but by the power of society. (1971:82)

Because materialism places all truth in sensation and matter, even God came to be questioned because His existence could not be verified in the sensuous present. "Since only what is material", says the young Marx, "is perceptible, knowable, nothing is known of the existence of God. I am sure only of my own existence." (1971:80) "The result", as Hegel points out, "has ... been atheism. God would thus be an historical product of weakness, of fear, of joy, or of interested hopes, cupidity, and lust of power." (1895:51)

For Hegel, realism or materialism fails to account for the fact that the categories of thought are not the mere result of the action of external objects on the mind, but rather, as Kant explains, the categories are independent of experience or a priori: "... the highest

legislation of Nature must lie in ourselves, namely in our understanding, and ... we must seek its universal laws, not in nature, by means of experience; but conversely must seek Nature, as to its universal regularity, solely in the conditions of the possibility of experience lying in our sensibility and understanding." (Kant, 1883:67) Science, it is true, deals with "a variety of sensuous properties and matters; ... [however,] these matters (elements) also stand in relation to one another ... [and] the question is, Of what kind is this relation?" (Hegel, 1969:311) Discovering the relationship between things requires more than passive observation, it needs thought and theory to penetrate the veil of sensuous experience. The verification (or falsification) of theory depends on observation; but theory itself is a product of the active power of the human mind. Materialism, with its reliance on the method of the natural sciences, fails to appreciate the independent role of theory, of the activity of the mind. The physicists, for example, says Hegel,

devote their attention to what they call experience, for they think that here they come across genuine truth, unspoiled by thought, fresh from the hands of nature; it is in their hands and before their faces. They can certainly dispense with the Notion [theory], but through a kind of tacit agreement they allow certain conceptions, such as forces, subsistence in parts, &c. to be valid, and make use of these without in the least knowing whether they have truth and how they have truth. But in regard to the content they express no better the truth of things, but only the sensuous manifestation. (1894:155)

Hegel's notion that the external appearance of things, their sensuous manifestation, must be penetrated by the mind, by human theory or ideality, appealed greatly to the mature Marx. "The older he grew," suggests S. S. Praver, "the more he came to agree with Hegel and the German idealists that truth lay below the level of

immediate empirical perception. It had to be dug for by well-informed men with a gift for theorizing and philosophic reflection ..." (1976: 315) For Hegel, as for Marx, materialism (and natural science with it) deludes itself when it imagines that its categories deal only with things as they are directly perceivable by the senses. Much of what materialism takes to be concrete facts are actually only theoretical constructs which, as Hegel suggests, "cannot be verified by observation". Even "matter itself", he notes,

— furthermore form which is separated from matter — whether that be the thing as consisting of matters, or the view that the thing itself subsists and only has proper ties, is all a product of the reflective understanding which, while it observes and professes to record only what it observes, is rather creating a metaphysic, bristling with contradictions of which it is unconscious. (1975:186)

Hegel's critique of materialism is taken up by Marx in Capital, where he applies it to theories about the nature of the laws of competition under the bourgeois mode of production. "It is not our intention here", notes Marx,

to consider the way in which the laws, immanent in capitalist production, manifest themselves as coercive laws of competition, and are brought home to the mind and consciousness of the individual capitalist as the directing motives of his operations. 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 which are not directly perceptible by the senses. (1976:433)

If human theory or ideality is necessary to penetrate the mysteries of the natural realm, it is so much the more indispensable in comprehending what Marx, following Hegel, calls "the supra-sensible or social" world. (1976:165)

According to Hegel, the human mind — like all natural organisms — is a product of self-development, and is not dependent on sources external to it. Thus the external or finite methodology of materialism and natural science is incapable of grasping the immanent or "necessary" character of human consciousness. Before Hegel, Kant had already elucidated the principle of living organisms, a principle materialism fails to comprehend: "an organized natural product is one in which every part is reciprocally both end and means." (Kant, 1973: 24) For Kant, as for Hegel, freedom is both the end and means of human development, and "the concept of freedom", Kant declares "is the stumbling block of all empiricists ..." (1956:8) While under the influence of Feuerbach, the young Marx is unable to see this weak point in materialism — its inability to understand organic processes as well as the active and transforming nature of individual human consciousness. As the young Marx points out, for materialism the human individual is something like a machine, and is subject to the forces of nature: "Every human passion is a mechanical motion ending or beginning. The objects of impulses are what is called good. Man is subject to the same laws as nature; might and freedom are identical." (1971:80) Kant, however, emphasizes the contrast between natural organisms and mere machinery: "In a watch", notes Kant,

one part is the instrument by which the movement of the others is effected, but one wheel is not the efficient cause of the production of the other. One part is certainly present for the sake of another, but it does not owe its presence to the agency of that other. For this reason, also, the producing cause of the watch and its form is not contained in the nature of this material, but lies outside the watch in a being that can act according to ideas of a whole which its causality makes possible. Hence one wheel in the watch does not produce the other, and,

still less, does one watch produce other watches, by utilizing, or organizing, foreign material; hence it does not of itself replace parts of which it has been deprived, nor, if these are absent in the original construction, does it make good the deficiency by the subvention of the rest; nor does it, so to speak, repair its own causal disorders. But these are all things which we are justified in expecting from organized nature. — An organized being is, therefore, not a mere machine. For a machine has solely motive power, whereas an organized being possesses inherent formative power, and such, moreover, as it can impart to material devoid of it — material which it organizes. This, therefore, is a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained by the capacity of movement alone, that is to say, by mechanism.  
(1973:22)

According to Hegel and the mature Marx, human consciousness is the infinitely creative, transforming power and manifests itself through human practice in the external, social world. "... Work", notes Hegel,

is the result of the disunion [between human beings and nature], it is also the victory over it. The beasts have nothing more to do but to pick up the material required to satisfy their wants: man on the contrary can only satisfy his wants by himself producing and transforming the necessary means. Thus even in these outside things man is dealing with himself. (1975:44)

Materialism, on the other hand, holds that mind is determined by the outside world: that is, by the world of nature and society that human ideality itself transforms and creates. As Marx puts it in his critique of Feuerbach's materialism in the German Ideology:

Feuerbach ... does not see how the sensuous world around him, is not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is a historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social

system, according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest "sensuous certainty" are only given him through social development, industry and commercial intercourse.

Even the "certainties" of Feuerbach's beloved natural science, Marx continues,

Even this "pure" natural science is provided with an aim, as with its material, only through trade and industry, through the sensuous activity of men ... Feuerbach ... only conceives [man] as an "object of the senses", not as "sensuous activity", because he still remains in the realm of theory and conceives men not in their given social conditions, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are ... Thus he never manages to conceive the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it ... (1968:58-59)

In other words, what both materialism and Feuerbach himself forget is "revolutionising practice" or human ideality.

Despite its defects, however, materialism makes a genuine attempt to overcome the separation of thought and being, to provide a solution for what is, after all, the supreme problem of philosophy. "We must recognize in materialism", suggests Hegel, "the enthusiastic effort to transform the dualism which postulates two different worlds as equally substantial and true, to nullify this tearing asunder of what is originally One." (1969:34) This accomplishment of materialism is also recognized by the young Marx: "If, for materialism,

man's senses are the source of all his knowledge ... then conception, thought, imagination, etc., are nothing but phantoms of the material world more or less divested of its sensuous form ... An incorporeal substance is just as much nonsense as an incorporeal body. Body, being, substance, are one and the same real idea. One cannot separate the thought from matter which thinks. Matter is the subject of all changes. (1971:80)



Idealism — what Hegel calls, the second approach to the problem of the unity of thought and being — proceeds from thought and makes everything the product of mind. "What Realism draws from experience is now derived from thought a priori." Nevertheless, Hegel argues, the two sides overlap one another; materialism must give experience the form of thought as laws and theories, while the abstract universality of idealism is in need of a determinate content derived from sensuous reality. "The philosophic systems are therefore no more than modes of this absolute unity, and only the concrete unity of these opposites is the truth." (Hegel, 1896:165) The same unity is urged, of course, by Marx. "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism ... is that the thing, ... reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object ... or of contemplation, ... but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the active side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism — but only abstractly, since ... idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such." (1969, I:13) For Hegel and for Marx, philosophy is now posed with the question which they both believe can only be answered by a philosophy which constitutes the unity of materialism and idealism: "How is and how can thought be identical with the objective?" (Hegel, 1896:166)

The answer provided by Hegel's absolute idealism, and which I will outline in more detail in the following chapters, is the one which excited Marx in 1845 and prompted him to set down the Theses on Feuerbach:

The question whether objective ... truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but a practical question. In practice man

must prove the truth, that is the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question. (1969, I:13)

The same excitement which infuses Marx's Theses also races through Lenin's 1914 commentary on Hegel's Logic. "Remarkable," Lenin exclaims,

Remarkable: Hegel comes to the 'Idea' as the coincidence of the Notion and the object, as truth, through the practical purposive activity of man ... Undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a link in the analysis of the theory of cognition, and indeed as the transition to objective ("absolute", according to Hegel) truth. (1963:191)

"Marx," Lenin continues, "consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice into the theory of knowledge: see the Theses on Feuerbach." The conclusion to be derived from Hegel, is obvious: "Man's consciousness", says Lenin, "not only reflects the objective world, but creates it." Lenin's study of Hegel led him to a further conclusion. For Hegel, writes Lenin, "Practice is higher than theoretical knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality." (1963:212-213)

A little less than three years after Marx's discovery of "revolutionising practice" in Hegel, Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto (1969, I:98-137); after a similar period, Lenin made a revolution.

The new relationship of men and women to philosophy and science exemplified by the "revolutionising practice" of Marx and Lenin is anticipated by Hegel. The philosophers of the ancient world, he writes, were "self-sufficing individualities ... they kept the external connection with the world all the further removed from themselves because they did not greatly approve of much therein present;

or at least it ever proceeds on its way, according to its own particular laws, on which the individual is dependent". In the Middle Ages philosophers were chiefly clergy, theologians and "in the transition period" from mediaeval to modern times "the philosophers showed themselves to be in an inward warfare with themselves and in an external warfare with their surroundings, and their lives were spent in a wild, unsettled fashion". (1896:167) Thus the Italians Bruno and Vanini were burnt at stake by the Inquisition; the Frenchman Cardanus was imprisoned and tortured; his compatriot Ramus was murdered.

The case is different with modern thinkers. They no longer constitute a class or group by themselves: "we find them generally in connection with the world, participating with others in some common work or calling ... They are involved in present conditions, in the world and its work and progress." The new relationship of philosophy and science with the world results from the rationality and universal connection of individuals with one another which sets bourgeois society apart from past epochs. "This connection is of such power that every individuality is under its domination and yet at the same time can construct for itself an inward world." (Hegel, 1896:167-168)

In modern society the external life of the individual may be set apart from his or her inward existence, while in past ages a person's inward life was entirely determined by his or her outward occupation: a priest was a priest, a peasant, a peasant. Notes Hegel,

Now, on the contrary, with the higher degree of strength attained by the inward side of the individual, he may hand over the external to chance; just as he leaves clothing to the contingencies of fashion, not considering it worthwhile to exert his understanding upon it. The external he leaves to be determined by the order which is

present in the particular sphere in which he is cast. The circumstances of life are, in the true sense, private affairs, determined by outward conditions, and do not contain anything worthy of our notice. (1896:168)

Accordingly, Marx — a man whose outward personality and prejudices conformed in most ways to the respectable middle-class standards of his time — went about his business in London, trudging daily to his seat in the British Museum, spinning the web of revolution. But Marx like all other individuals in capitalist society also found that he had to "seek to act in connection with others"; he found in those dark days in London that

The calling of philosophy is not, like that of the monks, an organized condition. Members of academies of learning are no doubt organized in part, but even a special calling like their sinks into the ordinary commonplace of state or class relationships, because admission thereto is outwardly determined.\* The real matter is to remain faithful to one's aims. (Hegel, 1896:169; my emphasis)

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\* Like Marx, Hegel had reason to believe that admission to "academies of learning" is "outwardly determined". Both men were refused entry to the academies of learning of their day.

## CHAPTER 5

## ALIENATION AND IDEOLOGY

1. Feuerbach, Western Marxism and Alienation

"In the social production of their existence," writes Marx in the "Preface" to his A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, "men invariably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production." (1970:20)

What Marx means here is elucidated by an already quoted passage from the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon where he writes,

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (1969, I:398)

Nevertheless, Marx's observation in the "Preface" is enthusiastically embraced by Louis Althusser and his followers, who deny that for Marx, men and women are "'free' and 'constitutive'" actors in the human drama. Individuals, Althusser declares, "work in and through the determinations of the forms of historical existence of the social relations of production and reproduction". (1976:95)

For Althusser, history is a "process without a Subject or Goal", in which men and women can act only as agents determined by their social relations. (1976:94) Social relations, in turn, are a product of the class struggle — what Althusser calls, the "motor" of history.

(1976:99) Althusser unites his interpretation of Marx with a corresponding vision of Hegel. Both thinkers, he argues, deny the "philosophical ideology of the Subject"; that is, they do not see the human individual as the subject of history, nor do they posit the liberation and freedom of men and women as history's goal. (1976:173, 97)

Althusser claims that Hegel substitutes the Idea for the human individual and Marx substitutes the class struggle for the Hegelian Idea.

According to Althusser, history in Marx's view, "is a terribly positive and active structured reality, just as cold, hunger and the night are for his poor worker". (1969:115) The basic assumptions of Althusser's structuralist Marxism are summed up by Nicos Poulantzas: "1. The distinction between real processes and processes of thought, between being and knowledge. 2. The primacy of being over thought; the primacy of the real over the knowledge of the real." Poulantzas (and Althusser) believe that "in the strong sense of the term, only real, concrete, singular objects exist", and therefore, "the final aim of the process of thought is knowledge of these objects". (1973:12-13)

Both Poulantzas and Althusser forget, however, that a corpse is also a "terribly positive and active structured reality", even if the activity of its "de-centred" structure (Althusser, 1969:115, 102) is only decomposition. A corpse most certainly has existence "in the strong sense of the term" — it is a "real, concrete, singular object"; a corpse, in fact, is the ultimate realization of the primacy of being over thought. (Hegel, 1976:232) Because individual human consciousness and will cannot be seen, heard, smelled or prodded with one's foot, it lacks reality "in the strong sense" for the Althusserians. The case is different for Hegel and Marx.

According to Marx, the object of social science "is always what is given, in the head as well as in reality"; economic categories, for example, "express the forms of being, the characteristics of existence". (1973:106) Hegel also emphasizes that philosophy and science are concerned with "the apprehension of the present and the actual", and that truth in science "means that concept and reality correspond". (1976:10, 231) For both thinkers, the present, in Marx's words, "points beyond itself ... towards a past lying behind it" and towards the future as well. (1973:460-461) "... The great thing", Hegel writes, "is to apprehend in the show of the temporal and the transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present." (1976:10) This view of society as something with a past as well as a future is predicated on the notion that society "is a kind of independent organism" (Marx, 1973:484), a living unity which finds its life in the breath, pulse and consciousness of the men and women who make it up. For Hegel and Marx, the concept of a living organism expresses the essence of the dialectic in history, the activity of living, conscious individuals in the process of the production, reproduction and transformation of society. From the standpoint of both thinkers, the "basic final outcome" of human history is the full "elaboration and development of the human personality and its freedom". (Rosdolsky, 1977:415) History is not Althusser's "lifeless process without a Subject or Goal", but the record and reality of the striving of individual men and women toward the multi-faceted expression of their character and personality, toward freedom.

One of Althusser's primary aims is to expunge the humanistic element in Marxism which, he believes, stems from the young Marx's

assimilation of Feuerbach's materialist inversion of Hegelian philosophy. It is paradoxical, therefore, that Althusser's conception of Hegel's Idea as a process without a subject or goal is derived from the writings of the young Marx and Feuerbach. "Hegelian philosophy", writes Feuerbach, "made thought, — namely the subjective being conceived, however, without subject, that is, conceived as being distinct from the subject — into a divine and absolute being." (1966:36) For Hegel, adds the young Marx, "the divine process of man ... must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject first emerges as a result. This result ... is therefore God — absolute Spirit — self-knowing and self-manifesting Idea. Real man and real nature become mere predicates — symbols of this esoteric, unreal man and of this unreal nature." Thus Hegel's philosophy concerns "the absolute subject as a process ... a pure, restless revolving within self". (1964:188) According to Feuerbach and the young Marx, the truth of the historical process lies not in the Hegelian Idea but in man and woman as species being, as the generic essence of humankind. "The new philosophy", says Feuerbach,

makes man — with the inclusion of nature as the foundation of man — the unique, universal and highest object of philosophy ... Truth does not exist in thought for itself or in knowledge for itself. Truth is only the totality of human life and of the human essence ... The essence of man is contained only in the community and unity of man with man ... (1966:70-71)

Hegel, however, had already criticized the notion of species being or man as a hopeless abstraction. "... A person", he writes, "is a specific existence; not man in general (a term to which no real existence corresponds) but a particular human being." (1956:24) The particular human being, in turn, must be seen within the context of



his or her sensuous activity in society.

The first glance at History convinces us that the actions of men proceed from their needs, their passions, their characters and talents; and impresses us with the belief that such needs, passions and interests are the sole springs of action — the efficient agents in this scene of activity. (Hegel, 1956:20)

It is not the Idea that creates history, but the concrete action of individual men and women guided by their interests, passions and desires. "Only by this activity" is the "Idea as well as abstract characteristics generally ... realized, actualized; for of themselves they are powerless. The motive power that puts them in operation and gives them their determinate existence, is the need, instinct, inclination, and passion of man." (Hegel, 1956:22)

"... The absolute right of personal existence", Hegel remarks, is "to find itself satisfied in its activity and labour ... Nothing ... happens, nothing is accomplished unless the individuals concerned seek their satisfaction in the issue." (1956:23) Hegel's view of history, then, has nothing to do with the abstractions of Althusser, Feuerbach and the young Marx. Writes Hegel,

Two elements ... enter into the object of our investigation; the first the Idea, the second the complex of human passions ... We have spoken of Freedom as the nature of Spirit, and the absolute goal of history ... I mean here nothing more than the human activity as resulting from private interests ... with this qualification, that the whole energy of will and character is devoted to their attainment ... The object [freedom] is so bound up with the man's will, that it entirely and alone determines the "hue of resolution", and is inseparable from it. It has become the essence of his volition. (1956:23-24)

At first attracted by Feuerbach's concept of species being, Marx later rejects it and turns to Hegel's view that the human individual

is above all a social being:

Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations ... The human essence can with [Feuerbach] be comprehended only as "genus", as an internal, dumb generality which merely naturally unites the many individuals. (1969, I:14)

Along with Hegel's notion of the human individual as a social being, Marx also comes to accept his conception of the role of men and women in the making of history. "When", writes Marx in his critique of Proudhon's "quasi-Hegelian phrases" in the Poverty of Philosophy,

When we ask ourselves why a particular principle was manifested in the eleventh or in the eighteenth century rather than in any other, we are necessarily forced to examine minutely what men were like in the eleventh century, what they were like in the eighteenth century, what were their respective needs, their productive forces, their mode of production, the raw materials of production — in short what were the relations between man and man which resulted from all these conditions of existence. To get to the bottom of all these questions — what is this but to draw up the real, profane history of men in every century and to present these men as both the authors and the actors of their own drama. (PP:110-111; my emphasis)

Althusser claims that "the Thesis that 'men' (the concrete individuals) are the subjects ... of history ... has nothing to do with Marxism, but actually constitutes a quite dubious theoretical position which it is practically impossible to conceive and to defend". (1976: 98) It is certainly easier to conceive the process of history in terms of abstractions than as the result of the activity of concrete human beings. It is also true that the "individual" is a category that makes only very rare appearances in the writings of Western Marxism. "Class" and "class struggle", which perform the same role in Marxist theory as Feuerbach's "human essence", are more often the operative

terms. A good example is Lukács' History and Class Consciousness, which charges "bourgeois thought" with the error of regarding "social phenomena ... from the standpoint of the individual", and which demands that things should be looked at "from the point of view of the proletariat ... together with its organised form, the Communist Party ..." (1971:28, 20, 75)

The Western Marxist glorification of the proletariat, of course, simply echoes Feuerbach. "Not I, you, or any one else is the measure of truth, but man, the species." (Quoted in Hook, 1976:261-262)

Feuerbach no doubt expresses here a great belief. But to surrender the "bourgeois" right to decide what is objective or not to the species or even to the proletariat is to surrender the right of decision ultimately to the individual or individuals who claim to speak in the name of the species or the proletariat. The result of this surrender is well known; it is called silence. "I am not talking", says Althusser in his critique of Stalinism, "about the silence or half-silence of the moment, but about a silence that has lasted twenty years. It is clear that the Soviet leaders have refused and are still refusing to undertake a Marxist analysis of this gigantic error, buried, like its millions of victims, in official silence... The USSR ... lives on in symptomatic silence about its own history." (1977:11)

"... We must never overlook the distance", declares Lukács, "that separates the consciousness of even the most revolutionary worker from the authentic class consciousness of the proletariat." (1971:80)

Stalin and his successors, to their everlasting credit, never made this mistake. The debate about Lukács' movement from a "revolutionary realism" characterized by History and Class Consciousness to the "non-

revolutionary Realpolitik of Stalin" (Lowy, 1977:64) could be settled by recognizing that Lukács's early work formed the philosophical underpinnings of Stalinism. The Western Marxist abstractions of "the proletariat" and "class struggle" are merely the continuations in theory of Stalinism.

Despite Althusser's claim to the contrary, the "individual" appears at least as often in the writings of the mature Marx as do the categories of "class" and "class struggle". Moreover, Marx's emphasis on the individual and his use of the individual as a category in his theory of society and history is a direct inheritance from the philosophy of Hegel and German Idealism. "... Personal conviction", Hegel remarks, "is the ultimate and absolute essential which reason and its philosophy ... demand from knowledge." (1892:14)

Althusser's contention that Hegel's view of history concerns a "process without a Subject or Goal" is not the only, nor the most important, of Feuerbach's and the young Marx's contributions to contemporary Marxism. The materialist assumptions of the Althusserians, which are shared by most Marxists, also have their roots in the writings of Feuerbach and the young Marx. As Vogel points out, "Feuerbach's philosophy is based on sense perception ..." (1966:ix) "The real in its reality or taken as real", Feuerbach explains, "is the real as an object of the senses; it is the sensuous. Truth, reality, and sensation are identical. Only a sensuous being is a true and real being. Only through the senses and not through thought for itself, is an object given in the true sense." (1966:51) The young Marx, who contrasts the "sober philosophy" of Feuerbach with the "drunken speculation" of Hegel (1971:75), suggests that "sense

experience (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Science is only genuine science when it proceeds from sense experience, in the two forms of sense perception and sensuous need; i.e. only when it proceeds from nature". (1971:72)

The emphasis on sense perception with its obvious distinction from and dependence on external objects, leads to the conclusion that the object, sensuous being, has priority over thought and the mind. "... We make the real, that is, the sensuous," Feuerbach points out, "into its own subject and give it an absolutely independent, divine, and primary meaning which is not first derived from the idea", i.e., from thought. (1966:51) In his essay on Feuerbach, Engels approvingly summarizes Feuerbach's materialist position:

The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and ... our consciousness and thinking, however supersensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism. (1969, III:348)

In Feuerbach's philosophy, the human mind and thought are essentially passive in relation to the independent, external object:

Only that thought which is determined and rectified by sensuous perception is real and objective thought — the thought of objective truth ... Perception takes matters in the broad sense, whereas thought takes them in their narrow sense. Perception leaves matters in their unlimited freedom, whereas thought gives them laws, which, however, are only too despotic. Perception enlightens the mind, but determines and decides nothing ... (1966:64-65)

Feuerbach's conception of the passive nature of the mind is summed up in the phrase, "Things must not be thought of otherwise than as they appear in reality ... The laws of reality are also the laws of thought." (1966:62-63) The young Marx was never comfortable with this

aspect of Feuerbach's materialism, although it is accepted by some contemporary Marxists. Timpanaro, for example, claims that "we cannot ... deny or evade the element of passivity in experience: the external situation which we do not create but which imposes itself on us".

(1974:7) Even in 1843-44, however, when Feuerbach's influence on him was at its height, Marx is aware of a tremendous discrepancy between reality and thought which, he feels, should be balanced in favour of the latter. "Will the enormous gulf", he asks, "between the demands of German thought and the replies of German actuality match the same gulf that exists between civil society and the state, and within civil society itself? Will theoretical needs immediately become practical ones? It is not enough that thought should tend towards reality, reality must also tend towards thought." (1971M:124) Marx, of course, utterly rejects the passive content of Feuerbach's materialism in his eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach which, as I suggested in Chapter 3, is taken almost word for word from Hegel: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." (1969, I:15)

According to Feuerbach, objectivity or truth is obtained only when the conception of an object is identical with the object itself, as corroborated by the testimony of an independent observer.

The distinction between the object in itself and the object for us — namely between the object in reality and the object in our thought and imagination — is ... necessarily grounded .... You think only because your ideas can themselves be thought, and they are true only when they pass the test of objectivity, that is, when they are acknowledged by another person apart from you for whom they are an object. (1966: 10, 68)

Feuerbach's criterion of truth or objectivity is accepted by most

modern Marxists. Lukács, for example, claims that true knowledge is "a reflection of reality" (1975:533) and Benton, a British theorist, observes that "adequacy to the object of knowledge is the ultimate standard by which the cognitive status of thought is to be assessed". (1977:171) Marx, as I have already pointed out, rejects this "ultimate" standard of truth in favour of the criterion of practice:

The question whether objective ... truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness ... of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question. (1969, I:13)

Sydney Hook observes that "Marx did not live to develop the implications of his scientific theory of truth". (1976:285) But as I will argue, it is precisely the scientific theory of truth which is the ultimate concern of Hegel's philosophy. Significantly, Western Marxism has made no attempt to develop Marx's theory of objectivity; nor has it explored Hegel's elaboration of this theory. The Althusserian Decourt is therefore correct when he writes, "one hundred years after the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach", (which is quoted above) Marxism "remains in a state of theoretical non-elaboration such that the question of its (theoretical) existence can still be asked." (1977:104)

Feuerbach's materialist epistemology lends itself easily to an uncritical regard for the methods and achievements of natural science. "The most perfect, and hence divine, sensuous knowledge", notes Feuerbach,

is indeed nothing other than the most sensuous knowledge that knows the most minute objects and the least noticeable details, that knows the hair

on a man's head not by grasping it indiscriminately in one lock but by counting them, thus knowing them all, hair by hair. This divine knowledge ... becomes real knowledge in the knowledge of natural science gained through the telescope and microscope ... it alone demonstrated anatomically in the grub of the butterfly 288 muscles in the head, 1,647 in the body, and 2,186 in the stomach and intestines. What more could one ask? (1966:16-17)

The seeds of what Hook calls Feuerbach's "'degenerate' sensationalism" — which consisted among other things in Feuerbach's contention in 1850 that "man is what he eats" (Quoted in Hook, 1966:267) may already be seen in this 1843 passage. But the young Marx at first fully accepts Feuerbach's worshipful attitude to the natural sciences and echoes Feuerbach's dictum that "Philosophy must once more tie itself to natural science and natural science to philosophy." (Feuerbach, quoted in Kamenka, 1970:78) "The first object for man — man himself —" writes the young Marx, "is nature, sense experience; and the particular sensuous human faculties, which can only find objective realization in natural objects, can only attain self-knowledge in the science of natural being ... Natural science will one day incorporate the science of man, just as the science of man will incorporate natural science; there will be a single science." (1971:73)

As he did with most other aspects of Feuerbach's philosophy — with the notorious exception of Feuerbach's materialist inversion of Hegel — Marx, as I have noted in Chapter 4, also came to reject Feuerbach's unquestioning enthusiasm for natural science:

Feuerbach speaks in particular of the perception of natural science; he mentions secrets that are disclosed only to the eye of the physicist or chemist; but where would natural science be without industry and commerce? Even this 'pure' natural science is provided with an aim, as with its material, only through trade and industry, through the sensuous



activity of men. So much is this activity, this unceasing sensuous labour and creation, this production, the basis of the whole sensuous world as it now exists, that, were it interrupted only for a year, Feuerbach would not only find an enormous change in the natural world, but would very soon find that the whole world of men and his perceptive faculty, nay his whole existence were lacking. (1971:84)

Feuerbach's respect for natural science is one of his most enduring legacies to modern Marxism. Accordingly, the Stalinist contention that there are two forms of natural science: "proletarian science" and "bourgeois science" has been utterly rejected by Western Marxism. The Lysenko affair, which strangled biological science in the U.S.S.R., was enough to indicate that the "theory of two sciences" is untenable and has disastrous consequences for progress in the natural sciences. (Lecourt, 1977) But Western Marxism clings to the notion that there are two forms of social science, the bourgeois, incorrect one, and the true Marxist social science. The fact that, on this basis, sociology has also been crushed in the Soviet Union eludes the attention of most Marxists. Feuerbach's contention that the natural sciences are divine while philosophy (and its modern-day offshoot, social science) is simply a collection of errors and fantasies ("no philosophy", declares Feuerbach, "is my philosophy." (quoted in Kamenka, 1970:80)), has appealed to generations of Marxists.

Colletti provides an instructive summary of the Western Marxist attitude to science. For Colletti, science, understood as a system of knowledge based on the methods of natural science, is "the sole form of real knowledge ... Bourgeois thought and civilization", he continues,

succeeded in founding the sciences of nature; whereas bourgeois culture has been incapable of generating scientific knowledge of society and morality. Of

course, the natural sciences have been conditioned by the bourgeois historical context in which they have developed — a process which raises many intricate problems of its own. But unless we are to accept dialectical materialism and its fantasies of a "proletarian" biology or physics, we must nevertheless acknowledge the validity of the sciences of nature produced by bourgeois civilization since the Renaissance. But bourgeois discourses in the social sciences command no such validity: we obviously reject them. (1977:325-326)

The "true (bourgeois) natural science" and the "false bourgeois social science" distinction made by Western Marxism is one of the most glaring aspects of what I shall define as the Marxist variant of false consciousness or ideology. For what Hegel calls the "understanding" or Enlightenment consciousness is as much a part of contemporary Marxism as it is of bourgeois thought. Marxism developed out of and along with bourgeois philosophy and science; together they compose an organic, if contradictory and antagonistic, unity.

Feuerbach's and the young Marx's vision of a unified natural science of man and woman has suggested to many Marxists that the study of human beings and society should be assimilated under the categories and methodology of pure or natural science. Accordingly, Feuerbach's admiration for the scientific probing of the anatomy of the butterfly grub has its analogue in Régis Debray's admiration of the "exact analytical tools" provided by thermo-dynamics (1977:28), and Benton's fascination with the theory of ideal gases. The lack in the "corpus of Marxist literature" of any "logical conditions, rules and constraints involved in the employment of [its] concepts in concrete analysis", says Benton,

may be compared with the precise and quantified knowledge which exists, for example, in the application of the kinetic theory of gases to

particular cases, concerning the degree of difference between the theoretically established behaviour of the 'ideal gas' and the behaviour of particular gases in particular temperature-ranges, etc. (1977:155)

Benton criticizes Engels because he has the temerity to apply "Hegelian categories" to the study of natural science in Dialectics of Nature (1954). "It does not seem to bother Engels", writes Benton, that these "discoveries" of Engels's dialectical materialism "were the result of the method of speculative philosophy, and are only externally applied by him to the results of the natural sciences." (1977:58)

The "ideal gas", of course, has neither consciousness nor will, but "it does not seem to bother" Benton, and many other Marxists (as well as bourgeois positivists), that the categories of natural science should be "externally applied ... to the results" of historical and social science. Long ago Hegel noted Kant's "customary tenderness for things" as exemplified in Kant's concern "that they shall not contradict one another". (Quoted in Lenin, 1963:135) Remarking on this passage, Lenin exclaims, "This irony is exquisite! 'Tenderness for nature and history (among the Philistines) — the endeavour to cleanse them from contradiction and struggle ...'" (1963:136) Kant's and Feuerbach's tenderness for things and the methodology of natural science lives on in Western Marxism, but the irony of this position escapes its exponents. "The unity of the sciences", declares Benton,

... justifies the practice of looking to the natural sciences for analogues of the conceptions of causality and of explanation which are required in the social sciences, and also of demanding that they are consistent with the basic laws and propositions of the physical sciences. (1977:199)

In the Lesser Logic, of course, Hegel subjects the category of ground or causality to a searching critique, and condemns its

uncritical use in the realm of human consciousness and society.

... It happens that a ground can be found and adduced for everything: and a good ground (for example, a good motive for action) may effect something or may not, it may have a consequence or it may not. It becomes a motive (strictly so called) and effects something, e.g. through its reception into a will; there and there only it becomes active and is made a cause. (Hegel, 1975:179)

Feuerbach's materialism leads him to glorify the human senses at the expense of what Hegel calls ideality — the theoretical and practical activity of men and women. According to Feuerbach, human superiority over other animals lies neither in consciousness and will, nor in reason, but rather in the development of the senses of feeling, hearing, seeing, and so on.

Man does not have the sense of smell of a hunting dog or of a raven, but only because his sense of smell is a sense embracing all kinds of smell; hence it is a freer sense which, however, is indifferent to particular smells. But wherever a sense is elevated above the limits of particularity and its bondage to needs, it is elevated to an independent and theoretical significance and dignity ... Even the lowest senses, smell and taste, elevate themselves in man to intellectual and scientific acts. The smell and taste of things are objects of natural science. Indeed even the stomach of man, which we view so contemptuously, is not animal but human because it is a universal being that is not limited to certain kinds of food ... He who concludes his view of man with the stomach, placing it in the class of animals, also consigns man, as far as eating is concerned, to bestiality. (1966:69-70)

Feuerbach's observations on the senses are actually derived from Hegel's Philosophy of Mind (1969); but where Hegel relegates sensation to the lowest level of thought, Feuerbach never attains to a critical examination of the higher levels of consciousness which Hegel, following Kant, calls understanding and reason.

The young Marx is not so certain that mere sensation is above

intelligence and will, but the 1844 Manuscripts contain many passages reminiscent of Feuerbach's "sensationalism". "... Man", writes the young Marx,

is affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking, but with all his senses ... The forming of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present ... Thus, the objectification of the human essence, both in its theoretical and practical aspects, is required to make man's sense human, as well as to create the human sense corresponding to the entire wealth of human and natural substance. (1964:141)

This emphasis on the human sensations drops out of the work of the mature Marx and finds no place in Hegel's writings, but the Feuerbachian influence has affected the so-called "Hegelian Marxists". Among them is Herbert Marcuse for whom "'The revolution will throw up new men with new needs even at the biological and instinctual level'". (Quoted in Walton and Gamble, 1971:91)

For contemporary Western Marxism, the chief difference between classical German Idealism, as exemplified by Kant and Hegel, and materialism, lies in the "acknowledgement" by materialism "of the reality and independence of the external world ... This", as Colletti observes, "is, of course, a fundamental thesis". (1977:327) Marxism is divided over many questions of theory but not over this one. Thus both Colletti and his Althusserian opponents accept "the priority of being or matter over thought and therefore the dependence of the latter on the former". (Colletti, 1973:201) But there is a difference between acknowledgement of the independent reality of the external world, and the affirmation of the priority of matter and being over thought. Neither Kant nor Hegel for a moment denied the independent reality of the external world: the essential distinction between being

and thought. However, in the view of Western Marxism this is the foundation of their philosophies and the root of all their errors. In an otherwise intelligent account, Martin Jay, for example, assures his readers that "The Frankfurt School never reverted to the idealist notion of the world as the creation of consciousness." (1974:268)

Even the briefest and most superficial acquaintance with Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1793) confirms that Kant is acutely aware that there is a world which exists independently of the thinking mind. The same is true of Hegel. "Nothing", he writes, "can be more obvious than that anything we only think or conceive is not on that account actual; the mental representation, and even the notional [theoretical] comprehension, always falls short of being ... Those who perpetually urge against the philosophic Idea the difference between Being and Thought might have admitted that philosophers were not wholly ignorant of the fact. Can there be any proposition more trite than this?" (1975:84-85) But this "trite" proposition has been taken by Western Marxism as a mark of its intellectual superiority over the idealism of Kant and Hegel. Lukács, for instance, who approves of "the materialist criticism of Hegel's position by Feuerbach", claims that Hegel's philosophy has "a definite idealistic significance: ... the total supercession of the objective world". (1975:528, 513)

The received Western Marxist view of German Idealism is especially dear to the current bête noir of modern-day Marxism, Stalin. "Contrary to idealism," writes Stalin,

which asserts that only our mind really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our mind, in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist materialist philosophy holds that matter, nature, being, is an objective reality existing outside

our mind; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, mind and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being, that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely of the brain, and that the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. (1940:15-16)

Stalin perceptively observes that "it is easy to understand how important is the ... application ... of the philosophical principles of philosophical materialism ... to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat." (1940:19) Althusser describes the results of this application:

the decay of philosophy into a practical ideology, sustaining the political ideology of the party by providing it with the guarantee of the 'laws' of the dialectic, encourages the party to close in on itself, to cut itself off from the outside world. It deprives it of the political benefit which a real Marxist philosophy, a 'critical and revolutionary' philosophy, could contribute both to its theory and to its historical practice, in every domain. (1977:15)

By asserting the priority of being over thought, Marxism unwittingly denies the very essence of Marx's "revolutionising practice" or what Hegel calls, ideality. For what these terms mean, above all, is the transformation, creation, and formation of external reality by conscious human activity: the dependence, as it were, of matter on mind. The result of the materialist (and metaphysical) position that mind is dependent on matter has been precisely what Marx predicted in 1845: "this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society ..." (1969, I:12) In Russia itself materialism "became an alienating ideology expressing and serving the interests of the new dominant class

produced in the course of Stalinist industrialization". (Claudin, 1975:604) Since matter is primary and mind secondary, there is little need for the "broad masses" to think overmuch about what will happen anyway through the "inexorable laws" of history. This doctrine, understandable enough in a rapidly developing but backward country, has absolutely no place in an advanced country where self-dependence and self-directed industriousness is the rule rather than the exception. But it remains a linchpin in the ideology of modern Western Marxism.

The reason for the survival of this materialist doctrine among Marxists in the advanced Western countries lies in the alienated character of bourgeois society itself, a character which will be detailed below. But this survival has historical roots as well. Marxism, as it is practised today, retains its connection with the radical generation of the 1930's and 1940's. "The distinctive feature" of this generation, writes Claudin, was its "total lack of any critical spirit towards anything which carried the Soviet label, a disregard for theory — since all important problems were solved 'from above' — and what was known in the party jargon as 'practicism'." Theory was ignored by these new recruits to Communism, except that spoon-fed to them by Stalin. "No one came to Lenin except through Stalin. Marx came a long way behind, in third place. It was this generation which provided the middle-rank organizers and many of the leaders in the period of the resistance, the liberation, 'national unity', the 'cold war', the People's Democracies, etc." (1975:642) The radical generation which grew up in the Western democracies of the 1960's found itself unable to express its opposition to the existing order except



with the categories bequeathed to it by the "old Left". These categories did not explain very much; certainly they did not explain the struggle and initiative of thousands of working- and middle-class individuals who (independently) decided to change the world in their own image.

No more than Kant and Hegel, Marx does not deny the independent reality of the external world, of nature, of reality as given by the sensations. But he does deny that this affirmation of external reality implies anything other than that. The world, nature, external reality, is certainly there, "the point, however, is to change it". (1969, I: 15) Hegel puts the same idea another way: "... Neither we nor the objects" of the external world "would have anything to gain by the mere fact that they possessed being. The main point is not, that they are, but what they are, and whether or not their content is true. It does no good to the things to say merely that they have being. What has being, will also cease to be when time creeps over it." (1975:70) As far as the external reality of nature is concerned, says Hegel, "Nature, the totality immediately before us, unfolds itself into the two extremes of the logical Idea [theory] and Mind [human practical activity]. But Mind is only Mind when it is mediated through Nature." And again: "Nature is for man only the starting point which he has to transform..." (1975:251, 44)

In his critique of Feuerbach's materialism, Marx observes that "revolutionising practice" — "this unceasing sensuous labour and creation, this production" of men and women in society — leaves

the priority of external nature ... unassailed, and all this has no application to the original men produced by generatio aequivoca (spontaneous

generation); but this differentiation has meaning only in so far as man is considered to be distinct from nature. For that matter, nature, the nature that preceded human history, is not by any means the nature in which Feuerbach lives, not the nature which today no longer exists anywhere ... and which, therefore, does not exist for Feuerbach. (1971: 84-85)

The reality given to Feuerbach's five senses, as well as to those of contemporary Western Marxists, is the mediated reality of human sensuous activity. "... The important question", notes Marx,

of the relation of man to nature ... out of which all the 'unfathomably lofty works' on 'substance' and 'self-consciousness' were born, crumbles of itself when we understand that the celebrated 'unity of man with nature' has always existed in industry and has existed in varying forms in every epoch according to the lesser or greater development of industry, just like the 'struggle' of man with nature, right up to the development of his productive powers on a corresponding basis. (1971:84)

Feuerbach's belief, which he inherited from Kant, that nature is a sort of "thing-in-itself" available only to the senses and ultimately beyond the grasp of human reason and sensuous activity, has influenced even those thinkers who are outside the main-stream of Marxist thought. Accordingly, Giddens in his New Rules of Sociological Method, suggests that

The difference between society and nature is that nature is not man-made, is not produced by man. Human beings, of course, transform nature ... But nature is not a human production, society is ... Theories men develop may, through their technological applications affect nature, but they cannot come to constitute features of the natural world as they do in the case of the social world. (1976:15, 160)

But what exactly is what Giddens calls, "the natural world"? As Marx points out, the natural world, as we know it, is not anything like the original nature which confronted the earliest human being. Even the

cherry tree — which Feuerbach uses to confute Hegel's Absolute Idea by demonstrating that it is not an ethereal idea but something which Feuerbach can bump his head on — even this cherry tree "like all fruit trees, was, as is well known, only a few centuries ago transplanted by commerce into our zone, and therefore only by this action of a definite society in a definite age it has become 'sensuous certainty' for Feuerbach". (1971:84) If the industrial revolution, for example, created modern British society, it also created an entirely new form of "nature" in the British countryside. That is, it not only transformed nature, but created a new one; a world of sheep and cattle breeds, varieties of vegetation and so on, utterly unknown before. Further, modern biology stands on the threshold of an era where life itself will no longer be "God's" or "nature's" prerogative, but one of the creations of human theory and practical activity.

There is no "nature" standing external to and outside of human consciousness and ideality. Men and women transform and create nature by taking advantage of natural laws as they are grasped in theory, in the same way as they transform and create society by developing and using their own natural human rationality. The individual, says Marx, must recognize "nature (equally present as practical power over nature) as his own real body". (1973:542) As Hegel puts it, "For these thousands of years the same Architect has directed the work: and that Architect is the one living mind," — the ideality of the human individual — "whose nature is to think, to bring to self-consciousness what it is, and with its being", i.e., nature and society, "thus set as object before it, to be at the same time raised above it, and so to reach a higher stage of its own being". (1975:18) The same idea is

expressed, though in less abstract terms, by Marx in the Grundrisse:

... Just as production founded on capital creates universal industriousness on one side — i.e. surplus labour, value-creating labour — so does it create on the other side a system of general exploitation of the natural and human qualities [my emphasis — D.M.], a system of general utility, utilizing science itself just as much as all the physical and mental qualities, while there appears nothing higher in itself, nothing legitimate for itself, outside this circle of production and exchange. Thus capital creates bourgeois society, and the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond itself by the members of society. Hence the great civilizing influence of capital; its production of a stage of society in comparison to which all earlier ones appear as mere local developments of humanity and as nature-idolatry. For the first time, nature becomes purely an object for humanity, purely a matter of utility; ceases to be recognized as a power for itself; and the theoretical discovery of its autonomous laws appears merely as a ruse [of reason — D.M.] so as to subjugate it under human needs, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production. (1973:409-410)

For Hegel, alienation — what in modern times has also been called "false consciousness" — is precisely that type of human consciousness which persists in seeing things as external to, somehow outside of and above, human theory and sensuous practice. Consciousness is the relation of knowledge to its object; and knowledge in turn, "means such an acquaintance with its object as apprehends its distinct and special subject matter". (Hegel, 1975:74) False consciousness or alienation, on this definition, is the view that certain aspects of reality — whether they are social or natural — are beyond the reach of knowledge, of human rationality and practical activity. Recognition of the essential unity of mind, society and nature as it is achieved in the science and industry of modern men and women is the ultimate meaning, states Hegel, of the phrase "Know thyself":

... the summons to the Greeks of the Delphic Apollo, Know thyself, does not have the meaning of a law externally imposed on the human mind by an alien power; on the contrary, the god who impels to self-knowledge is none other than the absolute law of mind itself. Mind is, therefore, in its every act only apprehending itself, and the aim of all genuine science is just this, that mind shall recognize itself in everything in heaven and earth. An out-and-out Other simply does not exist for Mind. (1969:1)

The abolition of alienation, otherness, false consciousness, is the truth of ideality, human sensuous activity, revolutionizing practice:

This triumph over externality which belongs to the Notion of mind, is what we have called the ideality of mind. Every activity of mind is nothing but a distinct mode of reducing what is external to the inwardness which mind itself is, and it is only by this reduction, by this idealization or assimilation, of what is external that it becomes and is mind. (Hegel, 1969:11)

Hegel argues that "finite mind" — what he also calls the "understanding", "reflection", the Enlightenment consciousness and so on (and which Marx calls, bourgeois thought) — considers the outside world, nature, to be an external reality which is only passively transformed by human ideality; that is, nature and society is believed to remain outside of, or alienated from, ideality or human theory and practice. There is no doubt of the "distinctive determinateness of external Nature and Mind [society] as such", but this distinction is overcome by revolutionizing practice.

We have said that mind negates the externality of Nature, assimilates Nature to itself and thereby idealizes it. In finite Mind which places Nature outside of it, this idealization has a one-sided shape: here the activity of our willing, as of our thinking, is confronted by an external material which is indifferent to the alteration which we impose on it and suffers quite passively the idealization which thus falls to its lot. (1969:13)

According to Hegel, "absolute mind" — which Marx would call, communist consciousness — recognizes the essential unity of mind with society and nature as it is achieved through ideality or revolutionizing practice:

Only in ... absolute mind ... does the Idea apprehend itself in a form which is neither the one-sided form of Notion or subjectivity [theory], nor merely the equally one-sided form of objectivity or actuality, but is the perfect unity of these its distinct moments, that is, in its absolute truth.  
(1969:12)

Hegel refers to alienation or false-consciousness as "illusory appearance", a term he borrowed from Kant. Illusory appearance, then is the notion that mind or human consciousness is somehow dependent on external reality, rather than its supreme arbiter. Illusory appearance, as I have suggested, is particularly endemic to Western Marxism which sees mind or human knowledge and practice as dependent upon and passive in relation to external social reality and nature. This illusion can only be removed by practice, by individual human ideality.

The illusory appearance which makes mind seem to be mediated by an Other is removed by mind itself, since this has so to speak the sovereign ingratitude of ridding itself, of mediatizing, that by which it appears to be mediated, of reducing it to something dependent solely on mind and in this way making itself completely self-subsistent.  
(Hegel, 1969:14)

Feuerbach's materialism, its reliance and dependence on sensation and external reality corresponds to what Hegel calls the first stage of human consciousness — that of "finding a world presupposed before us". The second stage, that of "generating a world of our own creation" (1969:22) is reached by Kant's philosophy which will be considered in the next chapter. Both these ways of considering the

world belong to "finite mind" — to bourgeois (and contemporary Marxist) consciousness. Much of bourgeois social theory has an advantage over certain aspects of Western Marxist theory in that it incorporates the heritage of Kant's philosophy. This advantage is shown above all in bourgeois ideality — the production, reproduction, maintenance and extension of capitalist relations of production, which have survived Marx by almost 100 years and which are likely to do so for a few more years at least. But for Western Marxism Hegel is a closed book, and Marxist theory has been unable to go beyond Marx — or even properly to understand him — precisely because it has not incorporated the revolutionary aspects of Hegel's absolute idealism.

For Hegel, finite mind or false consciousness "means the disproportion between concept and reality". But this finitude is itself the result of the activity of consciousness — it is a false consciousness that creates itself. As Hegel puts it, "it is a shadow cast by the mind's own light — a show or illusion which the mind implicitly imposes as a barrier to itself, in order, by its removal, actually to realize and become conscious of freedom as its very being, i.e. to be fully manifested". (1969:22)

What Hegel means by this passage is brilliantly explicated by Marx in the famous section of Capital called, "The Fetishism of Commodities and its Secret". Marx observes that the commodity embodies nothing more than human labour-power, and the value of a commodity is an expression of the human labour embodied in it. Commodities are equivalent to one another, that is, they may be exchanged for one another, precisely on the basis that they embody human labour-power considered in the abstract as universal human labour or value. Money, as the

universal equivalent, is the social mediator between commodities as values, and facilitates their exchange. All this, however, is beyond the ken of the economist who insists on seeing value, not as abstract human labour manifested in the object, but rather as an aspect of the external object itself. Writes Marx,

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. (1976:164-165)

In bourgeois society, production takes place as "the labour of private individuals who work independently of each other". The social character of their labour is lost on people in capitalist society since everyone appears to be pursuing his or her private ends, independently of anyone else. The only conscious productive social relation between people is simply that of the exchange of their private labours.

In other words, the labour of the private individuals manifests itself as an element of the total labour of society only through the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and, through their mediation, between the producers. To the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appears as what they are, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material ... relations between persons and social relations between things. (1976:165-166)

When people exchange the products of their labour with one another, what they are actually doing is equating "their different kinds of labour as human labour. They do this without being aware of it". (1976:166-167; my emphasis) In other words, "it is a shadow



cast by the mind's own light" — an illusory appearance in consciousness brought about by bourgeois ideality itself. Marx observes that the classical economists, such as Smith, James Mill and Ricardo, had advanced as far as what Hegel calls, the second stage of consciousness: "generating a world as our own creation". They recognized that the wealth of bourgeois society is the creation of human labour, but they could not go beyond this point because they took the commodity relation as an eternal and objectively valid aspect of all societies, not just of bourgeois society itself. In a word, the classical economists thought they had discovered a relationship equivalent to one in the natural sciences. They applied the external methodology of finite science, which has no knowledge of human consciousness and will, to a province in which individual ideality is the ultimate category. "The belated scientific discovery", writes Marx,

that the products of labour, in so far as they are values, are merely the material expressions of the human labour expended on them, marks an epoch in the history of mankind's development, but by no means banishes the semblance of objectivity possessed by the social character of labour. Something which is only valid for this particular form of production, the production of commodities, namely the fact that the specific social character of private labours carried on independently of each other consists in their equality as human labour, and, in the product, assumes the form of the existence of value, appears to those caught up in the relations of commodity production (and this is true both before and after the above-mentioned scientific discovery) to be just as ultimately valid as the fact that the scientific dissection of the air into its component parts left the atmosphere itself unaltered in its physical configuration. (1976:167)

The formulae of the classical economists, writes Marx, "which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the

opposite, appear to the political economists' bourgeois consciousness to be as much self-evident and nature-imposed necessity as productive labour itself". The bourgeois economists could not foresee, nor could they comprehend, the transformation of capitalist society into a social form in which the rationality of freely associated individuals, rather than the abstract forces of the market for commodities, will rule and determine social relations. (1976:173-175) But the alienation or false consciousness characteristic of the bourgeois epoch is a necessary phase or moment in the transformation to what Hegel calls, the third stage of human consciousness, "gaining freedom from" the natural and social world "and in it". (1969:22) Marx outlines these three stages in the Grundrisse:

Relations of personal dependence (entirely spontaneous at the outset) are the first social forms, in which human productive capacity develops only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence founded on objective ... dependence [i.e., capitalism] is the second great form, in which a system of general social metabolism, of universal relations, of all-round needs and universal capacities is formed for the first time. Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth is the third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third. (1973:158)

For Marx as for Hegel, capitalism is a barrier to consciousness; the alienation it imposes, the subordination of individuals to the rule of capital, is only the pre-condition for the development of a freer and richer individuality among its members. As it stands, bourgeois society is "a mass of antithetical forms of the social unity, whose antithetical character can never be abolished through quiet metamorphosis". Nevertheless, "if we did not find concealed in society as it is the material conditions of production and the corresponding relations

of exchange prerequisite for a classless society, then all attempts to explode it would be quixotic." (1973:159)

## 2. Alienation and Natural Science

"Feuerbach", writes Vogel, "is one of those thinkers who in the course of their careers radically changed their views." Although he was for fifteen years a loyal disciple of Hegel, "Feuerbach's distinct contribution is made as an empiricist, not as an idealist ..." (1966:ix) As shown in the previous section, Feuerbach's empiricism linked him not only to materialism but also to natural science. Natural science lends itself most easily to quantification and the abstract relations of mathematics, and, remarks Hegel, "this mere mathematical view ... viz. quantity, is no other than the principle of Materialism." (1975:147) Quantity or number is the thought-form closest to sensuous perception, to Feuerbach's sensationalism. Number, writes Hegel, is "a thought, but thought in its complete self-externalization. Because it is a thought, it does not belong to perception: but it is a thought which is characterized by the externality of Perception". (1975:153)

Number is a category of thought since it is not really a part of the external world; numbers are thoughts people independently attach to objects and are not aspects of the objects themselves. Nevertheless, number expresses an essential aspect of objects, namely "what is many, and in reciprocal exclusion". (Hegel, 1975:154) The category of number is an essential aspect of Feuerbach's ultimate

standard of objectivity: the intersubjectively valid correspondence between thought and its object. We know a thing is singular, a "one", for example, because we can see it and touch it; other thought-forms tend to elude this certitude. Writes Hegel,

The ordinary definition of truth, according to which it is "the harmony of the conception with the object" is certainly not borne out by the conception; for when I represent to myself a house, a beam, and so on, I am by no means this content, but something entirely different, and therefore very far from being in harmony with the object of my conception. (1894:150)

The "exact sciences", such as physics, are so-called precisely because of their reliance on number as an absolute category. "Strictly speaking", notes Karl Mannheim, "from this point of view, only what is measurable should be regarded as scientific ... the ideal science has been mathematically and geometrically demonstrable knowledge ... Modern positivism (which has always retained its affinity for the bourgeois-liberal outlook and which has developed in its spirit) has always adhered to this ideal of science and truth." (1966:147) Just as the early bourgeois philosophers attempted to put their ideas in mathematical form and "regarded with an envious eye the systematic structure of mathematics", (Hegel, 1954:190) many Western Marxists admire and try to imitate the method of natural science. For these Marxists and their bourgeois opponents alike, "science is a neutral structure containing positive knowledge that is independent of culture, ideology, prejudice". (Feyerabend, 1978:302) Accordingly, a recent critic of Lukács demands that Marxism should become "a real and responsible science". Castigating Lukács for his failure to kneel before the altar of natural science, this writer laments that "far from social-historical knowledge straining to attain a degree of

certainty comparable to natural science, the methodology and findings of natural science are demoted [by Lukács] to the status of being a particular form of expression of the world vision of the bourgeoisie". (Jones, 1977:34, 37)

An aspect of the alienated consciousness of Western Marxism is its adherence to the "either-or" syndrome: science is either bourgeois, or neutral and objective: it cannot be both. In fact, however, science can be both bourgeois and objective — as Marx demonstrates by criticizing the categories of bourgeois political economy with ... the categories of bourgeois political economy. "... The forms of production" of capitalism, says Marx, "... are theoretically or ideally expressed by the categories of political economy". (1973:489) Natural science is bourgeois, i.e., it arose with bourgeois society and has attained a high degree of development under capitalism. But it is also (to a degree) neutral and objective. Similarly, both atheism and materialism are also bourgeois, for the same reasons: they are not the exclusive property of Marxists. But natural science, besides being neutral and objective is also an alienated and severely limited system of thought: for it treats its object as something other to, and independent of, human ideality.

The limitation of natural science is also the limitation of bourgeois thought itself, where bourgeois thought means what Hegel calls "reflection", the "understanding" and so on — and means also, as I have argued, the consciousness of Western Marxism. This limitation is rooted in the bourgeois mode of production, in the production of commodities, of things produced for profitable sale in the market. It consists precisely in the view of reality as being constituted by

things external to, and independent of, human consciousness and will. It is a form of thought which sees the objects constituted by human endeavour as things alienated or apart from consciousness. It is useful to recall that the term alienation, which classical German philosophy took over from the English, has as one of its primary meanings "The action of transferring the ownership of anything to another." (OED, 1971:55)

One aspect of alienation under capitalism is that the independent individual worker sees the product of his or her conscious activity as a thing belonging to the capitalist. "Capitalist production", writes Marx, "is the first to develop the conditions of the labour process ... on a large scale — it tears them from the independent worker, but develops them as powers that control the individual worker and are alien to him. In this way capital becomes a highly mysterious thing." (1976:1056) The labour process under capitalism, Marx continues, "does not reproduce just capital, but also the product", i.e., the commodity. At the beginning of the labour process, "the conditions of production confronted the worker as capital only in the sense that he found them existing as autonomous beings opposed to himself. What", at the end of the process, "he now finds so opposed to him is the product of his own labour." (1976:1061)

Not only the commodity and capital itself are considered to be independent, autonomous things, but also science, culture, and so on — all these are believed to be aspects of an independent, alien capitalism existing opposed to, and apart from, the individual. "The transposition of the social productivity of labour into attributes of capital", Marx observes, "is so firmly entrenched in people's minds

that the advantages of machinery, the use of science, invention, etc. are necessarily conceived in this alienated form, so that all these things are deemed to be attributes of capital." (1976:1058) Enmeshed in the understanding mode of thought, Western Marxism is reduced to defining culture, science, etc., as an other, as an aspect of capital — as "bourgeois culture", "bourgeois social science", and so on.

Western Marxism fails to recognize that while these things are certainly aspects of the bourgeois mode of production, they are also the productions of the independent individuals within it. "The basis for this" illusion, states Marx,

is (1) the form in which these objects appear in the framework of capitalist production and hence in the minds of those caught up in that mode of production, (2) the historical fact that this development first occurs in capitalism, in contrast to earlier modes of production, and so its contradictory character appears to be an integral aspect of it. (1976:1058)

The most far-reaching aspect of this alienation of human consciousness and ideality from itself is the mystified view, propounded by all shades of the political spectrum, that the great progress achieved in production, consumption, education and so on represents the achievement of the bourgeoisie, and not of all the individuals within the capitalist mode of production. In his critique of "late capitalism" Mandel provides an instructive example of the headstands forced on Marxist theoreticians by the movement of capitalist society. On one page, for example, Mandel laments the take-over of the socialist press, cooperative publishers and so on by the "bourgeois" media. This, he gravely informs us, represents "a far-ranging reprivatization of the recreational sphere of the working class". Mandel spares his readers an examination of the Stalinist character "of the spheres of collective

action and solidarity of the proletariat" represented by much of the working-class media so heartlessly usurped by the capitalists. But on another page he speaks of "the growing interest of a wide public for Marxist literature" which is obligingly served by bourgeois publishers. Of course, this is explained by the mindlessness of the capitalists who are too stupid to perceive the results of their own actions, i.e., "the mass formation (or heightening) of anti-capitalist consciousness". (1978:393, 507-508) There may, however, be another explanation. For example, it may be that capitalist society is not the bourgeois monolith that Western Marxism thinks it is.

The growth of profit and the availability of consumer goods through increased production and reduced prices under capitalism, writes Marx,

appear to be the direct act and achievement of the capitalist, who functions here as the personification of the social character of labour, of the workshop as a whole. In the same way, science, which is in fact the general intellectual product of the social process, also appears to be the direct offshoot of capital (since its application to the material process of production takes place in isolation from the knowledge and abilities of the individual worker). And since society is marked by the exploitation of labour by capital, its development appears to be the productive force of capital as opposed to labour. It therefore appears to be the development of capital, and all the more so since, for the great majority, it is a product with which the drawing off of labour-power keeps pace. (1976:1053)

An aspect of this alienation from their own society, is the tendency of Western Marxists to deny the progress achieved under contemporary capitalism, or, if they do recognize it, to attribute it almost entirely to the plunder and exploitation of the Third World. The achievements of nineteenth-century capitalism are acknowledged (because they were applauded by Marx) but not those of the present day.



To paraphrase Marx, "there has been history, but there is no longer any". (1966:175) "It is only because of the phenomenon of imperialism," states Mandel,

or more precisely the beginning of the capitalist mode of production's decline, that Marx's old dictum that the most advanced countries mirror the future of the least advanced is no longer generally applicable in the twentieth century. (1978a:29)

Accordingly, all the hard-won advances achieved by individuals within the Western democracies, such as universal suffrage, the creation of a mass consumer economy, the growing recognition of female equality, the ever-widening field of individual freedoms, and so on, are attributed to "imperialism" and held to be irrelevant to the Third World. For this abstract frame of mind the socialist republics appear to represent a glowing standard of progress. "... Any Marxist", suggests Mandel,

... is compelled to recognize the progressive character of the [Soviet] bureaucracy relative to the bourgeoisie, and must credit it with the enormous economic and cultural achievements of the U.S.S.R., just as the achievements of the nineteenth century must be clearly credited to the bourgeoisie. (1978a:30)

Claudin, the historian of the Communist movement, declares, however, that "the new forms of human alienation, oppression and exploitation" practised in the U.S.S.R. represent "in some respects ... a regression from the forms familiar under 'advanced' capitalism". (1975:601) The view put forward by Mandel, which is representative of Western Marxist thinking on this issue, has led to the absence of a Marxist theoretical system capable of grasping the reality of the advanced capitalist world.

For Hegel, as for Marx, the labour process as it occurs under the

bourgeois mode of production is a process of "outward necessity". The production of commodities by the worker is accomplished according to a force and direction contrary to his or her inclination. In Marx's words, "labour capacity relates to its labour as to an alien, and if capital were willing to pay for it without making it labour it would enter the bargain with pleasure". (1973:462) Hegel's analysis of the labour process as it occurs specifically under capitalism appears in the "Second Subdivision of Logic" in the Lesser Logic. This subdivision entitled, "The Doctrine of Essence" is concerned with the categories of the understanding or bourgeois consciousness. Here Hegel discusses the production of "the fact" or commodity, a process which, as Hegel suggests, is completely external or alien to the individual worker. Everything in this process is pre-supposed or independent of the individual: the conditions of labour are "prior, and so independent ... contingent and external ..." The design and plan for the commodity to be produced "is also ... something pre-supposed or antestated ... an independent content by itself". The individual worker is free and independent, but his or her activity or labour "is possible only where the [external] conditions are and the fact". (1975:211-212)

Because the labour process under capitalism is accomplished by elements which "stand to each other in the shape of independent existences", this process "has a limited content for its fact. For the fact is this whole, in phase of singleness. But since in its form this whole is external to itself, it is self-externalized even in its own self and in its content, and this externality, attaching to the fact, is a limit of its content". Hegel's analysis is extremely

abstract, but its meaning is clear:

Whatever is necessary is through an other, which is broken up into the mediating ground (the Fact and the Activity) and an immediate actuality or accidental circumstance which is at the same time a Condition. The necessary, being through an other, is not in and for itself: hypothetical it is the mere result of assumption. (1975:212)

Hegel's abstract analysis is put in concrete terms by Marx. All things under capitalism, he writes,

confront the individual workers as something alien, objective, ready-made, existing without their intervention and frequently hostile to them ... As objects they are independent of the workers whom they dominate. Though the workshop is to a degree the product of the workers' combination, its entire intelligence and will seem to be incorporated in the capitalist or his under-strappers [Marx's word], and the workers find themselves confronted by the functions of the capital that lives in the capitalist. The social forms of their own labour ... the forms of their own social labour, are utterly independent of the individual workers. (1976:1054)

But if the worker is alienated, so is the capitalist. Like the worker, the capitalist has no interest in the commodity: its production and sale is regulated and determined by market forces independent of the capitalist. Not the commodity, but profit, is the aim of the "entrepreneur". The labour process itself is for the capitalist a "necessary evil" required for the amassing of profit. This "highly impoverished and abstract content ... makes it plain that the capitalist is just as enslaved by the relations of capitalism as is his opposite pole, the worker, albeit in a quite different manner". (Marx, 1976:990)

Given the alienated character of bourgeois consciousness and society, it is not difficult to understand why the development of natural science constitutes one of its most outstanding achievements.

As Korsch suggests, "Bourgeois consciousness necessarily sees itself as apart from the world and independent of it, as pure critical philosophy and impartial science ..." (1970:97) Nor is it surprising that both natural science and its object are felt to be independent of the social activity of individual human beings. But the object of science, after all, is not just the thing being investigated but also and most important the thing as it is placed and understood within a theoretical system. And this system is, above everything else, a product of the development of individual human consciousness, "the accumulated knowledge of society". (Marx, 1973:712) If under the bourgeois mode of production, "capital comes to be thought of as a thing" (Marx, 1976:982), this same "transformation may be observed in the forces of nature and science, the products of the general development of history in its abstract quintessence. They too confront the workers as the powers of capital." (Marx, 1976:1055)

The alienated conception of capital, natural science and nature as independent and autonomous powers existing apart from the consciousness and ideality of the individual is paralleled, of course, by the materialist belief in matter as the ultimate and inviolable component of reality. "The dominant basic trend in contemporary bourgeois philosophy, natural sciences and humanities ...", writes Korsch, "is inspired not by an idealist outlook but by a materialist outlook that is coloured by the natural sciences." (1970:129) And for the natural sciences, of course, matter is the fundamental category. "In the field of physical science", notes Hegel, "the universal, which is the final result of analysis, is only the

indeterminate aggregate — of the external finite — in one word, Matter ..." (1975:96)

The materialist belief is articulated by Feuerbach's philosophy which "takes matter as a real and independent being and therefore bases itself on sensation as the primary means of the authentic cognition of reality". (Vogel, 1966:1xxiii) "... Being, apart from thought," writes Feuerbach, "is matter — the substratum of reality." (1966:45) The young Marx shares Feuerbach's notion of matter and observes that "the first and most important of the inherent qualities of matter is motion ..." (1971:79) The idea that moving matter is, as Engels and Lenin suggest, "the only reality" the "objective reality given to us in sensation" and so forth, is the foundation of "dialectical materialism" as well as most other variants of Marxism. Nevertheless, the basic idea of materialism and natural science — the assertion of the independent, autonomous, alien, character of moving matter — is a myth. Writes Hegel,

Materialism ... looks upon matter, qua matter, as the genuine objective world. But with matter we are at once introduced to an abstraction, which as such cannot be perceived, and it may be maintained that there is no matter, because as it exists, it is always something definite and concrete. Yet the abstraction we term matter is supposed to lie at the whole world of sense, and expresses the sense-world in its simplest terms as out-and-out individualization, and hence as a congeries of points in mutual exclusion. (1975:63-64)

Writing from a neo-Kantian standpoint, Karl Popper echoes Hegel's observations on materialism and applies them to the actual theoretical practice of modern science. The research programme of science, says Popper, started from the assumption that matter "was ultimate; essential; substantial; an essence or substance neither capable of further

explanation nor in need of it, and thus a principle in terms of which everything else had to be, or could be explained". But "Modern physics contains explanatory theories of matter and of the properties of matter ... In thus explaining matter, and its properties modern physics transcended the original programme of materialism ... Matter", Popper continues,

is not "substance", since it is not conserved: it can be destroyed and it can be created ... Matter turns out to be highly packed energy, transformable into other forms of energy; and therefore something of the nature of a process, since it can be converted into other processes such as light, and of course, motion and heat.

Thus one may say that the results of modern physics suggest that we should give up the idea of a substance or essence. They suggest that there is no self-identical entity persisting through all changes in time ...; that there is no essence which is the persisting carrier or possessor of the properties or qualities of a thing. The universe now appears to be not a collection of things, but an interacting set of events or processes. (1977:6-7)

Of course, what this means is that the world is not a collection of independent things available as such to Feuerbach's sensuous conception, but rather the external world, as it is in reality, can only be understood and grasped through theory, through human ideality. Nature is not something independent of human endeavour, but something which can only be grasped, understood and utilized through thought and practical activity.

For the understanding consciousness in both its bourgeois and Marxist form, the denial that the methodology of natural science constitutes what Feyerabend ironically calls, "a lonely peak of human development", (1978:302) appears to be a foul slander against all that is good in the world. G. Stedman Jones, for example, declares "there will never be a millennium in which the formal analytic procedures of

natural science will cease to be applied to those objects for which they are the adequate instruments of appropriation." To deny the eternal character of the methodology of natural science (the objects of which include living organisms) is to turn aside from "the liberating effects of industrialization and scientific discovery". (1977:58, 34) Jones' polemic is delivered against the errors of Lukács' History and Class Consciousness. For all Lukács' faults, however, he never once questions the validity of natural science in its own realm. "When the ideal of scientific knowledge is applied to nature," he writes, "it simply furthers the progress of science. When it is applied to society it turns out to be an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie." (1971:10) Hegel also has no wish to deny "the brilliant successes of the physical or 'exact' sciences in ascertaining natural forces and laws". Nevertheless, "it is certainly not on the finite ground occupied by these sciences that we can expect to meet the indwelling presence of the infinite [i.e., individual consciousness and society]." (1975:96)

Another aspect of the respect for natural science current in Western Marxism is Althusser's notion that philosophy comes after and builds upon the results of natural science. For Althusser, "only science produces new knowledge; philosophy then works to transform and articulate this knowledge". (Althusser, 1969:14) To a degree, of course, Althusser is correct. As Kant explains, "... we have complete insight only into what we can make and accomplish according to our conceptions." (1973:34) Accordingly, early materialist philosophy certainly had its origins in the science of mechanics and its practical applications. Moreover, writes Hegel, "the empirical

sciences are "the real authors of growth and advance in philosophy". (1975:18) But Althusser's contention is based on the separation (or alienation), characteristic of our epoch, between science and philosophy — a separation unthinkable, in Britain at least, even up to the nineteenth century. "Newton", writes Hegel, "continues to be celebrated as the greatest of philosophers: and the name goes down as far as the price lists of instrument-makers. All instruments, such as the thermometer and barometer ... are styled philosophical instruments." (1975:11)

But Althusser's conception of the relation between science and philosophy suffers from a deeper error. The main categories such as "matter, force, those of one, many, generality, infinity, etc." were among the earliest creations of philosophy and were the primary categories employed by the mediaeval metaphysicians in their attempt to determine the existence and nature of God. (Hegel, 1975:62) They were taken over quite uncritically in the sixteenth century by the sciences and applied directly to nature. "And all the while," observes Hegel, "... scientific empiricism ... is unaware that it contains metaphysics — in wielding which, it makes use of these categories and their combinations in a style utterly thoughtless and uncritical." (1975:62) Similarly, the sensuous conceptions of time and space, postulated by Kant to be the bedrock of human thought, were mindlessly utilized by science right into the early twentieth century when they were suddenly exploded by Einstein. Their demise would undoubtedly have come earlier had scientists been aware of Hegel's critique of these "absolute" categories. (Hegel, 1896:433-436) Hegel points out that the basic categories of natural science — quantity, quality and



measure — "just because they are the first, are also the poorest, i.e. the most abstract. Immediate (sensible) consciousness, in so far as it simultaneously includes an intellectual element, is especially restricted to the absolute categories of quality and quantity. The sensuous consciousness is in ordinary estimation the most concrete and also the richest; but that is only true as regards materials, whereas in reference to the thought it contains, it is really the poorest and the most abstract". (1975:124)

Feuerbach's philosophy and its Western Marxist equivalent (as well as bourgeois empirical science) is the philosophy of sensuous perception. It thrives on the belief that "reflection is the means of ascertaining the truth, and of bringing the objects before the mind as they really are. And in this belief it advances straight upon its objects, takes the materials furnished by the senses and perception, and reproduces them from itself as facts of thought; and then believing the method to be the truth, the method is content." (1975: 47) This "reflection theory of thought" is, of course, the mainstay of dialectical materialism as it has been developed from Engels through to Lenin and Stalin, (Jordan, 1967) and survives outside the Soviet Union in much of the writings of Western Marxism. Writing in 1930, Korsch observes that this "'philosophical' outlook was ... dispensed from Moscow to the whole of the Western Communist world. Indeed it formed the basis of the new orthodox theory, so-called 'Marxism-Leninism'". (1970:122-123) This theory was first questioned by Kant — whom most Marxists see as an "idealist" — not because Kant believed in the priority of mind over matter but because he took very seriously Hume's scepticism about the ability of thought adequately to

reflect reality. (Kant, 1883:6)

Both Kant and Hegel would agree with Feuerbach that sensuous perception is the only way an object can be received into the mind: consciousness is dependent for its content on the external world.

"Everything", Hegel affirms,

is in sensation (feeling); if you will, everything that emerges in conscious intelligence and in reason has its source and origin in sensation; for source and origin just means the first immediate manner in which a thing appears. (1969:73)

Similarly Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is full of passages acknowledging the priority of the senses in the act of knowledge. "Without the sensuous faculty," writes Kant, "no object would be given to us, and without the understanding no object would be thought." (1893:46) Furthermore both thinkers would accept Feuerbach's definition of objectivity: the intersubjectively valid correspondence between an object and the representation of it. Nor is Hegel opposed to the empiricist notion of the "objective fact": "... our consciousness is, in the matter of its contents, only in the fact and its characteristics ... thought is only true in proportion as it sinks itself into facts [and] restricts itself to that universal action in which it is identical with all individuals." (1975:36) But Feuerbach's definition refers only to the lowest form of objectivity: there are other and higher forms of truth. The second of these forms is constructed by Kant and is discussed in the next chapter; the third, that of the union of theory and practice is developed by Hegel and Marx.

As suggested above, Feuerbach's definition of objectivity is based on a doctrine which views consciousness as essentially passive in relation to the external world. "Things", notes Feuerbach in an

already quoted passage, "must not be thought of otherwise than they appear in reality ... The laws of reality are the laws of thought."

(1966:63) In this notion of empiricism, Hegel writes, "we have a doctrine of bondage: for we become free, when we are confronted by no alien world, but depend upon a fact we ourselves are." According to empiricism, "we must take what is given just as it is, and we have no right to ask to what extent it is rational in its own nature."

(1975:64) The parallel with Marx is obvious: for what Marx struggles to overcome is precisely the situation in which the "material conditions" of capital "confront labour as alien, autonomous powers, as value — objectified labour — which treats living labour as mere means whereby to increase and maintain itself". (1976:1006) Marx, therefore, is concerned to discover whether capital "is rational in its own nature". His answer, of course, is that capitalism is far from rational — it is instead a minefield of contradictions: "... Within bourgeois society, the society that rests on exchange value, there arises relations of circulation, as well as of production, which are so many mines to explode it." (1973:159) Truth, then, involves something more than Feuerbach's notion of validity: in recent times, says Hegel, "it became urgent ... to justify thought, with reference to the results it had produced ..." (Hegel means the French Revolution), and this "constituted one of the main problems of philosophy". (1975:28-29)

Along with empirical science and the materialist philosophers, Kant, Hegel and, of course Marx, are convinced of the reality of the external world. "The external world is the truth if it could but know it," remarks Hegel, "for the truth is actual and must exist." The

central problem, however, is to grasp the character of this external reality in theory and change it in practice. "The infinite principle, the self-centred truth ... is in the world for reason to discover; though it exists in an individual and sensible shape, and not in its truth." (1975:62) But materialism and empiricism, because of their dependence on sensuous perception and feeling, are the least able to confront and overcome objective reality. In fact, they are the root of all ideology, where ideology is defined as false consciousness. "... It is from conforming to finite categories in thought and action", Hegel observes, "that all deception originates." (1975:41)

Natural or empirical science is everywhere distinguished by its reluctance to consider the categories it applies to reality. The essential anti-intellectualism of science must be obvious to anyone who has ever considered the political and theoretical backwardness evinced by many scientists whenever they wander outside their own realm; not to mention the absolutely overwhelming attention paid by natural science in the modern world to novel methods and means of bringing about death and destruction to humanity and nature. The essentially alienated character of natural science is noted by Marx: "The weaknesses of the abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism which excludes the historical process, are immediately evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions expressed by its spokesmen whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their own specialty." (1976:494) It is precisely because of its reliance on external objects, as given by sense perception, and its failure to question the nature of its own categories, that natural science is the

most ideologically conditioned and dogmatic of sciences. Of course, natural science has prepared its own ideological defences, and constantly preaches the difficult and esoteric nature of its endeavours.

But as Feyerabend points out,

Modern science ... is not at all as difficult and as perfect as scientific propaganda wants us to believe. A subject such as medicine, or physics, or biology appears difficult only because it is taught badly, because the standard instructions are full of redundant material, and because they start too late in life. (1978:307)

The dogmatic or alienated character of natural science has been noted by modern philosophers of science. Popper, for example, refers to the "'instrumentalist dogma' of current science ... which is accepted by our leading theorists of physics ..." and which "has become part of the current teachings of physics". (1976:100) According to this dogma, "The world is just what it appears to be. Only the scientific theories are not what they appear to be. A scientific theory neither explains nor describes the world; it is nothing but an instrument." (Popper, 1976:102) Similarly, "Kuhn's formulation of 'normal science' suggests that the development of science, outside of certain 'revolutionary phases' of change, depends upon the suspension of critical reason ..." Unlike Popper who urges the further progress of natural science through "the immanent 'permanent revolution' of critical reason," Kuhn suggests that "the suspension of critical reason ... is a necessary condition for the success of natural science ..." (Giddens, 1976:137) Kuhn may be correct in stating that natural science as it is presently constituted depends upon mindlessness and alienation. Hegel, however, would side with Popper in criticizing the instrumentalist view of science: the thought-forms of

science are not simply instruments, they also reflect the character of the universe.

The view that theories are instruments, while the real is only what is given to us in sensation is, of course, a hang-over from the ideas of Feuerbach and other materialists. Thus Feuerbach contrasts the "despotic" laws of thought compared to the "unlimited freedom" of perception. (1966:65) For Hegel, this is nonsense: "Pure science includes thought in so far as it is just as much the thing in itself as it is thought, or the thing in itself so far as it is just as much pure thought as it is the thing in itself." (1954:185) But the view that the categories of science reflect the nature of reality, also implies that these categories should be constantly criticized and subjected to the unrelenting tyranny of critical reason, to Popper's "permanent revolution". An example of the necessity of this permanent revolution is provided by atomic theory. Hegel observes that early atomic theory, which was based on Kant's notion of the reciprocal attraction and repulsion of atoms, assumed that there is a void or space between the atoms.

The Void, which is assumed as the complementary principle to the atoms, is repulsion and nothing else, presented under the image of nothing existing between the atoms. Modern Atomism — and physics is still in principle atomistic — has surrendered the atoms so far as to pin its faith on molecules or particles. In doing so, science has come closer to sensuous conception, at the cost of precision of thought. To put an attractive by the side of a repulsive force, as the moderns have done, certainly gives completeness to the contrast: and the discovery of this natural force, as it is called, has been the source of much pride. But the mutual implication of the two, which makes what is true and concrete in them, would have to be wrestled from the obscurity and confusion in which they were left

even in Kant's *Metaphysical Rudiments of the Natural Science*. (1975:143)

Following Kant, Hegel observes that the atom can only be understood as a dynamic process, and to comprehend this process the void or field between the atoms must be investigated theoretically. (1975:144) This investigation was not seriously pursued until Einstein took it up more than 100 years after Hegel first suggested it. "Einstein's approach to the problem", writes Coleman,

was to consider the field itself in an effort to understand the basic underlying properties of fields in general. Then gravitational, electric and magnetic fields would follow as special cases and the General Theory of relativity (since it is a theory of gravitation) would be derivable from the unified-field theory. (1972:133)

Einstein's theory has yet to be proven, but his work suggests that natural science is at last abandoning its uncritical reliance on the abstract and alienated categories of early metaphysics. Notes Coleman,

Up to now, scientists have been concerned mainly with directly measurable quantities, such as temperature, force, etc., and have evolved theories in terms of them so that they can measure these things experimentally in an almost mechanical after-math. The emphasis has not been on the understanding of a phenomenon but on the physical proof of it, or as Einstein called it, the "closeness to experience". Admittedly, physical proof is desirable, but it should be emphasized that it is not necessarily the most important element.

Coleman goes on to discuss the advantages of adopting a different methodology in the physical sciences — one more dependent on theoretical practice than the current one — but observes that "our civilization" has not encouraged such a novel methodology. Einstein's ideal field theory, for example, could

enable us to predict and create fields which are completely different from the ones we know. Such

scientific progress is rare in our civilization, but a brilliant example occurred when Maxwell in 1864 predicted the existence of radio waves from the elementary knowledge of electricity and magnetism. The fact that these could not be produced experimentally for another twenty-odd years makes his achievement all the more notable. We may be on the verge of a similar development today through the unified-field theory. (1972: 134-135)

Emphasis on theory in science, in place of its current and crude reliance on sensuous perception, experiment and so on, would be simply to recognize Hegel's dictum that

Everything which is human, however it may appear, is so only because the thought in it works and has worked ... Thought is the essential, substantial and effectual ... We must, however, consider it best when Thought does not pursue anything else, but is occupied only with itself — with what is noblest — when it has sought and found itself. (1892:4-5)

The fact that science has been used predominantly in bourgeois society to bolster up the rule of capital and to create weapons of destruction and repression seems to the understanding consciousness of Marxists and their opponents alike to be a mere aberration, the misapplication of an otherwise liberative technology. For Hegel, however, the root of the alienation of science lies in science itself. Science, Hegel observes, simply assumes the thought, point of view, and principles "which are common to the condition and culture of the time and people — the general ideas and aims ... the particular intellectual powers dominating consciousness and life". Our consciousness", Hegel continues, "has these ideas and allows them to be considered ultimate determinations; it makes use of them as guiding and connecting links, but does not know them and does not even make them the objects of its consideration". (1892:57; my emphasis)



Benton, Colletti and others have railed against Hegel's "denigration of science and common sense in favour of metaphysical speculation". (Benton, 1977:141) For these Marxist defenders of conventional wisdom against Hegelian "metaphysics", "nothing remains ..." as Marx suggests regarding Proudhon's critics among the "vulgar economists", "but to recoil from a sophistry they cannot entangle and to launch an appeal to 'common sense' relying on the notion that things will take their course. A great consolation for the would-be 'theorist'". (1976:974) But for Hegel, science and common sense are metaphysics; metaphysics, that is, of the lowest order. Speaking of another writer who admires common sense and its cultured companion, science, Hegel remarks that,

Tiedemann could say of every philosopher that he went further than healthy human understanding, for what men call healthy human understanding is not Philosophy, and is often far from healthy. Healthy human understanding possesses the modes of thought, maxims, and judgments of its time, the thought-determinations of which dominate it without its being conscious thereof ... Before Copernicus it would have been contrary to all human understanding if anyone had said that the earth went round the sun, or before the discovery of America, if it were said that there was a continent there. In India or China a republic would even now be contrary to all healthy understanding. (1892:379)

Hegel, however, does not reject common sense, and even less its scientific counterpart. The categories of science are perfectly adequate to what he calls, "the household needs of knowledge". (1975: 176) Categories like cause or force have a definite relation to reality, even if it is only the reality of sensuous perception. Everyone has felt or applied a "force", and "causation" is immediately available to the least cultured mind: we see ourselves as the cause of certain things and recognize that a ball, for example, flies because we threw it. (Hegel, 1975:61) As Hegel puts it, cause or "ground is

the contradiction which is expulsion of [contradiction] from itself". (1975:176) The knowledge and ideas of science and common sense "are permeated and governed by a [practical] metaphysic ... it is the net in which all the concrete matter which occupies mankind in action and in impulse is grasped. But this web and its knots in our ordinary consciousness are sunk into a manifold material, for it contains the objects and interests which we know and have before us". (1892:57)

Much has been written recently about what separates science from mythology, and the curtain of bogus respectability which science has drawn around itself accounts for a lot of this speculation. Giddens, for example, asks, "In what sense ... if any, is Western science able to lay claim to an understanding of the world that is more grounded in 'truth' than that of the Azande, who perhaps simply operate with a different over all cosmology ... to that of science?" After considering various aspects of scientific method, Giddens concludes, "There is no way of justifying a commitment to scientific rationality rather than, say, to Zande sorcery, apart from premises and values which science itself presupposes, and indeed has drawn from historically in its evolution within Western culture." (1976:138, 140) Hegel and Marx, however, would have no part in this hand-wringing relativism of the understanding consciousness. Science is, as Marx points out, one of "the general products of human development ..." As such, "science" is "realized in the machine" and "becomes manifest to the workers in the form of capital". (1976:1055) Capital, in turn, is a tremendous progressive force: "... The tendency of the capitalist mode of production is steadily to increase the productivity of labour ..." Capital brings about "the reduction in prices and cheapening of commodities ...

an increase in the quantity of goods, in the number of articles that must be sold. That is to say, a constant expansion of the market becomes a necessity for capitalist production". (1976:959, 966, 967)

These achievements are possible because capital is linked to science; they would be impossible without science and would gain nothing from "say ... Zande sorcery". Belief in science does not require what Giddens despairingly calls, "a Kierkegaardian 'leap into faith'". (1976:140)

For Hegel, natural science represents "the onward movement of a peaceful addition of new treasures already acquired". (1892:10) Its achievements are recognizable everywhere in the advanced industrial societies, and its impact (both positive and negative) is beginning to be felt in the impoverished countries of the Third World. Nevertheless, the principles, methodology and technique of natural science represent the work of an alienated and disjointed consciousness; it is ideology incarnate and the worshipful attitude toward it of the ideologues of Western Marxism simply represents their own theoretical bankruptcy. In the concluding chapter, where the dialectic method will be discussed, the extent of this bankruptcy is delineated. First, however, it was necessary to confront the alienated character of natural science. Hegel summarizes the weaknesses of its methodology as follows:

... Even if the sciences are systematic and contain universal principles and laws from which they proceed, they are still related to a limited circle of objects. The ultimate principles are assumed as are the objects themselves; that is, the outward experience or the feelings of the heart, natural or educated sense of right and duty, constitute the source from which they are created. Logic and the determinations and principles of thought in general are in their methods assumed. (1892:56)

In other words, natural science takes its objects, method, and logic as given, and then proceeds on this basis guided by "natural or educated sense of duty". Its principle is the principle of alienation, of bondage, of acceptance of the external world as it appears and is grasped by the categories of early metaphysics and common sense. Its greatest error lies in its uncritical reception of objects selected at random and as they are given by the senses. Its error is the fundamental error of materialism. This is the error that Marx combats on every page of Capital. For, according to Marx, reliance on materialist methodology, on Feuerbach's sensuous perception, is the foundation of all false consciousness, all of what Marx calls, following Kant (1793: 209) and Hegel, "illusory reflection" or appearance. (1976:1063)

From the analysis of the capitalist mode of production, writes Marx,

We can see ... how an article regarded as the product of capital is to be distinguished from an individual article treated as an independent object, and this distinction will increasingly make itself felt ... The folly of identifying a specific social relationship of production with the thing-like ... qualities of certain articles simply because it represents itself in terms of certain articles is what strikes us most forcibly whenever we open a textbook on economics and see on the first page how the elements of production, reduced to their basic form, turn out to be land, capital and labour. One might just as well say that they were landed property, knives, scissors, spindles, cotton, grain, in short, the materials and means of labour, and — wage labour. On one hand, we name the elements of the labour process combined with the specific social characteristics peculiar to them in a given historical phase, and on the other hand we add an element which forms an integral part of the labour process independently of any particular social formation, as part of the eternal commerce of man and nature ... We shall see ... that this illusion is one that springs from the nature of capitalist production itself. But it is evident even now that this is a very convenient method by which to demonstrate the eternal natural condition of human existence. (1976:998)

## CHAPTER 6

## KANT AND THE BOURGEOIS WORLD OF ABSTRACTION

1. Reality and Abstraction in the Generated World of the Categories

Lukács suggests in History and Class Consciousness that Kant's philosophy, unlike that of Feuerbach, "refuses to accept the world as something that has arisen ... independently of the knowing subject, and prefers to conceive of it as its own product". (1971:111) But, as Lukács recognizes, Kant is far from vulgar idealism, according to which the external world is merely the creation of consciousness. In fact, Kant is concerned to show precisely the limits of reason in relation to reality; beyond these limits, Kant argues, reason becomes "transcendent" and dissolves into "illusory appearance". (1893:210-211) Nevertheless, Kant emphasizes the active nature of consciousness in its representation of the external world, and shows that human experience of reality is predicated on categories, like cause and effect, which the mind develops a priori or independently of experience. "Kant", says Karl Popper, "... assumed ... that the world as we know it is our interpretation of the observable facts in the light of theories that we ourselves invent." (1976:191) As Hegel observes, "according to Kant all knowledge, even experience, consists in thinking our impressions — in other words, in transforming into intellectual categories the attributes primarily belonging to sensation." (1975:75)

What Kant does in philosophy, then, is to make the same affirmation about the world as the classical political economists like Smith and Ricardo do in economics. In Hegel's words, they are engaged in

"generating a world as our own creation". (1969:22) If Kant sees experience itself as dependent on human consciousness, the political economists regard values and wealth as "the material expressions of the human labour expended on them". (Marx, 1976:167) Both discoveries were the theoretical equivalents to the subjection of nature and the unleashing of human productivity made possible by the bourgeois mode of production.

Kant's philosophy, Popper argues, "makes it possible to look upon science, whether theoretical or experimental, as a human creation, and to look upon its history as part of the history of ideas, on a level with the history of art or of literature". (1976:181) Kant might have been expected to influence greatly the methodology of natural science, for one of the questions he attempts to answer is, "How is pure natural science possible?" (1883:26) Yet in the same way as classical political economy did not banish "the semblance of objectivity possessed by the social characteristics of labour" (Marx, 1976:167), Kant's epistemology of science left the external and finite methodology of natural science unaffected. Both political economy and natural science went on as before, convinced they were dealing only with things and not social relations or the categories of human thought. The reason for this failure is the same in both instances. Kant accepts the categories he employs in the Critique of Pure Reason just as they were developed by formal logic; instead of criticizing these categories he takes them to be the natural and eternal expressions of thought. As a result, "the facts and modes of observation" given currency by Kant, "continue quite the same as in" empirical science. (Hegel, 1975:93) Similarly, classical political economy

never succeeded ... in discovering the form of value which in fact turns value into exchange-value. Even its best representatives, Adam Smith and Ricardo, treat the form of value as something of indifference, something external to the nature of the commodity itself. The explanation for this is not simply that their attention is entirely absorbed by the analysis of the magnitude of value. It lies deeper. The value form of the product of labour is the most abstract, but also the most universal form of the bourgeois mode of production; by that fact it stamps the bourgeois mode of production as a particular kind of social production of a historical and transitory character. If then we make the mistake of treating it as the eternal natural form of social production, we necessarily overlook the specificity of the value-form and consequently of the commodity form together with its further developments, the money form, the capital form, etc. (1976:174; my emphasis)

Like Kant, classical political economy remains imprisoned in the categories of the understanding consciousness. In fact, for Hegel as for Marx, political economy represents the ultimate expression of the understanding or bourgeois consciousness in the realm of empirical science. Political economy studies the system of social needs and production, but only from the point of view of the abstract individual who pursues his or her selfish interests. This pursuit, in turn, is shown by political economy to produce the mutual interdependence of people on one another in civil or bourgeois society. But the bourgeois mind sees no necessity for subjecting the economic sphere itself to the control of individuals united in the state. "In the course of the actual attainment of selfish ends", writes Hegel,

there is formed a system of complete interdependence, wherein the livelihood, happiness and legal status of one man is interwoven with the livelihood, happiness, and rights of all. On this system, individual happiness, etc., depend, and only in this connected system are they actualized and secured. This system may be prima facie regarded as the external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it. (1976:123)

The state recognized by the understanding, however, is severely flawed: "... The whole sphere of civil society is the territory of mediation where there is free play for every idiosyncrasy, every talent, every accident of birth and fortune, and where waves of every passion gush forth, regulated only by reason glinting through them. Particularity, restricted by universality, is the only standard whereby each particular member promotes his interest." (Hegel, 1976:267)

As Marx observes, the call for a rational organization of society based on universal principles is absolute anathema for the understanding or bourgeois consciousness. "The same bourgeois consciousness", Marx points out,

which celebrates the division of labour in the workshop, the lifelong annexation of the worker to a partial operation, and his complete subjection to capital, as an organization of labour that increases its productive power, denounces with equal vigour every conscious attempt to control and regulate the process of production socially, as an inroad upon such sacred things as the rights of property, freedom and the self-determining genius of the individual capitalist. It is very characteristic that the enthusiastic apologists of the factory system have nothing more damning to urge against a general organization of labour in society that it would turn society into a factory. (1976:477)

No less than Marx, Hegel is aware of the great achievements of what Marx calls, "classical political economy" (1976:174): "To discover this necessary element", i.e., the laws inherent in the workings of the capitalist system, "is the object of political economy, a science which is a credit to thought because it finds laws for a mass of accidents". (Hegel, 1976:268) Nevertheless, the method of political economy is severely limited precisely because it takes its stand on the same soil as the bourgeoisie itself. The development of Political economy, writes Hegel,



affords the interesting spectacle (as in Smith, Say, and Ricardo) of thought working upon the endless mass of details which confront it at the outset and extracting therefrom the simple principles of the thing, the Understanding effective in the thing and directing it. It is to find reconciliation here to discover in the sphere of needs this show of rationality lying in the thing and effective there; but if we look at it from the opposite view, this is the field in which the Understanding with its subjective aims and moral fancies vents its discontent and moral frustration. (1976:126-127; my emphasis)

Hegel has frequently been represented as a bitter opponent of the Kantian philosophy; and recent Marxist commentators, like Colletti (1973) and Benton (1977), attribute to Hegel the absolute denial of Kant's thought, or at least his epistemology. Writes Colletti,

One could say, indeed, that there are two main traditions in Western philosophy in this respect [i.e., epistemology]: one that descends from Spinoza and Hegel, and the other from Hume and Kant. These two lines of development are profoundly divergent. For anyone that takes science as the sole form of real knowledge — that is, falsifiable, as Popper would say — there can be no question that the tradition of Hume-Kant must be given preference over that of Spinoza-Hegel. (1977:325)

But Hegel's position with regard to Kant is the same as that of both him and Marx to classical political economy. Marx and (as I will show) Hegel accept and go beyond the categories of political economy; in Hegel's phrase, they dialectically transcend the analyses of thinkers like Smith and Ricardo. Hegel explains this process with reference to the history of philosophy:

The relation ... of the earlier to the later systems of philosophy is much like the relation of the corresponding stages of the logical Idea: in other words, the earlier are preserved in the later; but subordinated and submerged. This is the true meaning of a much misunderstood phenomenon in the history of philosophy — the refutation of one system by another ... The refutation of a philosophy ... only means that its barriers are crossed, and its special principle reduced to a factor

in the completer principle that follows. Thus the history of philosophy in its true meaning, deals not with a past, but with an eternal and veritable present; and in its results, resembles not a museum of the aberrations of the human intellect, but a Pantheon of god-like figures. These figures of gods are the various stages of the Idea, as they come forward one after another in dialectical development. (1975:126)

Far from rejecting Kant, Hegel describes his thought as "the basis and beginning of modern German philosophy". (1956:200) The distinction made by Kant between "thought and thing ... is the hinge on which modern philosophy turns". (1975:35) Kant rejects the notion, such as is later put forward by Feuerbach, that thought passively reflects the true nature of reality. Instead, Kant holds that thought merely grasps phenomena as they are given to our sensations; we can never really know the thing-in-itself, but only its appearance as it is registered in our sensations. (1883:28-29) If the categories of thought "give the law to nature", as Kant suggests, this is simply because the nature we know is just our subjective conception of it. For Kant, objectivity does not lie in the correspondence between an external object and the way it appears in sensation, as Feuerbach (and common sense) suggest. Kant argues that categories or concepts like cause and effect, existence, contingency and so on, are not derived from sensation, but originate with thought. Accordingly, he applies the term objective only to things as they are grasped by the categories; things as they appear in sensation are merely subjective. Hegel observes that this classification, though confusing, is justified since "the perceptions of sense are the properly dependent and secondary feature, while the thoughts are really independent and primary. Our sensations are subjective, for sensations lack stability in their own nature, and are no

less fleeting and evanescent than thought is permanent and self-subsisting." (1975:67)

The immediate sensible object, which is the only form of being or objectivity for Feuerbach's materialism, is the essence of non-being or appearance for Kant and Hegel. "... If we look at the thought it holds," writes Hegel, "nothing can be more insignificant than being — that which at first sight is perhaps supposed to be, an external and sensible existence, like that of the paper lying before me. However, in this matter, nobody proposes to speak of the sensible existence of a limited and perishable thing." (1975:85) What were immediate sensible objects for the early Greek philosophers have long since deteriorated and passed away; but Greek thought and ideas, as expressed in Western culture and civilization, is as lively and present now as ever.

Kant's distinction between the subjectivity of sensation and the objectivity of thought is now universally accepted in the sciences and humanities. Thus scientists try to resist the interference of merely subjective feelings in their scientific work; and the criticism of art is not based, as Hegel points out, on "the particular and accidental feelings of the moment", but rather "on those general points of view which the laws of art establish". (1975:67)

According to Kant, we have knowledge of the objects of the external world only because we are able to unite the manifold content given to us by sensation with and through the categories of thought. It is this unifying action of the ego or "I" that Kant calls, "the transcendental unity of self-consciousness". (1893:82) Nevertheless, the categories themselves are without any real content; in Kant's

phrase, the categories furnish "the conditions for the possibility of experience", but they add nothing to experience. (1893:90-91) However, the notion that the unity of the external world belongs to the effort of thought rather than to the way things are immediately presented to sensation, seems to threaten belief in the reality of that world. Kant's solution to this problem is to postulate the existence of an unknowable universe of things-in-themselves or "noumena" along side the phenomenal world of human consciousness. "... I can only say of a thing in itself", writes Kant, "that it exists without relation to the senses and experience ... To this transcendental object we may attribute the whole connection and extent of our possible perceptions, and say that it is given and exists in itself prior to all experience. But the phenomena, corresponding to it, are not given as things in themselves, but in experience alone." (1893: 308-309) Thus, despite his emphasis on the objectivity of thought as opposed to sensation, Kant re-imposes the externality or alienation of thought from its object which is characteristic of the understanding or bourgeois consciousness.

Kant's notion of noumena or things-in-themselves is aimed precisely at staking out the subject area of natural science. He is concerned once and for all to destroy the belief that abstract theorizing has a place in science. As Hegel points out, the mystified belief criticized by Kant misled even "Leibnitz, one of the most acute philosophers of either ancient or modern times", to construct "a baseless system of intellectual cognition, which professes to determine its objects without the intervention of the senses". (1975:201) For Kant,

the field of science is objective knowledge; and such knowledge can only be obtained by a synthesis of the categories of thought with the data of the senses. The function of the Kantian thing-in-itself is elaborated by Colletti:

When Kant declares that the thing-in-itself is unknowable, one (if not the only) sense of his argument is that the thing-in-itself is not a true object of cognition at all, but a fictitious object, that is nothing more than a substantification or hypostasization of logical functions, transformed into real essences. In other words, the thing-in-itself is unknowable because it represents the false knowledge of the old metaphysics. This is not the only meaning of the concept in Kant's work, but it is one of its principal senses, and it is precisely this that has never been noticed by the utterly absurd reading of Kant that has prevailed among Marxists, who have always reduced the notion of the thing-in-itself to a mere agnosticism. (1977:326)

Colletti, however, argues that Hegel takes a step backwards from Kant: " ... When Hegel announces that the thing-in-itself can be known, what he is in fact doing is to restore the old pre-kantian metaphysics." (1977:327) But Hegel is actually in sympathy with Kant's programme for natural science in so far as it outlines the meaning and conditions for objectivity in the second sense of the term, i.e., knowledge obtained through the concrete union of the categories of thought with the data of sensation. Restricted to the first sense of objectivity, Feuerbach and his predecessors among the early empiricist philosophers like David Hume, are unable to distinguish theoretically between the data given by sense impressions in a sleeping or imaginative state as opposed to the conscious or waking state. "An impression" for Hume, writes R. G. Collingwood, "is distinguished from" a merely imaginative "idea only by its force or liveliness; but this force may be of two kinds. It may be the brute violence of crude sensation, as yet

undominated by thought. Or it may be the solid strength of a *sensum* firmly placed in its context by the interpretive work of thought. Hume did not recognize the difference ..." (1975:214)

Recognition of this distinction is precisely the strength of Kant's notion of objectivity: "With judgements of experience" based on the categories of thought, notes Kant, "what experience teaches me under certain circumstances, it must teach me at all times, and every other person as well; its validity is not limited to the subject or the state of the latter at a particular time." (1883:46) Hegel outlines Kant's position as follows:

... in the waking state man behaves essentially as concrete ego, an intelligence: and because of this intelligence his sense-perception stands before him as a concrete totality of features in which each member, each point, takes up its place as at the same time determined through and with all the rest. Thus the facts embodied in his sensation are authenticated, not by his mere subjective representation and distinction of the facts as external from the person, but by virtue of the concrete inter-connection in which each part stands with all parts of this complex ... In order to see the difference between dreaming and waking we need keep in view the Kantian distinction between subjectivity and objectivity of mental representation (the latter depending upon determination through the categories). (1969:66)

Colletti suggests that Marx also subscribes to the Kantian notion of objectivity as shown in Marx's discussion of the method of political economy in the Grundrisse. (Colletti, 1973:121) Colletti is correct, of course, but only in so far as Hegel also accepts Kant's definition of validity. For Marx's discussion of method, as I will show, is based entirely on Hegel.

Hegel urges that the facts shown to be objective in the Kantian sense should themselves be subjected to the scrutiny of thought. "... We are chiefly interested in knowing what a thing is: i.e. its content,

which is no more subjective than it is objective." (1975:71) The construction of the atomic bomb, for example, as well as its employment over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 certainly conformed to all the requirements of Kantian objectivity: but it also raised certain questions for which objectivity in the Kantian sense is irrelevant. "If mere existence be enough to make objectivity," Hegel remarks, "even a crime is objective: but it is an existence which is nullity at the core, as is definitely made apparent when the day of punishment comes." (1975:71) Similarly, Marx never questions the objectivity of the capitalist mode of production as it is revealed by the categories of political economy. Nevertheless, he argues that capitalism is based on a system of exploitation of human labour which necessarily dooms capitalism to "a historical and transitory existence". (1976:174)

Both Hegel and Marx point to a third and higher form of objectivity: a form of truth that recognizes the essential unity of human theory and sensuous practice. This union of theory and practice, this critical evaluation of objectivity, necessarily involves the employment of universal values and principles by the investigator. Hegel and Marx, therefore, reject the alienated division made by the understanding or bourgeois consciousness between facts and values. Human rationality, as it appears in the objectivity of society, represents the concrete manifestation of active human thought and will, or ideality, which is itself an amalgam of emotions, desires and so forth. To examine society as though it were an external thing, an object like that treated by natural science, is to overlook the most important aspect of this formation. Consequently, Ernest Mandel is wrong when he rejects the theory that Marx's "... Capital is essentially an instrument for the

revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat ..." and that therefore, "it is impossible to separate the 'scientific' content of Capital from its 'revolutionary' intention ..." (Mandel, 1976:16) For Mandel, "Marx strove ... to analyse capitalism in an objective and strictly scientific way;" he tried to build a "rock-like foundation of scientific truth"; and "sought to discover objective laws of motion". (1976:16-17) But Mandel limits objectivity to its Kantian form, and forgets that for Marx, capitalism is "historical and transitory" precisely because it fails to conform to the most elementary demands of human reason, demands which are themselves made possible by the progress fostered by capitalism.

The object of Capital is precisely to convince men and women that bourgeois society is irrational and inefficient by the standards of political economy itself, and therefore should be replaced by a society based on rational and human principles. In the concluding chapters, I will show that the type of Marxism dominated by the desire to be scientific, in the Kantian sense of the term, is often reduced to a platitudinous search for indications of capitalism's "death agony", and delights in forecasting the imminent end of the system in the same way as the early Christians looked forward to the end of the world. This millenarianism of Marxism has closed its eyes to the fact that capitalism is flourishing as never before, and has refuted every last prediction of the date of its final hour. More importantly, it has obscured for Marxists the very elements in the system which display the forms of the new society developing within it.

Like Colletti, however, Marx is under the impression that Hegel retreats from the Kantian notion of the reality of the external world.



"... Hegel", says Marx, "fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as a product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself ..." (1973:101) Marx derives this interpretation of Hegel from Feuerbach's materialist critique and inversion of Hegelian speculative philosophy. But, as I have argued above and as I hope to demonstrate conclusively in this study, Marx is fundamentally wrong in his estimation of Hegel's thought. In any case, Marx's formulation of what he calls, "the concrete" or objective in the Grundrisse merely repeats Hegel's remarks on the subject. "By concreteness of contents", writes Hegel, "it is meant that we must know the objects of consciousness as intrinsically determinate and as a unity of distinct characteristics." (1975:60) And further, "The concrete is the unity of diverse determinations and principles; these in order to be perfected, in order to come definitely before consciousness, must first of all be presented separately." (1894:13) Compare these passages from Hegel with the following one from the Grundrisse:

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 process of concentration, 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. (1976:101)

According to Hegel, while Kant made a great contribution to knowledge by demonstrating that thought, rather than sense perception, produces a unified and meaningful vision of the world, Kant nevertheless failed to realize the implications of his own argument. For as Hegel observes, it is not merely the action of our personal self-consciousness that introduces unity into the variety of sense perception; this unity is a property of the real world which human

consciousness discovers through the effort of thought. "... Though the categories, such as unity, cause and effect, are strictly the property of thought, it by no means follows that they must be ours merely and not the property of the objects. Kant, however, confines them to the subject-mind, and his philosophy may be styled subjective idealism: for he holds that both the form and matter of knowledge are supplied by the Ego — or knowing subject — the form by our intellectual, the matter by our sentient ego." (1975:70)

The rationality or law-governed character of the external world as revealed by the action of thought, "is itself absolute. The absolute is as it were, so kind as to leave individual things to their own enjoyment, and it again drives them back to this absolute unity". (1975:69-70) Far from being an abstract product of our personal self-consciousness, then, the laws of nature are objective and real; their reality is confirmed by human sensuous practice which takes advantage of these laws in the productions of science and industry. As Engels observes,

If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian thing-in-itself. (1969, III:347)

Lukács rightly alludes to the limitations of Engels's critique of Kant's thing-in-itself; industry and science under capitalism remain external and alienated activities which by no means overcome the division between thought and its object postulated by Kant. (1971: 131-133) Nevertheless, in practice this alienation is in part transcended by the bourgeois mode of production; it only remains for this alienation to be superseded in theory as well as in practice by — as

Marx argues — the communist revolution. Hegel puts this (dialectical) idea very succinctly: The "reason world" of society and culture is perceived by the individual in bourgeois society as a complex of "unconditioned and likewise universal powers, to which he must subject his individual will ... Now, to turn these rational (of course positively rational)" — i.e., flawed — "realities into speculative principles, the only thing needed is that they be thought ... By this", Hegel explains, "we mean only two things: first, that what is immediately at hand", i.e. bourgeois society, "has to be passed and left behind" — in theory — "and secondly, that the subject matter of such speculations, though in the first place only subjective, must not remain so, but be realized or translated into objectivity" — through ideality or revolutionizing practice. (1975:120)

In his commentary on Hegel's Logic, Lenin describes the third, or Hegelian, form of objectivity:

The unity of the theoretical idea (of knowledge) and of practice — this NB — and this unity precisely in the theory of knowledge, for the resulting sum is the "absolute, idea" (and the idea = "das objektive Wahre" [the objectively true]). (1963:219)

Hegel's third form of objectivity, the unity of theory and practice, is present in what he calls "free mind" or concrete will; Marx would call it "communist consciousness". There are three phases of free mind: the first phase is theoretical. Theory seizes the external object so that "the seemingly alien object receives, instead of the shape of something given, isolated and contingent, the form of something inwardized, subjective, universal, necessary, and rational". The externality or objectivity of the object, of course, is unaffected by this activity of theory; but at the same time, in knowledge the

object has become something subjective. "Of the content of this knowledge I know that it is, that it has objectivity and at the same time that it is in me and therefore subjective." (1969:185)

Hegel argues that it is a mistake to see theory as passive in relation to its object, for this activity of mind is engaged in seeking the rational quality, the law-like form of the object. "... Intelligence strips the object of the form of contingency, grasps its rational nature and posits it as subjective: and conversely, it at the same time develops the subjectivity into the form of objective rationality." But free theoretical mind does not stop at mere objectivity in the abstract Kantian sense — it aims at determining to what degree the object is rational in itself: in other words, theory is critical. "... Free mind does not content itself with a simple Knowing; it wants to cognize ... it wants to know not merely that an object is, and what it is in general and with respect to its contingent, external determinations, but it wants to know in what the object's specific, substantial nature consists." (1969:191)

Through the action of theoretical mind the externality of the object is annulled; the object becomes a part of the thinker, an aspect of his or her thinking activity. "Consequently ... thinking has no other content than itself, than its own determinations which constitute the immanent content of the form; in the object it seeks and finds only itself." (1969:227) In this way, then, "Thought is Being." (1969:224) But the materialists need not rejoice at the discovery of this so "idealist" notion, since no one is questioning the external reality of the object itself. "... The object is distinguished from thought only by having the form of being, of

subsisting on its own account." Nevertheless, "thinking stands here in a completely free relation to the object." (1969:227) In its theoretical activity, mind takes possession of the object; the object has become the property of consciousness. This forms the transition from mere theory to a thinking will. "But when intelligence is aware that it is determinative of the content, which is its mode no less than the mode of being, it is Will." (1969:227)

Will, or practical mind, is the second stage of the Hegelian form of objectivity; it is only through the action of will that mind becomes objective to itself, that it distinguishes its theoretical activity from itself as objective reality. For Hegel, as Lenin observes, "Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality." (1963:213) The sphere of will or practice is the universal reality, i.e., society, and the content of the will is freedom. "True liberty, in the shape of moral" (social) "life, consists in the will finding its purpose in the universal content, not in subjective or selfish interests." (1969:228)

In the first stage of Hegelian objectivity, theory seeks the universal or rational aspects of its object; that is, it looks for those qualities of the object connected with concrete freedom. Thus, for example, Marx studies capitalist society in order to isolate those elements which will make possible the transition to communist society. In the second stage, practical mind is concerned with actualizing the rational elements in society, i.e., it attempts to bring forward and develop the inward rationality illuminated by theory. "... It belongs to the Idea of freedom that the will should

make its Notion, which is freedom itself, its content and aim. When it does this it becomes objective mind, constructs for itself a world of its freedom, and thus gives to its true content a self-subsistent existence." (1969:229) Free will, or objective mind, is the third stage of objectivity, i.e., "the unity of theoretical and practical mind". (1969:238) Objective mind, which in its full development is really only Hegel's term for what Marx calls, communist society, is the result of ideality or revolutionizing practice. It is the result of the social activity of individuals — for the single will is "the peculiar and immediate medium in which" freedom "is actualized". (1969:240; my emphasis)

According to Hegel, the speculative and dialectical content of absolute idealism rises above the abstract contrast between subjectivity and objectivity postulated by the understanding consciousness. This contrast is characteristic not only of Kant's subjective idealism but also of the consciousness and ideology of bourgeois society as a whole. In place of the division between subjectivity and objectivity, dialectical thought "evinces its own concrete and all-embracing nature". Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that "subjective and objective are not merely identical but also distinct". What Hegel means is that human ideality is at once subjective: it is a property of the individual — as well as objective: it creates through its activity the concrete forms of the external world, like economy and culture. Kant, along with bourgeois (and Marxist) thinkers generally, cannot grasp this "unity in difference", and therefore for them, "the reason world may be styled ... mystical — not however because thought cannot both reach and comprehend it, but merely because it lies beyond

the compass of the understanding". (1975:120-121)

By leaving the categories of thought empty of any real content except that given by sense experience, Kant overlooked the fact that nature, as it is transformed by human endeavour, and society, as it is theorized, produced, reproduced and changed by human conscious activity, are not only objective facts, but also the products of revolutionizing practice, of ideality. Sense experience, then, is given by the categories of thought in so far as the categories are also actualized in the outside world by human practice. Far from being empty, as Kant supposes, the categories of thought constitute the forms of the real world. "To think", notes Hegel,

is an expression which attributes especially to consciousness the determination which it contains. But in so far as it is allowed that understanding, and reason, are of the world of objects, that spirit [society] and nature have general laws in accordance with which their life and mutations are governed, in so far as it is admitted that the determinations of thought also have objective validity and existence. (1954:187)

According to Hegel, economy, culture, religion and so on, are "concrete formations of consciousness"; as such, their development is inseparable from the development of individual human consciousness itself. The progressive advance of human society results from, informs and reflects the concrete development of individual human consciousness or ideality. But this "process must, so to speak, go on behind consciousness, since those" social "facts are the essential nucleus which is raised into consciousness". (1975:46) As a result, for the individuals within the bourgeois mode of production, the very creations of individual human consciousness and ideality appear as external and alien facts which exist apart from and dominate individuals.

Marx's work in the Grundrisse represents above all his struggle to theorize Hegel's dialectical conception of the relation between individual consciousness and social forms. Thus for Marx, capital itself represents, "the accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain ..." (1973:694; my emphasis) The objective, external nature which forms the basis of the Kantian thing-in-itself — this nature, says Marx,

builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are organs of the human brain, created by the human hand; the power of knowledge objectified. The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a direct force of production, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and have been transformed in accordance with it. To what degree the powers of social production have been produced, not only in the form of knowledge, but also as immediate organs of social practice, of the real life process. (1973:706)

For Marx, the "forces of production and social relations" are themselves merely "two different sides of the social individual ... It is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and wealth. The theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based, appears as a miserable foundation in face of this new one" of automation and mass production "created by large scale industry itself. In fact, however," the wealth produced by the social individual creates "the material conditions to blow this foundation sky high". (1973: 705-706) Before Marx, Hegel already anticipates the result made possible through the great abundance facilitated by the bourgeois mode of production: "... Man", notes Hegel in his Lectures on Aesthetics,



must work out his necessary satisfaction by his own activity; he must take possession of things in nature, arrange them, form them, strip off every hindrance by his own self-won skilfulness, and in such a way that the external world is changed into a means whereby he can realize himself in accordance with all his aims ... In so far as possession and affluence afford a situation in which poverty and labour vanish, not merely momentarily but entirely, they are therefore not only not unaesthetic, but they rather coincide with the Ideal ... For the genuine Ideal consists not only in man's being in general lifted above the grim seriousness of dependence on ... external circumstances, but in his standing in the midst of superfluity which permits him to play freely and cheerfully with the means put at his disposal by nature. (1975, I:257)

Hegel argues that Kant's subjective idealism simply reflects the distrust of reason and thought characteristic of the bourgeois mind. "It marks the diseased state of our age", Hegel writes, "when we see it adopting the despairing creed that our knowledge is only subjective, and beyond this subjective we cannot go." (1975:35) By asserting the essential unknowability of the thing-in-itself, Kant divided thought from its object "by an impassible gulf". Moreover, the authority on which Kant makes this distinction represents the most extreme form of alienation: "Kant ... holds that what we think is false, because it is we who think it." (1975:94)

In a passage already quoted, Colletti suggests that for Hegel the "thing-in-itself can be known" and that, therefore, Hegel restores "the old pre-kantian metaphysics". (1977:327) Hegel observes, however, that the thing-in-itself is simply devoid of all qualities which consciousness finds in its object, "all its emotional aspects, and all specific thoughts of it". Consequently, there is no great difficulty in seeing "what is left — utter abstraction, total emptiness ... the negative of every image, feeling and definite thought". Moreover, it

does not "require much penetration to see that this caput mortuum is still only a product of thought, such as accrues when thought is carried on to abstraction unalloyed: that is, the work of the empty 'Ego', which makes an object out of this empty self-identity of its own". Hegel's dismissal of Kant's thing-in-itself must be among the most abrupt in the history of philosophy: "... One can only read with surprise", he writes, "the perpetual remark that we cannot know the Thing-in-itself. On the contrary, there is nothing we can know so easily." (1975:72) Far from restoring the "old pre-kantian metaphysics", Hegel seeks only to reinstate "the natural belief of men ... that thought coincides with thing". (1975:35) Notes Hegel,

... everything we know both of outward and inward nature, in one world, the objective world, is in its own self the same as it is in thought, and to think is to bring out the truth of our object, be it what it may. The business of philosophy is only to bring into explicit consciousness what the world in all ages has believed about thought. Philosophy therefore advances nothing new; and our present discussion has led us to a conclusion which agrees with the natural belief of mankind. (1975:35)

Although he rejects Kant's thing-in-itself, the whole construction of Hegel's Logic — as I have argued in Chapter 2 — is based on acceptance of Kant's notion that the categories of thought are the actual building blocks of human experience of the world. The categories of logic are the constituents of Hegel's logical Idea, and the Idea is simply the a priori basis through which individual consciousness is "necessarily" led "onwards to the real departments of Nature and Mind". (1975:71) But the Idea itself, as Kant emphasizes, is constructed out of the facts of experience. What Kant fails to acknowledge, however, is the active power of thought; in Kant the activity of consciousness remains formal and abstract: it is separated altogether from human

practice and ideality. Kant's "great error", declares Hegel,

is to restrict our notions of the nature of thought to its form in the understanding alone. To think the phenomenal world means to recast its form, and transmute it into a universal. And thus the action of thought has also a negative effect upon its basis: and the matter of sensation, when it receives the stamp of universality, at once loses its first and phenomenal shape. By the removal and negation of the shell, the kernel within the sense-percept is brought to light ... (1975:81)

Because the logical Idea is based on "the material world perceived by the senses" (1975, I:116) it does not "come into possession of a content originally foreign to it: but by its native action is specialized and developed to Nature and Mind". (1975:71) In the case of nature, for example, the Idea begins as "Perception or Intuition, and the percipient Idea is Nature": in other words, external nature is first given to consciousness by sense perception. Consciousness then works up this concrete content into categories and laws; but these laws and categories are not external to nature, as Kant suggests, but rather they express its essence and reality. This is Hegel's meaning when he writes on the last page of the Lesser Logic, that

Enjoying ... an absolute liberty, the Idea does not merely pass over into life [as passive sense perception], or as [Kantian] finite cognition allow life to show in it: in its absolute truth it resolves to let the 'moment' of its particularity, or of the first characterization and other-being, the immediate idea, as its reflected image, go forth freely as Nature. (1975:296)

For Hegel, logic studies "things set and held in thoughts"; the categories of logic, further, are "accredited able to express the essential reality of things". (1975:36) This, of course, is also Marx's position. The subject of the economic categories, Marx writes in an already quoted passage, "is always what is given, in the head as well as in reality, and ... these categories therefore express the forms of

being, the characteristics of existence ..." (1973:106) Hegel's logic, moreover, is not the formal logic of the understanding — it is not "the science of the mere form of thought" — rather, the theme of Logic is in general the supersensible", i.e., the social and intellectual world. Like Marx's work in the Grundrisse and Capital, Hegel's logic studies "thought in its actions and productions". (1975:28) Whereas Kant's categories are simply taken over from formal logic, the categories in Hegel's logic reflect the dialectical development of the history of philosophy itself. "... The History of Philosophy gives us the same process from a historical and external point of view." (1975:18) Similarly, Marx's Capital, as Korsch points out, "is indeed precisely a theoretical comprehension of history". (1970:59)

Hegel argues that the history of philosophy constitutes the development of the categories of thought which men and women use to apprehend, utilize and transform the relations of the natural and social world. Consequently, the Logic is merely the exposition of that history in dialectical (i.e., logical and developmental) form. But it is also something else: it "recognizes and accepts ... the empirical facts in the several sciences ... it appreciates and applies to its own structure, the universal element in these sciences, their laws and classifications ... it preserves the same forms of thought, the same laws and objects — while at the same time remodelling and expanding them with wider categories". (1975:13) Accordingly, just as Marx employs the categories and facts of political economy in his concrete analyses and also creates new ones, like surplus-value and the social individual, Hegel utilizes the categories of formal logic and constructs his own, among which is the "Speculative or Absolute

Idea" (i.e., the rational, or communist, society). (1975:292) Read along with his other works, especially the History of Philosophy (1892:'94:'96) and the Philosophy of Right (1976), Hegel's Logic is what would now be called, an exposition in the sociology of knowledge. But with this difference: it is a sociology of knowledge concerned not with ideology as false consciousness, but with human thought as the expression of the truest reality of the world. Seen in this way, Hegel's "system" is infinitely more powerful and more advanced than anything ever attempted in the field.

## 2. Contradiction and Freedom in Bourgeois Society

Kant's epistemology, which guarantees only the illusory unity of consciousness with its object, and leaves the thing-in-itself outside of cognition, represents what Hegel calls, "abstract ideality". (1969: 165) This is the form of ideality commonly thought to apply to Hegel's philosophy as well: that is, an abstract essence or Idea, which leaves reality outside of consciousness, or, rather, refuses to recognize external reality at all, except in an abstract manner. Marxists and their opponents are unified in this vision of Hegel. Accordingly, Karl Popper observes that "Hegel's philosophy ... permitted" him "to construct a theory of the world out of pure reasoning ..." (1976:323) And even the "Hegelian Marxist" Karl Korsch suggests that "For Hegel, the practical task of the Concept in its 'thinking activity' (in other words, philosophy) does not lie in the domain of ordinary 'practical and sensuous activity' (Marx). It is rather 'to grasp what is, for that which is, is Reason'." (1970:94) But for Hegel, of course, ideality is precisely the relation between human

sensuous practice and its object, which he refers to as "an identity in itself with its difference". (1969:164)

Kant recognizes one side of ideality: the translation of the external world, as it is given in sensation, into the categories of mind. But he fails to emphasize the active side of consciousness: the theoretical and practical activity which transforms and creates the natural and social world. Nevertheless, Kant does admit the unity of theory and practice through what he calls, pure practical reason. Practical reason concerns the faculty of will "which is a faculty either of bringing forth objects corresponding to conceptions or of determining itself, i.e., is causality to effect such objects". (Kant, 1956:15) The precepts of will, says Kant, "themselves produce the reality of that to which they refer (the intention of the will) — an achievement which is in no way the business of theoretical concepts". (1956:68) Kant's notion of the freedom of the will has radical implications: "For, in fact, the moral law ideally transfers us into a nature in which reason would bring forth the highest good were it accompanied by sufficient physical capacities; and it determines our will to impart to the sensuous world the form of a system of rational beings." (1956:45) In Kant, however, even the notion of the unity of theory and practice remains purely abstract. The will is determined by moral laws, but the content of these laws remains indeterminate in the extreme, as evidenced by what Kant holds to be the "Fundamental Law of Pure Practical Reason": "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law." (1956:30)

In Kant's philosophy, the fundamental determinant of the will is

simply "abstract identity ... there must be no contradiction in the act of self-determination". (Hegel, 1975:87) In other words, for Kant the will is determined by moral laws which it is bound to obey; it cannot contradict these laws without contravening morality itself. These laws, which are given to the individual by his or her reasoning faculty, are absolute; acting according to them constitutes what Kant calls, duty. "The relation of ... will to" moral "law is one of dependence under the name of 'obligation'. This term implies a constraint to an action, though this constraint is only that of reason and its objective law. Such an action is called duty ..." (1956:32) In Kant's view, obligation or duty simply constitutes the freedom of the individual to conform to moral laws which themselves are the product of the thinking reason of the individual. "... The moral law expresses nothing else than the autonomy of the pure practical reason, i.e., freedom." (1956:33-34)

Hegel is impressed with Kant's notion of "Practical Reason". This notion, Hegel observes, "does not confine the universal principle of the Good to its own inward regulation: it first becomes practical, in the true sense of the word, when it insists on the Good being manifested in the world with an outward objectivity, and requires that the thought should be objective throughout, and not merely subjective". But Kant's notion of the free will is governed entirely by the abstract identity of the understanding: conformity of the will to moral law. Further, the laws of the will have in themselves no social content. "... To say that a man must make the Good the content of his will raises the question, what that content is, and what are the means of ascertaining what good is. Nor does one get over the difficulty by

the principle that the will must be consistent with itself, or by the precept to do duty for the sake of duty." Kant simply empties the concept of freedom of any content it had in metaphysics and fails to originate "any special forms, whether cognitive principles or moral laws". Nevertheless, by recognizing the absolute autonomy of human thought in social or moral practice, Kant "refused to accept or indulge anything possessing the character of an externality. Henceforth the principle of the independence of Reason, or of its absolute self-subsistence, is made a general principle of philosophy, as well as a foregone conclusion of the time". (1975:87-88, 93)

Hegel argues that "The principle of free mind is to make the merely given element in consciousness", i.e., the external world as perceived by the senses, "... into something mental", — the categories of thought — "... and conversely to make what is mental into an objectivity ..." through revolutionizing practice or ideality. In Kant's epistemology, says Hegel, the identity of subject and object "is still abstract, the formal identity of subjectivity and objectivity. Only when this identity has developed into an actual difference and has made itself into the identity of itself and its difference, therefore, only when mind or spirit steps forth as an immanently developed totality, not till then has that certainty established itself as truth". (1969:181) Lenin outlines Hegel's argument as follows:

The activity of man, who has constructed an objective picture of the world for himself, changes external actuality, abolishes its determinateness (=alters some sides or other, qualities, of it), and thus removes from it the features of Semblance, externality and nullity, and makes it as being in and for itself (=objectively true) ... The result of



activity is the test of subjective cognition  
and the criterion of OBJECTIVITY WHICH TRULY IS.  
(1963:218-219)

For Kant, reality as perceived by the Ego — the singular or simple "identity of my Self" (Kant, 1893:242) — is characterized by the absence of contradiction; consequently, non-contradiction must be the foremost principle of thought. As Karl Popper observes,

... it can easily be shown that if one were to accept contradictions then one would have to give up any kind of scientific activity: it would mean a complete breakdown of science. This can be shown by proving that if two contradictory statements are admitted, any statement whatever must be admitted; for from a couple of contradictory statements any statement whatever can be validly inferred. (1976:317)

Kant argues that if human reason operates without regard for the non-contradictory world of experience, it is bound to involve itself in arguments, which, although they contradict one another, can equally be shown as logically valid. Kant explains that this "natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason" (1893:212) is one of the essential weaknesses of thought, against which it must constantly guard itself. Contradiction can only be avoided by constant reference to the non-contradictory facts given to us in external reality. In Kant's view, the human mind is subject to a mass of internal contradictions; reality, however, is signally without contradiction. Kant's "only motive", Hegel writes, "was an excess of tenderness for the things of the world. The blemish of contradiction, it seems, could not be allowed to mar the essence of the world; but there could be no objection to attaching it to thinking reason, to the essence of mind". (1975:77)

Most commentators believe that Hegel utterly rejects Kant's principle of non-contradiction; and this rejection, suggests Karl Popper,

"makes" Hegel's "system secure against any sort of criticism or attack and thus it is dogmatic in a peculiar sense, so that I should call it a 'reinforced dogmatism'". (1976:327) Hegel, however, is much influenced by Kant's discussion of contradiction and states that it is even "more valuable" than Kant's theory of the nature and use of the categories. (1975:74) Hegel agrees with Kant that non-contradiction is an essential element of formal logic and empirical science, where science deals with inorganic matter and sensuous conceptions like number and force. But the principle of non-contradiction has no application whatever to the world of living things, and especially to the intellectual and social universe of men and women. (See above, Chapter 2) "... If in the end", writes Hegel, "Reason be reduced to mere identity without diversity ... it will in the end also win a happy release from contradiction at the slight sacrifice of all its facets and contents." (1975:77)

According to Hegel, if Kant shows that reason becomes "transcendent", or prey to illusion and contradiction, when it tries to comprehend the infinite, what Kant is actually doing is proving the inadequacy of the categories of the understanding or bourgeois mind to grasp the social and intellectual world of men and women. This sphere of social relations is certainly available to experience, but Kant's view of experience is limited to what immediately can be perceived by the senses: "... experience and observation of the world mean nothing else for Kant than a candle stick standing here, and a snuff-box standing there." (Hegel, 1896:444-445) In Kant's estimation, for example, freedom is simply an "ought to be", something to be striven for but never realized in the world of experience; it is an

ideal conception which can only be approximated by political constitutions which are "always nearer and nearer to the greatest possible perfection". (Kant, 1893:223) But Hegel argues that freedom can be studied with reference to the empirical world; it takes a concrete form at each stage of development of society, a form which can be elucidated by science and connected with the various aspects of society — its laws, religion, class structure, mode of production, and so on. In this (theoretical) reconstruction of society, however, something more than sense perception is involved. "... No one wishes", writes Hegel, "to demand a sensuous proof or verification of the infinite; spirit is for spirit alone." (1896:448)

Marx accepts Hegel's view and applies it to "vulgar political economy" — the science which "actually does no more than interpret, systematize and defend in doctrinaire fashion the conceptions of the agents of bourgeois production who are entrapped in bourgeois production relations". The limitation of this science is precisely its abstract and uncritical faith in the external world of sense experience. "It should not astonish us ... that vulgar economy feels particularly at home in the estranged outward appearances of economic relations ... and that these relations seem the more self-evident the more their internal relationships are concealed from it ... But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided." (1967, III:817) Like Hegel, Marx believes that freedom can be studied as it presents itself in concrete form in society; further, this study can reveal what Hegel calls, "the actually present Idea of the universal, of a total and perfect". (1975:92) That is, science can illuminate the eternal aspects of

reality: the elements which display the actual shape of the future.

"In all societies", notes Marx,

a definite quantity of surplus-labour is required as insurance against accidents, and by the necessary and progressive expansion of the process of reproduction in keeping with the development of the needs and the growth of population, which is called accumulation from the point of view of the capitalist. It is one of the civilizing aspects of capital that it enforces this surplus-labour in a manner and under conditions which are more advantageous to the development of the productive forces, social relations, and the creation of the elements for a new and higher form than under the preceding forms of slavery, serfdom, etc. Thus it gives rise to a stage, on the one hand, in which coercion and monopolization of social development (including its material and intellectual advantages) by one portion of society at the expense of the other are eliminated; on the other hand, it creates the material means and embryonic conditions, making it possible in a higher form of society to combine this surplus-labour with a greater reduction of time devoted to material labour in general. (1967, III:819)

Kant's principle of non-contradiction has obtained a strong grip on contemporary Western Marxism. "The fundamental principle of materialism and science", writes Colletti, "is the principle of non-contradiction." If Marxism is to be scientific, then, it must adhere to this principle. Nevertheless, admits Colletti, "for Marx, capitalism is contradictory not because it is a reality and all realities are contradictory, but because it is an upside-down, inverted reality..." (A strange "fundamental principle" indeed, if it does not even apply to the object of a "scientific Marxism": the bourgeois mode of production!) In Colletti's opinion, Marx's recognition of contradiction within capitalism, "confirms the existence of two aspects in Marx: that of the scientist and that of the philosopher". (1975: 28-29) Marx, however, could not have advanced a single step either as a scientist or a philosopher had he accepted the "fundamental principle

of materialism", Kant's principle of non-contradiction.

Marx's entire conception of history as well as his concrete analysis of the categories of bourgeois political economy is grounded precisely on the principle of contradiction. The basis for this principle is constructed by Hegel. As I have shown in Chapters 2 and 4, contradiction for Hegel is the essential principle of all living things; thus appetite itself, the desire of a human being to overcome hunger and thirst, is simply an aspect of contradiction: for in the condition of hunger both of the following (contradictory) statements are possible: "I am a self-sufficient unity"; "I am not a self-sufficient unity." Writes Hegel,

Where a self-identical something bears within it a contradiction and is charged with the feeling of its intrinsic self-identity as well as the opposite feeling of its internal contradiction, there necessarily emerges the impulse to remove this contradiction. (1969:167)

The satisfaction of appetite itself represents the unity of the self-identical human being with the object which satisfied the impulse of hunger; the individual becomes "an identity of itself and its difference":

In the object, the subject beholds its own lack, its own one-sidedness, sees in it something which belongs to its own essential nature and yet is lacking in it. Self-consciousness is able to remove this contradiction since it is not [merely] being, but absolute activity; and it removes it by taking possession of the object whose independence is, so to speak, only pretended, satisfies itself by consuming it and since it is self-end ..., maintains itself in the process. (1969:168)

The absolute activity of the individual human being, however, involves more than just the satisfaction of appetite, which, after all, "is always destructive, and in its content selfish: and as the satisfaction has only happened in the individual (and that is transient)

the appetite is again generated in the act of satisfaction". (1969: 169) A much more important aspect of contradiction involves the struggle of the individual to assert his or her freedom and independence over and against other individuals who deny them. This contradiction, this struggle, forms an essential aspect of human history. "... The fight for recognition ... constitutes a necessary moment in the development of the human spirit." (Hegel, 1969:173) For Hegel, the struggle for freedom is a reflection of the fact that the social reality of certain individuals represents a contradiction between what they know to be their essential nature and what they actually are in society. Thus in ancient Rome, two contradictory statements were possible and equally valid: "slaves are inferior and have no claim to equal rights"; "slaves are equal to others and are entitled to equal rights".

The reason for the possibility and even the necessity of contradiction in human society lies in the inherent characteristics of the living individual. "... Living beings as such", notes Hegel,

possess within them a universal vitality, which overpasses and includes the single mode; and thus, as they maintain themselves in the negative of themselves, they feel the contradiction to exist within them. But the contradiction is within them only in so far as one and the same subject includes both the universality of their sense of life, and the individual mode which is in negation with it. (1975:92)

The young Marx applies this concept to the degraded situation of the proletariat in the mid-nineteenth century. "The class of the proletariat", he writes,

feels annihilated in its self-alienation; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. In the words of Hegel, the class of the proletariat is in indignation at that abasement, an

indignation to which it is necessarily driven by the contradiction between its human nature and its conditions of life, which is the outright, decisive and comprehensive negation of that nature. (1971:143)

The limitation an individual may feel in his or her social position represents the consciousness of an unlimited and universal mode of existence — one which would make possible the fulfilment and self-realization of the individual. "A very little consideration might show that to call a thing finite or limited proves by implication the very presence of the infinite and unlimited, and that our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is on this side in consciousness." (Hegel, 1975:92) The unlimited which Hegel suggests is "on this side in consciousness" is outlined by Marx:

... The realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production ... Freedom can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of their human nature. But it nonetheless remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity at its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite. (1967, III:820)

For Hegel, as well as for Marx, the modern notion of freedom and equality for all men and women is nothing but the result and reflection of the principle of struggle and contradiction. Moreover, freedom and equality require not only their achievement for the particular individual, but also his or her recognition of these rights for others: in itself a contradiction. Notes Hegel,

I am only truly free when the other is also free and recognized by me as free ... Freedom demands, therefore, that the self-conscious subject should not heed his own natural existence or tolerate the natural existence of others; on the contrary, he should in his individual, immediate actions stake his own life and the lives of others to win freedom. Only through struggle, therefore, can freedom be won; the assertion that one is free does not suffice to make one so ... (1969:171-172)

The necessity for freedom to be universal in order to be real for the individual is emphasized by Marx: "In the United States of America, every independent workers' movement was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin." (1976:414)

In the course of history, the fight for independence and freedom for the individual, however, "ends in the first instance as a one-sided negation with inequality ... Thus arises the status of master and slave". This relationship results in the formation of a state: "the emergence of man's social life and the commencement of political union". (Hegel, 1969:173) "The family is the first precondition of the state," declares Hegel, "but class divisions are the second." (1976:270) Class distinctions indicate the organic differentiation of society and the beginnings of a division of labour; these, in turn, are necessary for the development of a constitution and political life. "A real state and a real Government", says Hegel, "arise only after a distinction of classes has arisen, when wealth and poverty become extreme, and when such a condition of things presents itself that a large proportion of the people can no longer satisfy its necessities in the way in which it has been accustomed so to do." (1956:85-86) The formation of the state, in turn, provides the basis for the development of the economy and culture of a nation; it "creates a



permanent means and a provision which takes care for and secures the future". (1969:74)

Hegel's theory of the relationship between contradiction, struggle and human freedom is, of course, a basic element in Marx's materialist conception of history. "The history of all hitherto existing society", Marx declares in the Communist Manifesto.

is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes ... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing one another: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (1969, I:108-109)

Hegel points out that the notion of abstract identity and equality treasured by the understanding consciousness, with its naive faith in the principle of non-contradiction, leaves it completely unable to grasp the discordant and contradictory reality of modern bourgeois society. The capitalist mode of production is founded on what Hegel calls, the "rights of particularity"; that is, the "concept ..." of "bourgeois society" (Marx, 1973:885) is the principle of self-seeking aggrandizement and the pursuit of private wealth. Given this "particularity", inequality is inevitable. "The objective right of the particularity of mind", writes Hegel,

is contained in the Idea. Men are made unequal by nature, where inequality is in its element, and in

civil society the right of particularity is so far from annulling this natural inequality that it produces it out of mind and raises it to an inequality of skill and resources, and even to one of moral and intellectual attainment. To oppose to this a demand for equality is a folly of the Understanding which takes as real and rational its abstract equality and its "ought to be".

(1976:130)

For the bourgeois mind, however, even the "existence of 'classes' generally" is in question; and the denial of the "reality" of classes is "drawn from the consideration of the State in its 'aspect' of abstract equity". But equality in bourgeois society, notes Hegel,

is something absolutely impossible; for individual distinctions of sex and age will always assert themselves; and even if an equal share in government is accorded to all citizens, women and children are immediately passed by, and remain excluded. The distinction between poverty and riches, the influence of skill and talent, can be as little ignored — utterly refuting those abstract assertions. (1956:145)

For Hegel, the evolution of animate nature, unlike that of society, is a peaceful and gradual process which nevertheless eludes the abstract categories of the understanding like "quality, cause and effect, composition, constituents and so on". (1975:90) And if the bourgeois mind cannot grasp the evolution of things in nature, it is so much the more unlikely to comprehend the contradictory progress of society. The animal, notes Hegel, is an end in itself, and "in the living organism ... 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". (1975:89) The notion that animate nature develops according to a teleological principle, to inner design, was first suggested by Kant. But it was abandoned by empirical science in Hegel's time, only to be taken up once again by Darwin in the middle of the nineteenth century. "The principle of inward adaptation or design,

had it been kept to and carried out in scientific application," Hegel observes, "would have led to a different and higher method of observing nature." (1975:90)

By contrast with nature, the evolution of society is based on splits, antagonisms and contradiction. "The spiritual is distinguished from the natural, and more especially from the animal, life, in the circumstance that it does not continue a mere stream of tendency, but sunders itself to self-realization." Contemporary bourgeois society is itself the result and illustration of the antagonistic development of the human spirit; but it is not the final goal of humankind, nor is its existence likely to be eternal. "... This position of severed life has in its turn to be suppressed, and the spirit has by its own act to win its way to concord again ... The disunion that appears throughout humanity is not a condition to rest in." (1975:43)

For the understanding consciousness of bourgeois and Marxist alike, the state of nature which characterized early man and woman was a blissful life of equality. But this notion, on which the understanding bases its abstract demand for equality, is completely mistaken. The class-divisions and inequality of bourgeois society are the result precisely of the fact that the relations of the state of nature are still in force and have not yet been suppressed by the rational impulse of men and women. "The sphere of particularity", writes Hegel, referring to bourgeois society, "which fancies itself the universal, is still only relatively identical with the universal, and consequently it still retains in itself the particularity of nature, i.e. arbitrariness, or in other words the relics of the state of nature." (1976:130) Bourgeois society, like "nature in every part

is in the bonds of individualism"; it is a "state of inward breach" in which "man pursues ends of his own and draws from himself the material of his conduct. While he pursues these aims to the uttermost, while his knowledge and will seek himself, his own narrow self apart from the universal, he is evil; and his evil is to be subjective." (1975:44) There are, of course, natural qualities in the individual such as "social or benevolent inclinations, love, sympathy, and others, reaching beyond his selfish isolation". But under capitalism, these qualities in the individual are subservient and restricted: "... so long as these tendencies are instinctive, their virtual universality of scope and purport is vitiated by the subjective form which always allows free play to self-seeking and random action." (1975:45)

Far from the harmonious development pictured by the understanding consciousness in accordance with its sacred principle of non-contradiction, the progress of bourgeois society is founded on the alienation of human skills and talents — their transformation into commodities external to and independent of the individual who possesses them. "The field of vision" of "the Understanding ... is limited ... to the dilemma 'either a thing or not a thing' where a 'thing' is contrasted with the 'person' as such", and "means ... that whose determinate character lies in its pure externality". In bourgeois society, however, "Attainments, erudition, talents, and so forth, are, of course, owned by free mind," i.e., the individual, "and are something internal and not external to it, but even so, by expressing them it may embody them in something external and alienate them ... and in this way they are put into the category of 'things'". The category of things, then, becomes very large indeed:

Mental aptitudes, erudition, artistic skill, even things ecclesiastical (like sermons, masses, prayers, consecration of votive objects), inventions, and so forth, become subjects of a contract, brought on to a parity, through being bought and sold, with things recognized as things. (Hegel, 1976:40-41)

Accordingly, the absolute principle of bourgeois society is actually the principle of contradiction: "My labour or ideality is a part of me; "— My labour or ideality is a thing." The result of this alienation is pointed out by Marx:

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked upon with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers. (1969, I:111)

Where the understanding sees only harmony and non-contradiction, capitalism proceeds by tearing apart and crushing the very basis of harmony, the family. "Originally", writes Hegel,

the family is the substantive whole whose function is to provide for the individual on his particular side by giving him either the means and the skill necessary to enable him to earn his living out of the resources of society, or else subsistence and maintenance in the event of his suffering a disability. But civil society tears the individual from his family ties, estranges the members of the family from one another, and recognizes them as self-subsistent persons. Further, for the paternal soil and the external organic resources of nature from which the individual derived his livelihood, it substitutes its own soil and subjects the permanent existence of even the entire family to dependence on itself and contingency. (1976:148)

Again, Marx: "The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation." (1969:111) For Hegel, as for Marx, capitalism creates the conditions in which the traditional educative role of the family is usurped by society, by what Hegel calls, "the universal family":

In its character as a universal family, civil society has the right and duty of superintending and influencing education, inasmuch as education bears upon the child's capacity to become a member of society. Society's right here is paramount over the arbitrary and contingent preferences of parents ... Society must provide public educational facilities so far as is practicable ... The chief opposition to any form of public education usually comes from parents and it is they who talk and make an outcry about teachers and schools because they have a faddish dislike to them. None the less, society has a right to act on principles tested by its experience and to compel parents to send their children to school, to have them vaccinated and so forth. (1976:148, 277)

Hegel's observations are taken up by Marx in the Manifesto: "But you will say", writes Marx, referring to the opponents of communism,

we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social ... The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour. (1969, I:123-124)

Hegel, too, is keenly aware of the exploitation and degradation of children under the bourgeois mode of production. "Children are potentially free," he writes, "and their life directly embodies nothing save potential freedom. Consequently they are not things and cannot be the property either of their parents or others." In a society where slave labour and indentured service by working-class children was the rule rather than the exception, Hegel's (and Marx's) insistence on public education is much more radical than it sounds today. "The services which may be demanded from children", declares Hegel, "should ... have education as their sole end and be relevant thereto; they must not be ends in themselves, since a child in slavery is the most unethical of all situations whatever." (1976:117, 265)

The contradictions of bourgeois society which dissolve the family also undermine the foundations of both the domestic servitude of women and the sexual double standard. "Since", writes Hegel, "the community gets itself subsistence only by breaking in upon family happiness, and dissolving self-consciousness into the universal, it creates its own enemy within its own gates, creates in it what it suppresses, and what is at the same time essential to it — womankind in general." (1967: 496) In bourgeois marriage, Hegel observes, "the wife is without the moment of knowing herself as this particular self in and through an other." (1967:476) While the husband may carve a place for himself in an other, the social universe, the universe of the wife is limited and restricted to the family alone:

... man has his actual substantive life in the state, in learning and so forth, as well as in labour and in struggle with the external world and with himself so that it is only out of his self-diremption that he fights his way to self-subsistent unity with himself. In the family he has a tranquil intuition of this unity, and there he lives a subjective ethical life on the plane of feeling. Woman, on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family, and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mind. (1976:114)

The identification of the husband with society or the universal, and the restriction of the role of the wife to the family alone results in the bourgeois double standard.

It must be noticed in connection with sex-relations that a girl in surrendering her body loses her honour. With a man, however, the case is otherwise, because he has a field for ethical activity outside the family. A girl is destined in essence for the marriage tie and for that only; it is therefore demanded of her that here love shall take the form of marriage and that the different moments in love shall attain their true rational relation to each other. (1976:263)

But the comfortable bourgeois assumptions about women and their place in society are destroyed by the contradictions of bourgeois society itself. The life of a woman in bourgeois society, is "a life which has not yet attained its full actualization". (1976:115) This actualization is achieved by the dissolution of the family under capitalism. For Hegel, the distinction between the sexes within the family relation is "natural" rather than rational; and bourgeois society absolutely destroys this immediate and natural family relation. The family is splintered into its independent members and the opposition between individuals on the basis of their sex and role in the family disappears. "The two 'self-conscious factors' within the family, i.e., husband and wife, "passes over into the absolute self-existence of mere single self-consciousness." (1967:484) Accordingly, bourgeois society is characterized by the dialectical development and struggle of the individual self-consciousness of women: "The universal spirit of the particular individual", writes Hegel,

finds its existence, in woman, through the mediation of whom the unconscious spirit comes out of its unrealizedness into actuality, and rises out of the state of unknowing and unknown, into the conscious realm of universal spirit ... the daylight of conscious existence. (1967:482)

The "subjective self-seeking" which characterizes bourgeois society increases at the same time the dependence of individuals on one another. As Marx puts it, "The general interest is precisely the generality of self-seeking interest." (1973:245) "... Subjective self-seeking", Hegel observes,

turns into a contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of everyone else. That is to say by a dialectical advance, subjective self-seeking turns into the mediation of the particular through the universal, with the result that each man in earning,



producing, and enjoying on his own account is eo ipso producing and earning for the enjoyment of everyone else. The compulsion which brings this about is rooted in the complex interdependence of each on all, and it now reveals itself to each as the universal permanent capital ... which gives each the opportunity, by the exercise of his education and skill, to draw a share from it and so be assured of his livelihood, while what he thus earns by means of his work maintains and increases the general capital. (1976:129-130)

Here, in other words, is the trinity relation already discussed in Chapter 4: the unity of the extremes of finite and infinite, particular and universal, thought to be impossible by the understanding consciousness and its abstract principle of non-contradiction. For what is revealed in this relation is simply another aspect of the chief contradiction which permeates bourgeois society — the contradiction that resides in the commodity relation and the alienation of human productive powers this relation entails. The individual in bourgeois society is supremely independent; but also supremely dependent.

Recognition of this contradiction had, of course, a great impact on

Marx:

Exchange, when mediated by exchange value and money, presupposes the all-round dependence of the producers on one another, together with the total isolation of their private interests from one another, as well as a division of social labour whose unity and mutual complementarity exist in the form of a natural relation, as it were, external to the individuals and independent of them ... The very necessity of first transforming individual products or activities into exchange value, into money, so that they obtain and demonstrate their social power in this objective ... form, proves two things: (1) That individuals now produce only for society and in society; (2) that production is not directly social, is not "the offspring of association", which distributes labour internally. Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not ... manageable by them as their common wealth. (1973:158)

Kant's adherence to the abstract identity of the bourgeois mind trapped him in the proposition  $I=I$ ; the individual is simple and self-same. The individual, however, is not simple and self-same, but rather the "identity which posits difference", the absolute activity of ideality or revolutionizing practice. It is precisely this activity which unites the individual with society, while at the same time making him or her appear to be independent of society. "... Life is that inner existence which does not remain abstractly inner but enters wholly into its manifestation." (Hegel, 1969:164) The individual is above all the embodiment of productive and creative activity, the absolute force which changes external reality according to his or her needs and desires, and therefore creates a living unity between the object of activity and consciousness. "A person", says Hegel, "must translate his freedom into an external sphere in order to exist as Idea." (1976:40)

Possession is the first manifestation of the activity of the individual, and "To impose a form on a thing", i.e., to work on and create something, "is the mode of taking possession most in conformity with the Idea to this extent, that it implies a union of subject and object ..." (1976:47) Through his or her conscious activity in society — ideality or revolutionizing practice — the individual posits a relation which Hegel calls, Reason or Idea. But under capitalism, this relation appears as a social reality independent of and opposed to the individual:

Reason, as the Idea ... as it ... appears [in bourgeois society] is to be taken as meaning that the distinction between notion and reality which it unifies has the special aspect of a distinction between the self-concentrated notion or consciousness, and the object subsisting external to it. (1969:177)

In bourgeois society, as Marx points out, "the objective conditions of labour assume an ever more colossal independence, represented by its very extent, opposite living labour, and that social wealth confronts labour in more powerful portions as an alien and dominant power. The emphasis comes to be placed not on the state of being objectified, but on the state of being alienated, dispossessed, sold ..." (1973:831)

The apparent externality to the individuals of the very objects which they create leads precisely to the Kantian definition of objectivity: "My idea is correct merely if it agrees with the object, even when the latter only remotely corresponds to its Notion and hence has hardly any truth at all." (Hegel, 1969:178) But the third, Hegelian form of objectivity — the union of consciousness with its object as achieved through Reason or ideality — has to be transferred to society as a whole. Society must be made subject to reason in the same manner as reason transforms and creates in its own image the objects of the external world.

True liberty, in the shape of moral [social] life, consists in the will finding its purpose in a universal content, not in subjective or selfish interests. But such a content is only possible in thought and through thought ... It belongs to the Idea of freedom that the will should make its Notion, which is freedom itself, its content or aim, when it does this it becomes objective mind [the rational state], constructs for itself a world of its freedom, and thus gives to its true content a self-subsistent existence. But will achieves this aim only by ridding itself of its [abstract] individuality, by developing its initially only implicit universality into a content that is universal in and for itself. (1969:228-229)

What Hegel has in mind here is simply that form of society which Marx calls, communist society: "In place of the old bourgeois society,

with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (1969, I:127)

The understanding or bourgeois consciousness is utterly repelled by, and incapable of grasping, this absolute union of the very extremes, individual and society, which the bourgeois mode of production actually does unite if only in an abstract and accidental manner. But this bourgeois incomprehension is based on the most far-reaching illusion of all within capitalism: the mystique of equality and free exchange which governs the relations of commodities. As Marx suggests, equality of exchange in the market is the basis of freedom and equality in bourgeois society as a whole.

... When the economic form, exchange, posits the all-sided equality of its subjects, then the content, the individual as well as the objective material which drives towards exchange, is freedom. Equality and freedom are thus not only respected in exchange based on exchange values but, also, the exchange of exchange values is the productive, real basis of all equality and freedom. As pure ideas they are merely the idealized expressions of this basis as developed in juridical, political, social relations, they are merely this basis to a higher power. (1973:245)

This free exchange is so far from inequality and privilege that it is their very opposite: "A worker who buys commodities for 3s. appears to the seller in the same function, in the same equality — in the form of 3s. — as the king who does the same. All distinction between them is extinguished." (1973:246) Accordingly, it is in the realm of exchange that the principle of non-contradiction reaches its highest expression.

For the abstract understanding, the fundamental law of thought is that of identity,  $I=I$ . But the fundamental law of capitalist production

eludes this equation. Instead of identity, there is an identity which posits difference. Thus, the capitalist invests his or her money (M) into commodities (C), not in order to satisfy the fundamental law identity,  $M=M$ , but rather to achieve an altogether different result, where  $M=M+m$ . "The capitalist knows", writes Marx, "that all commodities ... are in faith and in truth money ... and what is more, a wonderful means for making still more money out of money." (1976: 256) In fact, money becomes capital, only on condition that it creates more money. "In itself ... money may only be defined as capital if it is employed, spent, with the aim of increasing it, if it is spent expressly to increase it. In the case of the sum of value or money this phenomenon is its destiny, its inner law, its tendency, while to the capitalist, i.e. the owner of the sum of money, in whose hands it shall acquire its function, it appears as intention, purpose." The transformation of money into more money seems to involve neither its transformation into commodities nor the production process itself.

It is for this reason that the character, the specific nature of capitalist production, appears to be so simple and abstract. If the original capital is a quantum of value  $=x$ , it becomes capital and fulfils its purpose by changing into  $x + \Delta x$ , i.e. into a quantum of money or value = the original sum + a balance over the original sum. In other words, it is transformed into the given amount of money + additional money, into the given value + surplus-value. The production of surplus-value — which includes the preservation of the original value advanced — appears therefore as the determining purpose, the driving force and the final result of the capitalist process of production ... (Marx, 1976:976)

The relation of money with money is every bit as mysterious for the understanding consciousness as is the relation of the Holy Trinity itself. Notes Marx,

... in the circulation M-C-M, value suddenly presents itself as a self-moving substance which passes through a process of its own, and for which commodities and money are both mere forms. But there is more to come: instead of simply representing the relations of commodities, it now enters into a private relationship with itself, as it were. It differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus-value, just as God the Father differentiates himself from God the Son, although both are of the same age and form, in fact one single person; for only by the surplus-value of [e.g.] £10 does the £100 originally advanced become capital, and as soon as this has happened, as soon as the son has been created and, through the son, the father, their difference vanishes again, and both become one, £110. (1976:256)

What Hegel calls, "the general capital" of society (1976:130) — and what Marx terms, "social capital" — is actually the product of the labour of all individuals in society. Nevertheless, it appears in bourgeois society as "the means of production monopolized by a certain section of society, confronting living labour power as products and working conditions rendered independent of this very labour power, [and] personified through this antithesis in capital". (Marx, 1967, III:815) The process by which capital accumulates magnificently in society, and yet remains the property of an ever-diminishing group of private individuals, is another of the great mysteries encountered by the principle of non-contradiction and its bourgeois exponents. For the bourgeois mind, the exchange of commodities is based — as pointed out above — on the principle of identity. The individual sells his or her labour-power to the capitalist, who employs that labour-power, and the individual is given wages or a salary in exchange. Yet at the end of the labour process, the capitalist is possessed of commodities which represent a larger value than the capitalist originally advanced. In Marx's formula, we have (where "C" represents "capital"):  $C=C'$ . (1976:977) Where now is Colletti's "fundamental principle of

materialism and science"? And what has happened to Kant's and Popper's absolute law of non-contradiction? And what, moreover, has happened to liberty and equality?

Marx suggests an answer as follows:

In present bourgeois society as a whole, this positing of prices and their circulation etc. appears as a surface process, beneath which, however, in the depths, entirely different processes go on, in which this apparent individual equality and liberty disappear ... Thus what all wisdom comes down to is the attempt to stick fast at the simplest economic relations, which conceived by themselves are pure abstractions; but these relations are, in reality, mediated by the deepest antithesis, and represent only one side, in which the full expression of the antithesis is obscured. (1973:248)

The surface appearance is the quintessence of the bourgeois world of abstraction. But beneath this realm of shades, processes are at work which turn an identity around into its very opposite. "... Exchange value or, more precisely, the money system is in fact the system of equality and freedom, and ... the disturbances ... [encountered] in the further development of the system are disturbances inherent in it, are merely the realization of equality and freedom, which prove to be inequality and unfreedom." (Marx, 1973:248-249) For the vulgar economist, the sycophant of the bourgeoisie, there is no difference between capital as it is advanced by the capitalist, and capital plus profit as it emerges from the production process. Profit is the natural reward of the capitalist who, after all, risked his or her capital, employed his or her ingenuity, applied his or her rationality, and so on. For the socialist opponents of the system, who are as imprisoned by abstractions as their opponents, "there is, unfortunately, a difference, but by rights, there ought not to be". (Marx, 1973:250)

Marx's analysis of the bourgeois mode of production follows the organic process of capitalist production itself; it is aimed at uncovering the inner dialectic of capital, the contradiction,  $C=C'$ : the identity which in exchange posits a difference between it and itself. As Hegel points out, however, "the identity which posits difference" can only be the human individual; things lack the ability to withstand contradiction, and cannot advance out of negativity or opposition. Moreover, things have no creative capacity or energy: as discussed in Chapter 4, a thing does not have its end in itself — it can achieve only imperfect activity, activity the subject of which lies outside it. Production is human precisely in so far as it accords with human ends and design: "The purposive form of the product is the only trace left behind by the purposive labour ..." (Marx, 1976:980) Marx's investigation, therefore, leads him precisely to the nature of individual human ideality, or — as it appears predominantly under capitalism — individual human labour-power.

The starting point of Marx's analysis is the commodity, the ultimate being or identity of capitalism: "Capitalist production is the first to make the commodity into the general form of all produce." (1976:951) Marx's examination of the commodity follows the guidelines suggested by Hegel in his dialectical analysis of the categories of thought in the Logic. There Hegel observes that an identity, an object, should be studied only in so far as it includes difference. To look at a thing in its character as an identity and ignore other (contradictory) categories, such as difference and diversity, is the method of the abstract understanding. This abstract method "may neglect a part of the multiple features which are found in the concrete



thing (by what is called analysis) and select only one of them; or neglecting their variety", it "may concentrate the multiplicity into one". (1975:166) Hegel's observation is echoed by Marx, who notes that for bourgeois commentators on the nature of capital, "... identity is proved by holding fast to the features common to all processes of production, while neglecting their specific differentiae. The identity is proved by abstracting from the differences." (1976:982)

A commodity for Marx is certainly a self-identical thing; it "is first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind". But a commodity is not only a self-identical thing, it also includes difference. "Every useful thing is a whole composed of many properties; it can therefore be used in various ways. The discovery of these ways and hence of the manifold use of the thing is the work of history." (Marx, 1976:125) Hegel remarks that philosophy "lays bare the nothingness of the abstract, undifferentiated identity, known to the understanding"; nevertheless, "it also undoubtedly urges its disciples not to rest at mere diversity, but to ascertain the inner unity of all existence." (1975:71) Thus Marx points out that a commodity is certainly self-identical in that it represents a unity, i.e., value. But value itself is a unity which breaks down into difference: use-value (the commodity's intrinsic usefulness for the consumer), "the material content of wealth" (1976:126) and exchange-value: "the quantitative relation, the proportion, in which use-values of one kind exchange for use-values of another kind". (1976:126)

Here we begin a journey into what must be among the great mysteries of intellectual history. For Marx's analysis of the

commodity, and, as I will show, his theory of surplus-value and even of the transition from capitalism into communism is, or seems to be, taken over directly from similar discussions in Hegel. Whether Marx is aware of the similarity between his views and those of Hegel will never be known. Perhaps it is safe to say that since Marx adopts Hegel's dialectic method, he is led to the same discoveries made by Hegel a generation before him. Marx himself admits that in Capital "I ... openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, [Hegel] and even, here and there in the chapter on the theory of value, coquetted with the mode of expression peculiar to him." (1976:102-103) But Marx is less than honest either with his readers or with himself. The "chapter on value" Marx refers to is "Chapter 1: The Commodity": this chapter, or at least that part of it devoted to the analysis of the commodity, simply reproduces Hegel's similar discussions in the Philosophy of Right (1976), and the Philosophy of Mind (1969). These discussions, in turn, are found, though in a much more abstract form, in the Phenomenology (1967:424-438)

In the Philosophy of Mind, Hegel observes that in contract — the act of buying and selling, or exchange — "there is put into the thing or performance", i.e., the object of exchange, "a distinction between its specific quality" or use-value "and its substantial being or value, meaning by value the quantitative terms into which that qualitative feature has been translated", i.e. its exchange-value. "One piece of property is thus made comparable with another, and may be made equivalent to a thing which is (in quality) wholly heterogeneous. It is thus treated in general as an abstract, universal thing or commodity." (1969:245) Similarly, in the Philosophy of Right, Hegel contrasts the

value of a "thing in use" with its "universality" or the property which makes it possible to exchange the thing for other objects of utility. "This, the thing's universality, whose simple determinate character arises from the particularity of the thing, so that it is eo ipso abstracted from the thing's specific quality, is the thing's value, wherein its genuine substantiality becomes determinate and an object of consciousness. As full owner of the thing, I am eo ipso owner of its value as well as of its use." In fact, for Hegel as for Marx, the commodity — a thing with use-value and also exchange-value — is the vital element which separates the capitalist mode of production from the economy of the feudal period: "The distinctive character of the property of a feudal tenant is that he is supposed to be the owner of the use only, not of the [exchange-]value of a thing." (1976: 52)

One thing separates Marx's discussion of the commodity from that of Hegel. Hegel does not use the term "value" to refer to the usefulness of things, but uses it to refer only to value in exchange. What Marx calls a thing's "use-value" is described by Hegel as "the specific need which it satisfies", a need which "is at the same time need in general [i.e., social need] and thus is comparable on its particular side with other needs, while the thing in virtue of the same considerations is comparable with things meeting other needs." (1976:51) Given this difference in their treatment of the concept of the commodity, it is instructive to look at what Louis Althusser says about Marx's discussion of the commodity. Althusser states that Marx's account "derives from ... Hegelian prejudice"; and the most evident influence of this prejudice appears in Marx's use of the term "use-value". "The

fact is", declares Althusser, "that Marx had not taken the precaution of eliminating the word value from the expression 'use-value' and of speaking as he should have done simply of the social usefulness of the products." (1971:87, 91) Of course, had Marx done what Althusser suggests, then Marx would indeed have been a victim of "Hegelian prejudice"! It only remains to be said, that Althusser's account of the relationship of Marx to Hegel suffers from the small difficulty that Althusser, like most Western Marxists, knows nothing of Hegel.

For Hegel, "the true Identity ... contains Being and its characteristics ideally transfigured in it ..." (1975:168) What Hegel means is that identity includes, among other things, the commodity — that is, an object produced for the purpose of exchange in the market; an object containing the result, or consisting of human labour-power or ideality. "... Identity", Hegel continues, "is undoubtedly a negative — not however an abstract empty Nought, but the negation of Being and its characteristics. Being so, Identity is at the same time self-relation, and, what is more, negative self-relation; in other words, it draws a distinction between it and itself." (1975:169) Hegel's observation is elaborated by Marx:

if we ... discard the use-value of a commodity, only one property remains, that of being products of labour. But even the product of labour has already been transformed in our hands. If we make abstraction from its use-value, we abstract also from the material constituents and forms which make it a use-value. It is no longer a table, a house, a piece of yarn or any other useful thing. All its sensuous characteristics are extinguished.

In other words, abstracting from its use-value, the commodity represents only exchange-value or "human labour in the abstract" (Marx, 1976:128); and therefore in the production of exchange-value, human ideality or labour "draws a distinction between it and itself".

The exchange value of a commodity, in turn, represents "the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production ... Commodities which contain equal quantities of labour, or which can be produced in the same time, have therefore the same value". Further, this necessary labour-time "is determined by a wide range of circumstances: it is determined amongst other things by the workers' average degree of skill, the level of development of science and its technological application, the social organization of production, the extent and effectiveness of the means of production, and the conditions found in the natural environment". (Marx, 1976: 129-130)

Under capitalism, human labour-power is a commodity like any other; it is bought and sold on the market according to the principle of identity or non-contradiction. Thus labour-power is purchased on the market at its full price; i.e., the wages or salary paid by the capitalist to the individual who alienates his or her labour-power, equals the exchange-value of labour-power. Equivalent is matched by equivalent; I=I. Moreover, both the capitalist and the worker are independent individuals, and meet on the market in a spirit of freedom and equality. "... Labour", writes Marx in a passage where he refers to Hegel's similar discussion in the Philosophy of Right (1976:54):

... Labour can appear on the market as a commodity only if, and in so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour-power it is, offers it for sale or sells it as a commodity. In order that its possessor may sell it as a commodity, he must have it at his disposal, he must be the free proprietor of his own labour-capacity, hence of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and enter into relations with each other on a footing of equality as owners of commodities, with the sole difference that one is a buyer, the other a seller; both are therefore equal in

the eyes of the law. For this relation to continue, the proprietor of labour-power must always sell it for a limited period only, for if he were to sell it in a lump, once and for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity. (1976:271)

Marx distinguishes a person's labour from his or her labour-power, since the capitalist only purchases a person's ability to labour for a particular period. Only a slave owner purchases labour, i.e., the entire substance of a slave. Referring to the contract between the buyer of labour-power and its seller, Hegel writes, "It is only when use is restricted that a distinction between use and substance arises. So here, the use of my powers differs from my powers and therefore from myself, only in so far as it is quantitatively restricted. (1976:54)

The worker differs from the capitalist in that "this worker must be free in the double sense that as a free individual he can dispose of his labour-power as a commodity, and that, on the other hand, he has no other commodity for sale, i.e. he is rid of them, he is free of all the objects needed for the realization ... of his labour-power." (Marx, 1976:272-273) Referring to the production process in bourgeois society, Hegel makes the same point: "In this ... process ... dependence and want increase ad infinitum, and the material to meet these is permanently barred to the needy man because it consists of external objects with the special character of being property, the embodiment of the free will of others, and hence from his point of view its recalcitrance is absolute." (1976:128) Even freedom, then, is a contradiction in capitalist society; and the ultimate realization of freedom is ... alienation: "... Work can only be wage-labour when its own material conditions confront it as autonomous powers, alien property, value

existing for itself and maintaining itself, in short as capital."

(Marx, 1976:1006) Moreover, as Hegel emphasizes in the passage above, this type of freedom is the result of an historical process — the absolute dependence of the worker or needy man on the owner of private property is a product of the evolution of the capitalist mode of production itself. Notes Marx,

Nature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their labour-power. This relation has no basis in natural history, nor does it have a social basis common to all periods of human history. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older formations of social production. (1976:273)

Like any commodity, the exchange-value of labour is determined by the labour-time socially necessary for its production; and this labour-time "is the same as that necessary for the production of the means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the owner". (1976:274) The means of subsistence, however, includes much more than just the bare requirements of life. Writes Marx,

the number and extent of [the worker's] so-called necessary requirements, as also the manner in which they are satisfied, are themselves the product of history, and depend therefore to a great extent on the level of civilization attained by a country ... In contrast, therefore, with the case of other commodities, the determination of the value of labour-power contains a historical and moral element. Nevertheless, in a given country at a given period, the average amount of the means of subsistence necessary for a worker is a known datum. (1976:275)

Marx's definition of the value of labour closely follows that given by Hegel for the "subsistence level ... necessary for a member of society ...". This level, says Hegel, is "regulated automatically" and is based

on "the sense of right and wrong ... honesty and self-respect which makes a man insist on maintaining himself by his own work and effort ..." (1976:150) Below this minimum is "the lowest subsistence level, that of a rabble of paupers", which is also "fixed automatically, but the minimum varies considerably in different countries. In England, even the very poorest believe that they have rights; this is different from what satisfies the poor in other countries". (1976:277)

According to Marx, the price of labour-power is in addition determined by the time and energy spent by the individual to acquire his or her particular skills and training. "In order to modify the general nature of the human organism in such a way that it acquires skill and dexterity in a given branch of industry, and becomes labour-power of a developed and specific kind, a special education or training is needed, and this in turn costs an equivalent in commodities of a greater or lesser amount." (1976:276)

The value of labour-power is subject to two countervailing or contradictory pressures under the bourgeois mode of production. The first is what Marx calls, "the reserve army of unemployed", a "relatively redundant working population" created by the increasing productivity of labour, trade cycles, and so on. "The working population ... produces both the accumulation of capital and the means by which it is made relatively superfluous; and it does this to an extent which is always increasing." (1976:782-783) The surplus population offers two advantages to capital — it helps to put pressure on wages by creating a group of workers ready to work for less than those already employed. And it offers a readily available supply of workers for periods of expansion. The second force in determining wages is



the trade unions: "The trade unions aim at nothing less than to prevent the reduction of wages below the level that is traditionally maintained in the various branches of industry." (1976:1069) By maintaining and increasing the level of wages, however, trade unions also encourage the development of machinery to raise the productivity of labour and therefore increase the number of unemployed. By a dialectical advance, therefore, the demand for higher wages assures the increasing productivity and progress of the capitalist mode of production.

Human labour power is distinguished from other commodities in that its "use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption is therefore an objectification ... of labour, hence a creation of value". (Marx, 1976:270) The same notion is put forward by Hegel:

The means of acquiring and preparing the particularized means appropriate to our similarly particularized needs is work. Through work the raw material directly supplied by nature is specifically adapted to these numerous ends by all sorts of different processes. Now this formative change confers value on means and gives them their utility, and hence man in what he consumes is mainly concerned with the products of men. It is the products of human effort which man consumes. (1976:128-129)

But at point of sale, labour-power is simply a capacity on the part of the worker; labour-power is not manifested or consumed except in the production process itself. Consequently, as Marx points out,

In every country where the capitalist mode of production prevails, it is the custom not to pay for labour-power until it has been exercised for the period fixed by the contract, for example, at the end of the week. In all cases, therefore, the worker advances the use-value of his labour-power to the capitalist. He lets the buyer consume it before he receives payment of the price. Everywhere the worker allows credit to the capitalist. (1976:278)

That bourgeois society is one in which the less fortunate constantly lend commodities in the shape of labour-power to the rich is, of course, only another aspect of the "non-contradictory" reality which escapes the notice of the understanding consciousness. But the root, the fundamental contradiction within the bourgeois world of abstraction has yet to be explored. So far the analysis has lingered on appearances, on the ghostly world of exchange, identity and non-contradiction. The elements of this shadowy world are outlined by Marx:

The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour-power, are determined by their own free will ... Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to his own advantage. The only force bringing them together, and putting them into relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain, and the private interest of each. (1976:280)

## CHAPTER 7

## CAPITALISM, CLASS AND PROFIT

1. Capitalism and Abstract Freedom

Under capitalism, writes Marx, "individuals are ... ruled by abstractions, whereas earlier they depended on one another. The abstraction, or idea, however, is nothing more than the theoretical expression of those material relations which are their lord and master." (1973:164)

Bourgeois society is the kingdom of abstraction — of commodities expressed as abstract values, and as value itself expressed by that supreme abstraction, money. "If we consider the concept of value", notes Hegel,

we must look on the thing itself only as a symbol; it counts not as itself but as what it is worth. A bill of exchange, for instance, does not represent what it really is — paper; it is only a symbol of another universal — value. The value of a thing may be very heterogeneous; it depends on need. But if you want to express the value of a thing not in a specific case but in the abstract, then it is money which expresses this. Money represents any and every thing, though since it does not portray the need itself but is only a symbol of it, it is itself controlled by the specific value [of the commodity]. Money, as an abstraction, merely expresses this value. (1976:240)

Since abstraction is the ruling principle of capitalist society, the relations between individuals themselves take on the mystified cloak of abstraction. In civil or bourgeois society, notes Hegel,

Needs and means [of production] ... become something which has being for others by whose needs and work satisfaction for all is alike conditioned. When needs and means become abstract in quality ... abstraction is also a character of the reciprocal relations of individuals to one another. This abstract character,

universality, is the character of being recognized and is the moment which makes concrete, i.e., social, the isolated and abstract needs and their ways and means of satisfaction. (1976:127)

But the abstract or universal character of exchange and production relations in bourgeois society also involves a civilizing force. The abstract character of social relations simply expresses the universal dependence of individuals on one another. Notes Hegel,

The fact that I must direct my conduct by reference to others introduces here the form of universality. It is from others that I acquire the means of satisfaction and I must accordingly accept their views. At the same time, however, I am compelled to produce means for the satisfaction of others. We play into each other's hands and so hang together. To this extent everything private becomes social. In dress fashions and hours of meals, there are certain conventions which we have to accept because in these things it is not worth the trouble to insist on displaying one's own discernment. The wisest thing here is to do as others do. (1976:269)

Given the universal and abstract character of bourgeois society, freedom itself takes on the form of abstraction — free exchange, free competition, and free choice. The relation expressed by these abstract, contentless freedoms is "only ... the illusory reflection of the capitalist relation underlying it". (Marx, 1976:1063) They reflect

nothing more than free development on a limited basis — the basis of the rule of capital. This kind of individual freedom is therefore at the same time the most complete suspension of all individual freedom, and the most complete subjugation of all individuals under social conditions which assume the form of objective powers, even of overpowering objects — of things independent of the relations among individuals themselves. (Marx, 1973:652)

The buying and selling of labour power presents the illusion of an exchange between two equal and independent individuals. In this exchange, the worker appears to confront "an independent individual."

It is clear that this is not his relation to the existence of capital as capital, i.e. to the capitalist class. Nevertheless, in this way everything touching on the individual, real person leaves him a wide field of choice, of arbitrary will, and hence of formal freedom".

(Marx, 1973:464)

For Kant, and the bourgeois mind in general, free choice is the essence of freedom. "The categories of freedom", he writes, "... are elementary practical concepts which determine the free faculty of choice ..." (1956:68) This conception of freedom remains dominant, as Flamenatz suggests, "In England and other English-speaking countries [where] the philosopher has turned his mind to two closely connected though not identical ideas of freedom: freedom as absence of constraint by others and freedom of choice." (1975:30) But Kant's notion of freedom, the freedom of bourgeois society, is formal freedom only. It abstracts from any determinate content and therefore relies entirely "on a content and material given either from within or from without". (Hegel, 1976:27) Even if the individual in bourgeois society can choose his or her job, or select from among a variety of consumer goods, or vote for the candidate of his or her choice — the item of choice and selection itself is external to and independent of the individual. The choice, in other words, "is other than the form of the will" of the individual "and therefore finite". (Hegel, 1976:28) By leaving the will of the individual outside the actual functioning of capitalist society, by making him or her subject to an economic system which operates independently of the individual, the freedom of bourgeois society is merely formal and external: a freedom of choice.

Freedom of choice is arbitrary, since the content of choice is not dependent on the will of the individual, but rather the individual is dependent on it. "The man on the street thinks he is free if it is open to him to do as he pleases but his very arbitrariness implies that he is not free." (Hegel, 1976:230) Nevertheless, this formal freedom, "the capacity for determining ourselves toward one thing or another, is undoubtedly a vital element of the will". (Hegel, 1975:206) How- ever flawed this type of freedom may be, it is a necessary and essen- tial element of human freedom. Consequently in Hegel's 1831 essay on the English reform bill, he criticizes the lack in Britain of "the modern principle in accordance with which only the abstract will of the individual as such is to be represented". The absence of the principle of free choice along with "the purely formal principle of equality" creates a situation in which the country is ruled by the "privileged class": "the crass ignorance of fox-hunters and landed gentry" and the other "great interests of the realm". "Nowhere more than in England", notes Hegel in a passage still apposite today, "is the prejudice so fixed and so naive that if birth and wealth give a man office they also give him brains." The bribery and corruption endemic to the British political system in the nineteenth century are characteristic of a nation "dominated by ... dexterity of reasoning in terms of ... prejudices and by ... shallowness of principle", and where "the contrast between prodigious wealth and utterly embarrassed penury is enormous ..." (1964:313, 325, 316, 310, 313, 312, 325)

Avineri observes that "Hegel is ... among the first political theorists to recognize that direct suffrage in a modern society would create a system very different from that envisaged by the advocates of

such a system of direct representation." (1972:163) Hegel's critique, however, does not centre on direct suffrage itself, but on the nature of the right to vote in the abstract context of bourgeois society. His criticisms of capitalist democracy contrast strongly with the optimism expressed by Marx and Engels regarding extension of the franchise to the working class. "Thus in 1852 [Marx] could write that: 'Universal suffrage is the equivalent of political power for the working class of England ... Its inevitable result, here is the political supremacy of the working class.'" (Jones, 1973:35) It is symptomatic of the almost endearingly naive approach of Western Marxism to the relation between Hegel and the founders of historical materialism that the optimism Marx and Engels entertain for the franchise is attributed by a leading Marxist writer to the pernicious influence of ... Hegel! (Jones, 1973:17-36) Hegel's view, however, is diametrically opposed here to that of Marx and Engels.

"... Experience proves", notes Hegel, "that the exercise of the right to vote is not so attractive as to provoke strong claims or the movements to which they give rise. On the contrary, what seems to prevail in the electorate is great indifference ..." The ordinary citizens in British society

see in their right a property which accrues to the benefit of those alone who wish to be elected to Parliament and on the altar of whose personal opinion, whim and interest everything implicit in this right of participating in government and legislation is to be sacrificed. (1964:317)

The result of direct suffrage in bourgeois society, writes Hegel, "is ... likely to be the opposite of what was intended; election actually falls into the power of a few, of a caucus, and so of the particular contingent interest which is precisely to have been neutralized".

(Quoted in Avineri, 1972:162-163) As Marx puts it in 1871, under capitalism the vote comes down "to deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class [is] to misrepresent the people in Parliament ..." (1966:69) More even than Marx and Engels, however, Hegel anticipates the contemporary situation where "under conditions of relative but nevertheless considerable political freedom, the parties of the working classes, the parties explicitly pledged to the defence and the liberation of the subordinate classes, have generally done much less well politically than their more or less conservative rivals, whose own purpose has preeminently included the maintenance of the capitalist system". (Miliband, 1973:162)

Hegel observes that the apathy of the voters toward their own political prerogative is clearly out of tune "with the fact that it is in this right that there lies the right of the people to participate in public affairs and in the higher interests of state and government". (1964:318) Nevertheless this apathy is understandable given the extremely limited effectiveness of a single vote in the highly atomized and fractionated electorate within bourgeois society. In France, for instance, notes Hegel,

The number of voters to be on the roll under the new French electoral law is assessed at 200,000; the number of members to be elected is given in round figures as 450. It follows that one vote is a two-hundred-thousandth part of the total voting power and the ninety-millionth part of one of the three branches of the legislative power. (1964:318)

The result of the atomistic principle concealed in the heart of universal suffrage as it appears in capitalist society is aptly outlined by

Hegel:

Liberalism ... sets up ... this atomistic principle, that which insists upon the sway of individual wills ... Asserting this formal side of Freedom — this



abstraction — the party in question allows no political organization to be firmly established. The particular arrangements of the government are forthwith opposed by the advocates of Liberty as the mandates of a particular will, and branded as displays of arbitrary power. The will of the Many expels the Ministry from power, and those who had formed the Opposition fill the vacant places; but the latter having now become the government, meet with hostility from the Many, and share the same fate. This agitation and unrest are perpetuated. This collision, this nodus, this problem is that with which history is now occupied, and whose solution it has to work out in the future.  
(1956:452)

Given the futility and irrelevance of the vote to the concrete needs of the individual, the call for the individual to step out of indifference and apathy and to vote, no matter for whom, is likely to fall on deaf ears. "... Sound common sense", Hegel suggests,

is glad to stop at what is effective. If the individual has brought before him the usual story that, if everyone thought so indolently, the state's existence and, above all, freedom itself would be jeopardized, he is bound to remind himself just as much of the principle on which his duty and his whole right to freedom is built, namely that he should let himself be guided not by considering what others do but solely by his own will, and that what is finally decisive for him, what is even duly as his sovereign, is his own personal volition. (1964:319)

Even if the individual gets beyond the cynicism fostered by the game of political musical chairs in government and the sense of insignificance connected with the limited power of a single vote, he or she must still merely vote for an individual or a party. The actual content of legislation — the law of the land — is expressly excluded from the voting rights of the individual. "Only", writes Hegel, "in the French democratic constitution of the year III under Robespierre — a constitution adopted by the whole people but of course all the less carried into effect — was it prescribed that laws on public affairs were to be

brought before the individual citizens for confirmation." (1964:319)

If freedom is interpreted by the bourgeois consciousness as freedom of choice, it is also connected, as Plamenatz suggests in the quotation given above, with absence of constraint. From this viewpoint, duty appears as the negation of freedom. This, of course, is precisely the definition of freedom adduced by that bourgeois thinker par excellence, Kant. For Kant, the individual is a "thing-in-itself", a "causa noumenon", "the determination of which no physical explanation can be given". (1956:57, 103) As noted in the preceding chapter, the individual, in Kant's theory, is guided by moral laws "which are independent of all empirical conditions and which therefore belong to the autonomy of pure reason". (1956:44) Individuals are able to act outside "the natural laws of appearances [phenomena] in their mutual relations, i.e. the law of causality. Such independence", Kant continues, "is called freedom in the strictest, i.e. transcendental sense". (1956:28) We have seen, however, that Kant never gives any content to his notion of the moral laws and even his famous categorical imperative is simply an abstraction: "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law." (1956:30) Hegel adopts a variation of this principle in the Philosophy of Right: "'Be a person and respect others as Persons.'" (1976:37)

Hegel, however, makes Kant's maxim only the beginning of his concrete analysis of the modern state, while Kant employs it as the basis of his moral philosophy and gives it no social content whatever. Kant's principle, notes Hegel, "would be admirable if we already had determinate principles of conduct. That is to say, to demand of a

principle that it shall be able to serve in addition as a determinate of universal legislation is to presuppose that it already possesses a content. Given the content, then of course the application of the principle would be a simple matter". (1976:254) In Kant's philosophy, duty, understood as conformity to the moral law, is simply a restriction on the freedom of the individual. And "chill duty", as Hegel puts it, "is the final undigested lump left within the stomach, the revelation given to Reason". (1896:461) Accordingly, even duty and the free will become for Kant, externalities and abstractions opposed to the interests of the individual:

The stage of morality on which man ... stands is respect for the moral law. The disposition which obliges him to obey it is: to obey it from duty and not from spontaneous inclination or from an endeavour unbidden but gladly undertaken. (Kant, 1956:87)

The bourgeois notion of duty as a restriction on individual freedom is a natural consequence of the external and alienated character of capitalist society: Where objective reality is seen as independent of and an other to the will of the individual, then any kind of duty must appear as a burden and a fetter on the isolated individual.

Duty of the type outlined by Kant, Hegel argues, can only be dispensed with when the individual perceives him or herself as achieving a concrete personal identity with and through society. "... The consummation of the realization of the Notion of objective mind, is achieved only in the State, in which mind develops its freedom into a world posited by mind itself, into the ethical [social] world." (1969: 22) As I will show, the state Hegel refers to is precisely what Marx calls, communist society. This state, says Hegel, "exists when individuals, instead of being moved to action by respect and reverence

for the institutions of the state and of the fatherland, from their own convictions, and after moral deliberation, come of themselves to a decision, and determine their actions accordingly". (1894:98)

This conforms, of course, to Giddens's account of Marx's notion of socialist society. Here, writes Giddens,

the character of moral authority will not demand the maintenance of the Kantian element of obligation or duty, insofar as this is linked with the necessity of moral norms which the individual finds antipathetic. (1977:222)

As shown in Chapter 6, the basis for freedom of choice and the other cherished freedoms of bourgeois society inheres in the relation between commodity owners — the objective relation of contract, where one commodity owner, the worker, exchanges his or her labour power for commodities in the form of wages or money provided by the capitalist. So far from containing an inner drive toward fascism or unfreedom as Western Marxism supposes, this (capitalist) relation is the absolute moment of abstract freedom. Under capitalism, notes Marx, "The general interest is precisely the generality of self-seeking interests. Therefore, when the economic form, exchange, posits the all-sided equality of its subjects, then the content, the individual as well as the objective material which drives towards the exchange is freedom. Equality and freedom are thus not only respected in exchange based on exchange values but, also, the exchange of exchange values is the productive, real basis of all equality and freedom. (1973:245) Hegel observes, however, that even this free and equal relation of contract involves the element of contradiction. Contract concerns not only the commodity exchanged but also the will of the persons who make the exchange; and exchange is possible only on condition that ownership

of a thing means the potential not to own it. "Contract is the process in which there is revealed and mediated the contradiction that I am and remain the independent owner of something from which I exclude the will of another only in so far as in identifying my will with the will of another I cease to be an owner." (1976:58)

Under the feudal mode of production, contract was impossible since a person could not alienate or sell his or her property. Accordingly, the individual was not the owner of the value of property since a person can only be the owner of something if he or she can also be its seller. But the contradiction in the relation between buyer and seller of labour-power goes further than its appearance in the mere form of a contract between equals. First of all in the exchange between the worker and the capitalist, the capitalist provides commodities in the universal form of money, but the worker provides labour-power. Labour-power, in turn, produces commodities so that the worker transforms the capital of the employer into commodities. The commodities produced, therefore, are not produced by the capitalist but rather by the worker. At the end of the labour process, the employer is presented with an increased amount of capital while the worker has only wages. Kalecki sums up this situation very simply: workers spend what they get; capitalists get what they spend. (1968:45-47)

This "equal" relation, then, crystallizes into a class relation, a relation between unequals. Writes Marx:

Thus, while the worker produces his produce as capital, the capitalist reproduces the worker as wage labourer and hence as the vendor of his labour. The relation of people who merely sell commodities is that they exchange their own labour objectified in different use-values. However, the sale and purchase of labour-power, as the constant result of the

capitalist process of production, implies that the worker must constantly buy back a portion of his own produce in exchange for his living labour. This dispels the illusion that we are concerned here merely with relations between commodity owners.

Instead of a relation between free and independent individuals, the buying and selling of labour power produces a relation of dependence of the worker on the capitalist, a class relation.

The constant renewal of the relationship of sale and purchase merely ensures the perpetuation of the specific relationship of dependency, endowing it with the deceptive illusion of a transaction, of a contract between equally free and equally matched commodity owners. This initial relationship itself now appears as an integral feature of the rule of objectified labour [capital] over living labour that is created in capitalist production. (1976:1063-1064)

## 2. Class and the Individual in Capitalist Society

For Marx as for Hegel, society "is no solid crystal, but an organism capable of change, and constantly in the process of change". (Marx, 1976:93) Both writers are fascinated with the conception of the living cell and its relationship with the organic body. "... For bourgeois society", notes Marx, "the commodity-form of the product of labour, or the value-form of a commodity, is the economic cell-form." (1976:90) Hegel uses the notion of a living cell to explain the production and reproduction of class and other social relations in society:

Much the same as this ideality of the moments in the state occurs with life in the physical organism. Life is present in every cell. There is only one life in all the cells and nothing withstands it. Separated

from that life, every cell dies. This is the same as the ideality of every single class, power, and Corporation as soon as they have the impulse to subsist and be independent. It is with them as it is with the belly of an organism. It too, asserts its independence, but at the same time its independence is set aside and it is sacrificed and absorbed within the whole. (1976:287)

The organic image utilized by Hegel and Marx is much more than a simple metaphor; it expresses rather the identity between the consciousness and will of individual men and women — who, after all, are organic beings — and the manifestation of their rational activity, their ideality, in the living totality of society. Thus in the Russian review of Capital, which Marx quotes approvingly in the Preface to the second German edition of Capital, Marx's depiction of economic life is said to "'offer us a phenomenon analogous to the history of evolution in other branches of biology'". The reviewer goes on to observe that,

"... The old economists misunderstood the nature of economic laws when they likened them to the laws of physics and chemistry. A more thorough analysis of the phenomena shows that social organisms differ among themselves as fundamentally as plants or animals. Indeed, one and the same phenomenon falls under quite different laws in consequence of the different general structure of these organisms, the variation of their individual organs, and the different conditions in which those organs function."  
(1976:101)

Marx's conception of capitalism as a living system, an organic unity, is an essential element in the dialectic method which he took over from Hegel. The Russian reviewer, states Marx, "... pictures what he takes to be my own actual method, in a striking and, as far as concerns my own application of it, generous way. But what else is he depicting but the dialectic method?" (1976:102) The Russian commentator, however, observes that "'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." (1976: 101) Marx seems to lend credence to the reviewer's notion that human ideality takes no part in the formation and function of the bourgeois mode of production. "I do not by any means", Marx points out,

depict the capitalist and landowner in rosy colours. But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personification of economic categories, the bearers ... of particular class relations and interests. My standpoint, from which the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them. (1976:92)

But even in the abstract realm of the capitalist mode of production individual consciousness and will is the substantial basis of social relations. The individual is the living cell within the social organism, and the function of the individual cannot be reduced to a mechanical and determinate relation — however congenial and easy to grasp this relation may be to the alienated consciousness of Marxists and their opponents alike.

The notion of the consciousness and will — the ideality or revolutionizing practice — of the individual has certainly dropped out of the discourse of Western Marxism, just as has the concept of society as a living organism. While rejecting economic determinism — or anyway appearing to reject it — modern Marxism relies almost entirely on a somewhat mechanical model of class and class struggle to explain society and its development. This tendency in Western Marxism is only a reflection of the alienated consciousness typical of individuals within bourgeois society. It is even more typical of



the minds of people within the socialist republics whose raison d'être, it should be recalled, is to "catch up" with the advanced capitalist democracies. In these countries, writes Claudin, "the decisive factor in bringing [communism] about became 'economic competition' between" capitalism and socialism, "which was destined to be crowned by the victory of Soviet 'Communism' ... On the level of theory, official Marxism was completely transformed into a rigid system of dogmas and stereotyped formulas; on the political level it became a narrow empiricism with a reformist content." (1975:622)

Whereas Marx begins Capital with the commodity, Hegel begins the Philosophy of Right with the free will of the individual. Nevertheless, the focus of both works is on what Hegel calls, "abstract right" or the property relation. Moreover, throughout Capital Marx never loses sight of the consciousness and will — the ideality — of the individual. This aspect of Marx's work, however, is ignored by most commentators. Sydney Hook's From Hegel to Marx affords a convenient example of what has become the dominant Western Marxist mode of explanation of capitalism and its development. "Through class consciousness", declares Hook,

society attains self-consciousness. Consciousness implies activity. As a result of the activity of class consciousness the interacting social whole becomes transformed. The class is the subject of the historical process, the carrier of the transformative principle. The social environment is the object of the historical process, the matter transformed. In changing the historical object, the subject changes itself ... The gradual changes in human nature which are the result of the evolution of the forces of production produce sudden changes in the social relations of production. Sudden changes in the social relations of production can be effected only by political revolution. In class societies social evolution is impossible without political revolution at some point in the process. (1976:74-75)

As Kant suggests, "in the restless and continuous ascent from the conditioned to the condition, always with one foot in the air, [empiricism] can find no satisfaction." (1893:293) Modern Western Marxism is no exception. Ultimately, for this type of Marxism, the explanation of social change lies in "the evolution of the forces of production". This "engineer's model" of social change finds its definitive basis in the machinery, technology and expertise of a particular social formation. It terminates in the fantasy much indulged by the Althusserian school where society is conceived as a multi-layered monolith composed of structures and superstructures, determined or over-determined in the last instance by the economic foundation. The warrant for this incredible vision is provided by Marx himself. "My view", he observes,

is that each particular mode of production and the relations of production corresponding to it at each given moment, in short "the economic structure of society", is "the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond, definite forms of social consciousness", and that "the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life". (1976:175)

Marx, however, is aware that the forces of production themselves may be reduced to the consciousness of the individuals who design, manufacture and utilize these forces. "... Real wealth", he writes, "is the developed productive power of all individuals." (1973:708) "... The productive power of labour [is] itself the greatest productive power." (1973:711) "The mystification implicit in the relations of capital as a whole" prevents people from seeing that capital itself is the "productive power of the individual worker or of the workers joined together in the process of production". (1976:1024) Etc., etc.

But this aspect of the "productive forces" is ignored by Marxists. Thus Mandel suggests that "... capital is the historic result of the growth of the productivity of human labour ..." (1968:89) But what brings about "growth in the productivity of human labour" if not the development of individual human consciousness or ideality?

No less than Marx, Hegel is aware that human consciousness is conditioned by its social environment. "Consciousness", he writes, "knows and comprehends nothing but what falls within its experience; for what is found in experience is merely spiritual substance [society], and, moreover, object of its self." (1967:96) But the social environment itself is the result of practical human activity, revolutionizing practice. And further, changes in society are to be traced in the last instance to the rational activity of individual human beings. For Hegel, "the Dialectical principle constitutes the life and soul of scientific progress"; and the purpose of dialectic method "is to study things in their own being and movement". The essence of dialectic, in turn, is "the universal and irresistible power before which nothing can stay, however stable and secure it may deem itself". (1975:116, 117, 118) This essence is nothing other than individual human consciousness or ideality. For human consciousness alone exhibits the character of the rational principle, i.e., it alone, and not the "forces of production", "is unconditioned, self-contained, and thus ... self-determining". (1975:120)

Without the self-determining element of individual human consciousness as a fundamental theoretical category, the method of Western Marxism is sheer empiricism; a form of thought which always has "one foot in the air"; a dualism which oscillates between "class" and "the

forces of production" as basic explanatory categories. But to admit the individual as the principle of dialectic is not to abandon the notion that the consciousness of the individual is a function of its social environment. The individual is identical with as well as distinct from society; neither can be explained without the other. For example, the cynical mode of life adopted by the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes, writes Hegel,

was nothing more or less than a product of Athenian social life, and what determined it was the way of thinking against which his whole manner protested. Hence it was not independent of social conditions but simply their result; it was a rude product of luxury. When luxury is at its height, distress and depravity are equally extreme, and in such circumstances Cynicism is the outcome of opposition to refinement. (1976:269)

S. S. Praver perceptively observes that "in face of the German idealist tradition which culminated in Hegel, a tradition in which 'spirit' and 'idea' were seen as fundamental, ultimate reality, Marx may well have felt compelled to overemphasize the 'conditioning' power exerted by relations of production and the 'determining' power of man's social being". (1976:298) But if modern bourgeois society betrayed the ideal of the great French Revolution of 1789; it also betrayed the culmination of that ideal in the philosophy of German idealism. After Hegel, the understanding or bourgeois consciousness reigned supreme; only Marx managed to seize a part of the tradition which culminated with Hegel. And in the hands of Marx's followers the life in this tradition fled leaving only the dry husks of "class" and "class struggle".

The triumph of the understanding consciousness was already an established fact when Marx began his scientific work. Indeed, Hegel

and the idealist tradition generally were entirely dismissed by Marx's contemporaries; and Marx himself was under great pressure from the ruling positivism of the age. Marx resents the "ill humoured, arrogant and mediocre epigones who now talk large in educated German circles" and who "... take pleasure in treating Hegel as a 'dead dog'". Nevertheless, he is careful to distance himself from "that mighty thinker". (1976:102-103) The German reviewers of Capital, Marx informs us, "cry out against my 'Hegelian sophistry'", and even the sympathetic Russian reviewer finds it necessary to defend him from the charge that "Marx is the most idealist of philosophers, and indeed in the German, i.e. the bad sense of the word". (1976:100) Today, Hegel and not Marx is seen "as the most idealist of philosophers, and indeed in the German, i.e. the bad sense of the word". Marx dodged the tar-brush of idealism, but since Hegel stood directly behind him, the result of Marx's manoeuvre was inevitable. The more "materialist" Marx's theory of history and society is felt to be, the more "idealist" Hegel's philosophy is made to appear. But to see that the fundamental Hegelian categories of ideality and individual will are also the primary categories employed by Marx one has only to consult the pages of Capital.

For Marx, the individual capitalist is the "conscious bearer" of the movement of capital. "His person, or rather his pocket, is the point from which the movement starts, and to which it returns." Profit is the "subjective purpose" of the capitalist: "it is only in so far as the appropriation of ever more wealth in the abstract is the driving force behind his operations that he functions as a capitalist, i.e. as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and will." (1976:254)

The capitalist is no mere pawn of the capitalist system itself; rather, the driving force of capital lies in the rational avarice — the consciousness and will — of the individuals who personify capital. "This boundless drive for enrichment, this passionate chase after value, is common to the capitalist and to the miser; but while the miser is merely a capitalist gone mad, the capitalist is a rational miser. The ceaseless augmentation of value, which the miser seeks to attain by saving his money from circulation, is achieved by the more acute capitalist by means of throwing his money again and again into circulation." (1976:244-245) The capitalist, in other words, has a rational ethic, a driving spirit, which finds expression in, and helps produce and reproduce the capitalist mode of production. Thus, the amount of capital the capitalist decides to invest is not an amount altogether determined by forces external to the capitalist: "it is the owner of surplus-value, the capitalist, who makes this division. It is an act of his will." (1976:738)

Nor did the spirit and the rationality of the capitalist arise from the mere mechanical functioning of the capitalist mode of production. This spirit and rationality existed prior to the establishment of capitalism, and were the cause rather than the result of the bourgeois mode of production. The beginnings of capitalism may be found in the old feudal mode of production; but the rapid transformation of the forces of production occurred after and not before the emergence of capitalism. "... It by no means suffices", notes Marx, "for capital to take over the labour process in its given or historically transmitted shape, and then simply to prolong its duration" in order to produce profit. "The technical and social conditions of the

process and consequently the mode of production itself must be revolutionized before the productivity of labour can be increased." (1976:432) In its beginnings capitalist production differed from the handicraft trade of the guilds only "by the greater number of workmen simultaneously employed by one and the same individual capital. It is merely an enlargement of the workshop of the master craftsmen of the guilds". (1976:439) Thus the changes which characterized the dissolution of the feudal system were brought about by the rational and organizing activity of individuals within this system.

A theory of social change based on the struggle between classes may certainly explain (to a degree) transformations from one political system to another: the revolutions of 1789 and 1917 are classic instances. But the origin and development of classes themselves remains to be accounted for. Marx suggests that the genesis of the industrial capitalist class by no means corresponded "with the snail's pace of advance" connected with the dissolution of the feudal system. Feudalism nevertheless allowed for the creation of two forms of capital: "usurer's capital and merchant's capital". These forms of capital were able to take advantage "of the new world market, which had been created by the great discoveries of the end of the fifteenth century". In other words, we are back with Hegel's theory, outlined in Chapter 4, that the development of bourgeois society may be attributed to the new spirit of adventure and rationality which, among other things, replaced chivalry with "the romance of commerce". (1896:159)

Writes Marx:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and

the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. (1976:915)

Even after the establishment of the capitalist mode of production, the role of the consciousness and will of individuals remains paramount. Thus the theories of bourgeois economists, which were accepted and acted upon by individual capitalists, had a direct bearing on the further development of capitalism:

It was of decisive importance for the bourgeois economists, when confronted with the habitual mode of life of the old nobility, which, as Hegel rightly says, "consists in consuming what is available", and is displayed in the luxury of personal retainers, to promulgate the doctrine that the accumulation of capital is the first duty of every citizen, and to preach unceasingly that accumulation is impossible if a man eats up all his revenue, instead of spending a good part of it on the acquisition of additional workers, who bring in more than they cost. (1976:735)

Throughout Capital Marx emphasizes the managerial and supervisory activity of the individual capitalist; the vital part played by the capitalist in organizing and rationalizing the production process: "... the capitalist's ability to supervise and enforce discipline is vital." (1976:986) The activity of the capitalist is nowhere presented as the mindless and mechanical function of class postulated by Western Marxism; instead the capitalist is active and rational — he or she carries out specific programmes on the basis of rational calculation, etc., etc. "That a capitalist should command on the field of production is now as indispensable as that a general should command on the field of battle." (Marx, 1976:448) Similarly, the whole activity of the individual capitalist is aimed at avoiding the



objective social laws that govern the process of capitalist production. Yet it is precisely through the capitalist's consciousness and will that these laws are realized. As Hegel puts it, "... the law is no agent; it is only the actual human being who acts." (1976:100)

Under capitalism, for example, there is an absolute tendency for commodities to become cheaper, and this law "becomes manifest as the desire of the individual capitalist, who in his wish to render this law ineffectual, or to outwit it and turn it to its own advantage, reduces the individual value of his product to a point where it falls below the socially determined value. (1976:1038) After Marx, of course, individual capitalists have consciously striven to lower the cost of their commodities for the consumer, and not only for the capitalist. This is the secret of the modern consumer economy definitively opened up by Henry Ford in the early twentieth century with the production of the Model "T" Ford.

Consciousness and will are not just the property of the capitalist; they are equally an aspect of the individual worker. The modern worker, writes Marx, "is ... a person who is something for himself apart from his labour, and who alienates his life expression only as a means toward his own life". (Marx, 1973:289) The consciousness and will of the worker confront the capitalist first, as the labour power which the capitalist purchases on the market and utilizes in the labour process, and second, as active resistance to the exploitive power of capital. But both the worker and the capitalist form an essential, if antagonistic, unity: the capitalist cannot be a capitalist without the worker, and the wage or salary worker cannot be such without the capitalist. Their unity is what Hegel calls, the

unity of opposites: "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." (1975:174) The notion of the unity of the capitalist with the worker is an essential element in the theory of class in both Hegel and Marx. In Hegel's terminology, their relation is one of opposition; but "In opposition, the different is not confronted by any other, but by its other." (1975:173) This relation is outlined by Hegel in the Lesser Logic as follows:

... the essential difference, as a difference, is only the difference of it from itself, and thus contains the identical: so that to essential and actual difference there belongs itself as well as identity. As self-relating difference it is likewise virtually enunciated as the self-identical. And the opposite is in general that which includes the one and its other, itself and its opposite. (1975:175)

For Hegel, ideality or revolutionizing practice, is an "existence [which] agrees with its notion". (1975:135) The ideality of the individual capitalist, therefore, includes the worker; and the ideality of the worker includes the capitalist. Together they form an organic unity. "Capital and wage labour (it is thus we designate the labour of the worker who sells his own labour power)," writes Marx, "only express two aspects of the self-same relationship." (1976: 1005-1006) Most commentators on Hegel do not understand his conception of social class precisely because they do not relate Hegel's dialectical analysis of the categories in speculative logic to his concrete discussion of society in the Philosophy of Right. But the Philosophy of Right must be read as a concrete application of Hegel's dialectic method; read outside this context, the work simply cannot be comprehended. "... In this book", states Hegel in the Preface to the

Philosophy of Right, "I am presupposing that philosophy's mode of progression from one topic to another and its mode of scientific proof — this whole speculative way of knowing — is essentially distinct from any other way of knowing. ... It will be obvious from the work itself", he continues,

that the whole, like the formation of its parts, rests on the logical spirit. It is also from this point of view above all that I should like my book to be taken and judged. What we have to do with here is philosophical science, and in such science content is essentially bound up with form. (1976:2)

With regard to social class, writes Avineri, "Hegel's point of departure is the exact opposite of Marx's". As a result, "one looks in vain for ... [the working] class in Hegel's system of estates. Obviously the worker is not part of the peasantry nor does he belong to the civil service. But neither does the commercial class, the class of businessmen, include him." (1972:109) Another recent commentator, Raymond Plant, agrees with Avineri's verdict: "Hegel did not define classes in terms of the relationship to the means of production ..." (1977:106) In fact, however, for Hegel, the individual worker is precisely included in what Hegel calls, "the business class"; this class is a unity which includes the opposites, capitalist and worker, just as the agricultural class includes both great landowners and peasants. The business class is concerned with the sphere of contract, and an essential moment of contract is:

Contract for wages (locatio operae) — alienation of my productive capacity or services so far, that is, as these are alienable, the alienation being restricted in time or in some other way ... (1976:63)

The failure of commentators to see that the worker is actually a part of Hegel's business class derives from their unspoken assumption

(perhaps prejudice) that the worker is a simple pawn in a system of production dominated and controlled by the capitalist. This assumption, however, is not shared by Hegel. His definition of the business class is worth quoting in full:

The business class has for its task the adoption of raw materials and for its means of livelihood it is thrown back on its work, on reflection and intelligence, and essentially on the mediation of one man's needs and work with those of others. For what this class produces and enjoys, it has mainly itself, its own industry, to thank. The task of this class is subdivided into

- (α) work to satisfy single needs in a comparatively concrete way and to supply single orders — craftsmanship;
- (β) work of a more abstract kind, mass-production to satisfy single needs, but needs in more universal demand — manufacture;
- (γ) the business of exchange, whereby separate utilities are exchanged the one for the other, principally through the use of the universal medium of exchange, money, which actualizes the abstract value of all commodities — trade. (1976:132)

Hegel's definition of the business class, therefore, would include the modern categories of workers — blue collar, white collar, service — as well as the class of owners of the means of production and exchange, the capitalists. But for Hegel as well as for Marx, the dialectical movement of modern society will eventually result in a real unity of the business class where the opposition and distinction between capitalist and worker disappears. Like all contradictions, the one between the capitalist and the worker "is ... a contradiction, which, so far from persisting quietly in itself, is rather the expulsion of it from itself". (1975:176) To grasp the dynamic of this process it is necessary to explore the labour process under capitalism as it is elucidated by both Hegel and Marx. This process, as Hegel

suggests, is "objectively and intrinsically determined, and hence self-acting", and, moreover, includes "the universal or notion of will". (1975:177-178) Accordingly, Marx defines human labour-power as "a self-acting capacity, a labour-power that expresses itself purposively by converting the means of production into the material object of its activity, transforming them from their original form into the new form of the product". (1976:980)

For Hegel, the work performed by the individual in the modern labour process is ideal, it demonstrates the "unity of notion and objectivity ... its 'real' content is only the exhibition which the notion gives itself in the form of external existence, while yet, by enclosing this shape in its ideality, it keeps it in its power, and so keeps itself in it". (1975:274-275) "At the end of every labour process", notes Marx in an already quoted passage,

a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally. Man not only affects a change of form in the materials of nature; he also realizes ... his own purpose in those materials. And this is a purpose he is conscious of, it determines the mode of his activity with the rigidity of a law, and he must subordinate his will to it. This subordination is no mere momentary act. Apart from the exertion of the working organs, a purposeful will is required for the entire duration of the work. (1976:284)

Employing the means of production provided by the capitalist, the worker transforms the raw material into the finished product, the commodity. "What virtually happens in the realizing of the End", notes Hegel, "is that the one-sided subjectivity and the show of objective independence confronting it are both cancelled. In laying hold of the means, the notion," i.e., the ideality of the worker, "constitutes itself the very implicit essence of the object." (1975:273) The

relation theoretically expressed by Hegel is given concrete form by Marx:

In the labour process the worker enters as worker into the normal active relationship with the means of production determined by the nature and purpose of the work itself. He takes possession of the means of production and handles them simply as the means and materials of his own work. The autonomous nature of the means of production, the way they hold fast to their independence and display a mind of their own, their separation from labour — all this is now abolished ... in practice. The material conditions of labour now enter into a normal unity with labour itself; they form the material, the organs requisite for its creative activity. The worker treats the hide he is tanning simply as the object of his creative activity, and not as capital. He does not tan the hide for the capitalist. (1976:1007)

The commodity, therefore, is the worker's product; it contains the result of his or her ideality, which has now become "the very implicit essence of the object". It is the concrete result of the creative activity of the worker. "... Real labour", notes Marx, "is what the worker really gives to the capitalist in exchange for the purchase price of labour, that part of capital that is translated into a wage. It is the expenditure of his life's energy, the realization of his productive faculties; it is his movement and not the capitalists'. Looked at as a personal function, in its reality, labour is the function of the worker, and not of the capitalist." (1976:982) To the bourgeois mind, however, the product — the commodity — appears to be the property of the capitalist. The commodity, writes Marx, "does not appear as the productive power of labour, or even that part of it that is identical with capital. And least of all does it appear as the productive power of the individual worker or of the workers joined together in the process of production". (1976:1024)

Accordingly, under capitalism "the means of production appear not just as the means for accomplishing work, but as the means for the exploitation of the labour of others". (1976:1019) The result of this exploitation is that the product of the labour of the worker appears as an alien object, a power set over against the individual: "... Since the labour has ceased to belong to the worker even before he starts to work, what objectified itself for him is alien labour and hence a value, capital, independent of his labour-power. The product belongs to the capitalist and in the eyes of the worker it is as much a part of capital as the elements of production." (Marx, 1976:1016)

In the labour process, the worker creates commodities, objectified labour, part of which appears as consumption goods for the worker, but the other part of which takes the form of consumption goods for the capitalist and investment goods, i.e. means of production which will then be used to re-employ the worker. "... When we consider the individual commodity we find that a certain proportion of it represents unpaid labour, and when we take the mass of commodities as a whole we find simultaneously that a certain proportion of that also represents unpaid labour. In short, it turns out to be a product that costs the capitalist nothing." (1976:1039) The worker produces not only his or her subsistence goods, but also surplus-value, profit plus the replacement of the means of production used up in the labour process, for the capitalist. The worker, then, has created "alien, autonomous powers ... value — objectified labour — which treats living labour as a mere means whereby to maintain and increase itself". (1976:1006) Here, then, is the secret of the mystery  $C=C'$  — the identity which posits difference.

"The product of capitalist production", writes Marx, "is neither a mere product (a use-value), nor just a commodity, i.e. a product with an exchange-value, but a product specific to itself, namely surplus-value. Its product is commodities that possess more exchange-value, i.e. represent more labour than was invested for their production in the shape of money or commodities." (1976:1001) And the only element in the labour process capable of creating value, of expanding the given amount of value represented in the means of production and raw material, is what Marx calls, "variable capital", i.e., living labour-power: "... the only real component of capital to enter the process of production is the living factor, labour-power itself." (1976:994) Labour-power is "the value-creating activity, the activity of the living factor embodied in the valorization process". (Marx, 1976:987) Without human ideality, without labour-power, machinery — which is itself simply objectified, past, dead labour — is incapable of producing value: "A machine which is not active in the labour process is useless. In addition, it falls prey to the destructive power of natural processes. Iron rusts; wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize on these things, awaken them from the dead, change them from merely possible into real and effective use-values." (1976:289) As Hegel puts it in an already quoted passage:

The means of acquiring the particularized means appropriate to our similarly particularized needs is work. Through work the raw material directly supplied by nature is specifically adapted to these numerous ends by all sorts of different processes. Now this formative change confers value on means and gives them their



utility, and hence man in what he consumes is mainly concerned with the products of men. It is the products of human effort which man consumes. (1976:129)

### 3. Profit, Private Property and Freedom

It is one of the great ironies of intellectual history that Marx — whose entire mode of approach to the study of the capitalist system is taken over from Hegel — it is a great irony that Marx himself did not realize that the exploitive relationship of the capitalist toward the worker that he describes in such detail in Capital had been worked out before him by Hegel. In fact, Marx misunderstands Hegel so thoroughly that he describes Hegel's approach to the labour process as "comical". "According to this", says Marx, "man as an individual must endow his will with reality as the soul of external nature and make it his private property." (1967, III:615) In his Reason and Revolution, the "Hegelian Marxist" Marcuse follows Marx's lead: "The notion of freedom in the Philosophy of Right ... loses its critical content and comes to serve as a metaphysical justification of private property." (1973:189) For Hegel, however, the most important aspect of private property is that with the development of this social relation, the individual was set free to the extent that even his or her labour-power or ideality could be his or her own private property. This is the world-historical significance of private property: that the individual's labour can no longer be the property of another, either in the shape of slavery or feudal serfdom. The importance of this development,

of course, is emphasized by Marx:

In the slave relation [the worker] belongs to the individual, particular owner, and is his labouring machine ... he is a thing ... belonging to another, and hence does not relate as subject to his particular expenditure of force, nor to the act of living labour. In the serf relation he appears as the moment of property in the land itself, is an appendage of the soil, exactly like draught cattle ... The totality of the free worker's labour capacity appears to him as his property, as one of his moments, over which he, as subject, exercises domination, and which he maintains by expending it. (1973:464-465)

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the worker in bourgeois society does not sell or alienate his or her labour, i.e., the worker's whole being and life, but merely his or her labour-power. Both Hegel and Marx emphasize the importance of this distinction. But while Marx credits Hegel with the discovery of this distinction, he does not go on to examine Hegel's definition of private property in the context of the notion of free labour-power. Marx's failure to appreciate Hegel's theoretical analysis of private property turns on his inability to recognize in Hegel's mature works the fundamental concept of the Hegelian dialectic: ideality.

Possession, for Hegel, is commodity ownership; and commodity ownership is obtained by ideality, by conscious human practice:

A person by distinguishing himself from himself relates himself to another person, and it is only as owners that the two persons really exist for one another. Their implicit identity is realized through the transference of property from one to the other in conformity with a common will and without detriment to the rights of either. This is contract. (1976:38)

Contract, in turn, "is never a right over a person, but only a right over something external to a person or something which he can alienate", e.g., labour-power, "always a right over a thing". (1976:40)

For Hegel, the right of property indicates a social relation that goes well beyond the mere satisfaction of human needs. This satisfaction could be obtained under earlier modes of production which involved no private property; but private property represents a value that could not be achieved under earlier forms of society, namely the value of human personality. "The rationale of property is to be found not in the satisfaction of needs but in the supersession of the pure subjectivity of personality. In his property a person exists for the first time as reason." (1976:235-236) In a society where private property is the norm, the significance of this social relation loses its impact in the minds of people within that society. But private property is precisely the external manifestation of a person's freedom; it is the manifestation of his or her own consciousness and will. It represents an extension of the person's individuality and personality; an extension that is inviolable.

For Hegel, the notion that the private property of individuals should be held and shared in common is simply an abstraction of the understanding consciousness. Each individual is entitled to, and has the right of, private property. If people set about to share their goods in common, instead of keeping them under their own control, this simply indicates that they distrust one another. A perfect trust and a sharing attitude would require no prior agreement between individuals to share their property. Private property is a determination of individual freedom; the lack of private property would be the negation of that freedom. "The general principle of Plato's ideal state", notes Hegel,

violates the right of personality by forbidding the holding of private property. The idea of a pious or friendly and even compulsory brotherhood of men holding their goods in common and rejecting the principle of private property may readily present itself to the disposition which mistakes the true nature of the freedom of mind and right and fails to apprehend it in its determinate moments. As for the moral or religious view behind this idea, when Epicurus's friends proposed to form such an association holding goods in common, he forbade them, precisely on the ground that their proposal betrayed distrust and that those who distrusted each other were not friends. (1976:42-43)

Private property is a low form of human freedom or personality, since it is characterized by its externality to the owner of property. But it is a necessary and essential aspect of human freedom. Moreover, it is the only form of concrete and real freedom possible in the abstract context of bourgeois society: "Even if my freedom is here realized first of all in an external thing and so falsely realized, nevertheless abstract personality in its immediacy can have no other embodiment save one characterized by immediacy." (Hegel, 1976:236)

In embodying his or her will in an object which becomes the private property of a person, the individual actually translates his or her ideality into an external form. And the preeminent external manifestation of property is one's ability to alienate or sell for a limited time one's own labour-power or ideality. Thus the rational purpose of the individual finds a real existence; in the property relation reason or rationality — the thinking activity of the individual — takes on the essential aspect of existence or being. In this relation, freedom becomes "concrete, i.e. social" (Hegel, 1976:127); that is, the individual's freedom in property is recognized and respected by other individuals. Notes Hegel,

A person must translate his freedom into an external sphere in order to exist as Idea. Personality is the first, still wholly abstract, determination of the absolute and infinite will, and therefore this sphere distinct from the person, the sphere capable of embodying his freedom, is likewise determined as what is immediately different and separable from him.  
(1976:40)

A person obtains private property by possessing or appropriating a thing in order to satisfy natural needs, impulse or even individual caprice. But the vital element or moment in appropriation is ideality: "... 'to appropriate' means at bottom only to manifest the pre-eminence of my will over a thing and to prove that it is not absolute; is not an end in itself. This is manifest when I endow the thing with some purpose not directly its own ... The free will, therefore, is the idealism which does not take things as they are to be absolute ..."  
(1976:236) For Hegel, possession is essentially an aspect of the human will; a person possesses something only in so far as his or her will is embodied in the object. Even the body of a person remains the possession of that person just so far as his or her will is shown in it: "I possess the members of my body, my life, only so long as I will to possess them. An animal cannot maim or destroy itself, but a man can." (1976:43) But freedom is not an abstract quality which can be embodied in the individual will alone; for a person to be truly free, he or she must be recognized as such by others. "To be free from the point of view of others is identical to being free in my determinate existence." Freedom as expressed in the possession of an external object is distinct from freedom in the person of the individual, because the will is intrinsic to the body and personality of the individual, but external to the object.

If my body is touched or suffers violence, then, because I feel, I am touched myself actually, here and now. This creates the distinction between personal injury and damage to my external property, for in such property my will is not actually present in this direct fashion.  
(Hegel, 1976:44)

To steal a person's property is to violate an external embodiment of that person's free will; but "murder, slavery, enforced religious observance, etc." absolutely abolish the victim's freedom. (Hegel, 1976:68) As Marx suggests, "the presupposition of the master-servant relation is the appropriation of an alien will." (1973:500-501)

For Hegel, the disappearance of slavery and serfdom in the modern world is a direct result of the apprehension by men and women that their body, as well as their ideality or labour-power, is their own private property, and not the possession of someone else. This awareness was not easily achieved, but once established it is impossible to take it away. To argue against slavery on the basis of the natural rights of the individual is correct, says Hegel, in so far as this argument recognizes "the absolute starting-point" that freedom is the essence of the individual. (1976:48) But it is incorrect in that it postulates that freedom is a natural characteristic. The basis of this view, notes Hegel, "is the fashionable idea of a state of nature and a natural origin for rights, and the lack of the concept of rationality and freedom". (1976:116) Freedom is not a natural, but a social relation. It has nothing to do with nature.

According to Hegel, nature is in the chains of accident and caprice, and a natural existence is far from being one of freedom. In their natural state men and women were capable of being enslaved, and did not regard slavery as an absolute negation of their own person.

Had they done so, slavery would have been inconceivable. A truly free people would die rather than be enslaved: Hitler's attempt to crush Europe and Russia, no less than the U.S. effort to impose an alien order in Southeast Asia, were doomed from the start precisely because they failed to recognize this fundamental principle. "If we imagined a conqueror in Europe", notes Hegel, "who acted on caprice and it struck him to make half his subjects slaves, we would realize at once that this was impossible, however great the force behind the project." (1976:316) In human history, slavery was relatively justified because the peoples who were enslaved had not reached the point where they recognized themselves as free and independent individuals. It was precisely the event of slavery itself which brought about the consciousness in people that they should and must be free. Writes Hegel,

To adhere to man's absolute freedom — one aspect of the matter — is eo ipso to condemn slavery. Yet if a man is a slave, his own will is responsible for his slavery, just as it is its will which is responsible if a people is subjugated. Hence the wrong of slavery lies at the door not simply of enslavers or conquerors but of the slaves and of the conquered themselves. Slavery occurs in man's transition from the state of nature to genuinely ethical [social] conditions; it occurs in a world where a wrong is still a right. At that stage wrong has validity and so is necessarily in place. (1976:239)

Hegel's view is echoed by Marx: "the master-servant relation ... forms a necessary ferment for the development and the decline and fall of all original relations of property and production, just as it also expresses their limited nature." (1973:501)

In the sphere of private property so far discussed — the ownership by an individual of his or her own body and the products of his or her ideality — equality is meaningless. The natural ideality of different

persons is far from equal: everyone has different talents, abilities, desires and so on. In this sphere, freedom simply demands that "everyone must have property"; but the concept of abstract ideality itself means that "particularity is just the sphere where there is room for inequality and where equality would be wrong". (1976:237) Everyone has different capacities by nature, but "We may not speak of the injustice of nature in the unequal distribution of possessions and resources, since nature is not free and therefore is neither just nor unjust." (1976:44) Those who demand equality in the abstract sphere of private property, "call to mind", as Marx suggests, though in a different context, "the advice given by the good Dogberry to the night-watchman Seacoal ... 'To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but reading and writing comes by nature.'" (1976:177)

In common with many commentators, Marcuse interprets Hegel's dictum that "'Right is unconcerned about differences in individuals'" as one of the "regressive features of his Philosophy of Right". Hegel's attitude, Marcuse assures his readers, "typifies a social practice wherein the preservation of the whole is reached only by disregarding the human essence of the individual". (1973:194) But Hegel's concern is precisely to uphold "the human essence of the individual" since difference rather than equality is what distinguishes one individual from another.

For Hegel, use of a thing "implies a ... universal relation to the thing, because, when it is used, the thing in its particularity is not recognized but is negated by the user". (1976:239) Consequently, Hegel observes, "... my full use or employment of a thing is the thing in its entirety, so that if I have the full use of a thing I



am its owner. Over and above the entirety of its use, there is nothing of the thing which could be the property of another." (1976:50) It is precisely at this point that Hegel embarks on a devastating critique of capitalist private property — the property relation thought to be absolute by the understanding or bourgeois consciousness. "If the whole and entire use of a thing were mine", Hegel declares,

while the abstract ownership was supposed to be someone else's, then the thing as mine would be penetrated through and through by my will ... and at the same time there would remain in the thing something impenetrable by me, namely the will, the empty will of another. As a positive will, I would be at one and the same time objective and not objective to myself in the thing — an absolute contradiction. Ownership therefore is in essence free and complete. (1976:50)

The modern worker in "laying hold of the means" of production, as Hegel puts it in the Lesser Logic (1975:273) is in effect laying claim to the ownership of the means of production. The commodities he or she produces embody the will of the producer and not the "abstract will" of the capitalist. They are therefore the private property of the worker. For Hegel, the relation between the worker and the means of production in capitalist society is totally alienated and contradictory. It is a relation of necessity: a product of a society ruled and governed by abstractions. Here the creative impulse and ideality of the individual represent only "inner capacity, mere possibilities"; this is the realm of "external, inorganic nature, the knowledge of a third person, alien force and the like". (1975:197) The distinction posited by the bourgeois mind between the abstract ownership of capital and the flesh and blood ideality of the means of production by the worker is nothing less than an "'insanity of personality'". Hegel's corrosive critique of capitalist private property is worth quoting in full:

To distinguish between the right of the whole and entire use of a thing and ownership in the abstract is the work of the empty Understanding for which the Idea — i.e. in this instance the unity of (a) ownership (or even the person's will as such) and (b) its realization — is not the truth, but for which these two moments in their separation from one another pass as something which is true.

What Hegel means is that the bourgeois mind distinguishes between ownership as possession and ideality, i.e., the labour of the worker, and ownership of the product of this relation, i.e., the ownership by the capitalist of the commodities produced by the worker. "This distinction, then," he continues,

as a relation in the world of fact [i.e., in the bourgeois world of commodity production] is that of overlord to nothing, and this might be called "insanity of personality" (if we may mean by "insanity" not merely the presence of a direct contradiction between a man's purely subjective ideas and the actual facts of his life), because "mine" as applied to a single object would have to mean the direct presence in it of both my single exclusive will and also the single exclusive will of someone else.  
(1976:50)

According to Hegel, therefore, the modern capitalist is an "overlord to nothing", infected by an "insanity of personality". And the distinction between the property of the capitalist and that of the worker is completely empty — a mystified creation of the bourgeois mind. It is precisely this empty distinction that is criticized by Marx almost a half century after Hegel. "... The transformation of money into capital", notes Marx,

breaks down into two wholly distinct, autonomous spheres, two entirely separate processes. The first belongs to the realm of the circulation of commodities and is acted out in the market place. It is the sale and purchase of labour power.

This sphere concerns the relation Hegel calls "contract".

The second is the consumption of the labour power that has been acquired, i.e. the process of production itself.

This is the sphere which Hegel refers to as "ownership through use".

... The first process, the sale and purchase of labour power displays to us the capitalist and worker only as buyer and seller of commodities ... What distinguishes the worker from the vendors of other commodities is only the specific nature, the specific use-value, of the commodity he sells ... In order to demonstrate, therefore, that the relationship between capitalist and worker is nothing but a relationship between commodity owners who exchange money and commodities with a free contract and to their mutual advantage, it suffices to isolate the first process and cleave to its formal character. This simple device is no sorcery, but it contains the entire wisdom of the vulgar economist. (1976:1002)

Disease for Hegel is any kind of alienation of a part of an organic system from the whole; the result of disease is "impotence and dependence on an alien power". The bourgeois mind is diseased in precisely this sense: it is an alienation and division of consciousness which constantly reproduces this alienation and division in the objects of consciousness. In its attitude to private property the alienation of bourgeois consciousness reaches its most extreme form; it becomes an "insanity of personality". The mind of an insane person, observes Hegel, "is shifted out from the centre of its actual world and, since it also still retains a consciousness of this world, has two centres, one in the remainder of its rational consciousness and the other in its deranged idea". (1969:115, 128) The apotheosis of the deranged idea of the bourgeois mind is precisely the notion of abstract capitalist private property. The "insanity of personality" which results from what Marx calls, the "empty" and "formal character" of bourgeois private property means that "all material wealth confronts

the worker as the property of commodity possessors. What is proposed here is that he works as a non-proprietor and that the conditions of his labour confront him as alien property." The contradictory and alien nature of bourgeois private property creates a situation where "The objective conditions essential to the realization of labour are alienated from the worker and become manifest as fetishes endowed with a will and soul of their own ... It is not the worker who buys the means of production and subsistence, but the means of production that buys the worker to incorporate him into the means of production." (Marx, 1976:1003-1004)

According to Hegel, the contract between the worker and the capitalist is a formal contract only, since the exchange between them is not the same as that between two equal commodity owners. In the capitalist exchange relation only one of the contractors receives property: the capitalist; the worker receives only wages which, far from being property, are only adequate to keep the worker alive and fill his or her immediate consumption requirements. Writes Hegel:

Contract implies two consenting parties and two things. That is to say, in a contract my purpose is both to acquire property and to surrender it. Contract is real when the action of both parties is complete, i.e. when both surrender and both acquire property, and when both remain property owners even in the act of surrender. Contract is formal where only one of the parties acquires property or surrenders it. (1976:242-243; my emphasis)

The worker, by possessing and employing the means of production, becomes the real owner of the means of production, and the value created therefore belongs to the worker. "As a full owner of the thing, I am eo ipso owner of its value as well as its use." (Hegel, 1976:51)

But the worker gets only a part of the value he or she creates, the capitalist pockets the rest. This formal relation Hegel refers to as "laesio enormis", a relation which "annuls the obligation arising out of the making of a contract". (1976:59) The only real contract, says Hegel, is one where

each party retains the same property with which he enters the contract and which at the same time he surrenders, what thus remains identical throughout as the property implicit in the contract is distinct from the external things whose owners alter when the exchange is made. What remains identical is the value, in respect of which the subjects of the contract are equal to one another whatever the qualitative differences of the things exchanged. Value is the universal in which the subjects of the contract participate. (1976:59; my emphasis)

Marx — without recognizing that Hegel had already theorized the exploitive relation between capitalist and worker (although Hegel's theory may have operated as an unconscious sub-text in Marx's mind) — Marx, as we have seen, calls the excess value created by the worker in the labour process and pocketed by the capitalist, "surplus-value":

... The past labour embodied in the labour-power [of the worker] and the living labour it can perform, and the daily cost of maintaining labour-power and its daily expenditure in work, are two totally different things. The former determines the exchange-value of labour-power, the latter its use-value. The fact that half a day's labour is necessary to keep the worker alive during 24 hours does not in any way prevent him from working the whole day. Therefore the value of labour-power, and the value which that labour-power valorizes ... in the labour-process, are two entirely different magnitudes ... (1976:300)

For Marx, the process of valorization is simply the continuation of the creation of value in the labour process beyond the amount of value necessary to pay the worker's wages. "If the process is not carried beyond the point where the value paid by the capitalist for the labour

process is replaced by an exact equivalent, it is simply the process of creating value; but if it is continued beyond that point it becomes the process of valorization." (1976:302) Under the capitalist mode of production, then, "the labour process is only the means whereby the valorization is implemented and the valorization process is essentially the production of surplus-value, i.e. the objectification of unpaid labour." (1976:991)

Marx's solution to the dilemma posed by the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist is well known: the workers must seize the means of production and replace capitalism with communist society. Although Hegel's critique of capitalist private property has gone virtually unrecognized by all commentators, not least Marx himself, Hegel's radical analysis of bourgeois society, which will be outlined in the following chapter is familiar to most writers on Hegel. But Hegel, in contrast with Marx, is supposed to be without a solution. "At the height of his critical awareness of the horrors of industrial society", claims Avineri, "Hegel ultimately remains quietistic ... his failure to find a solution to it within his system seems to justify a nagging doubt." (1972:99, 109) Avineri's account of Hegel's theory of the state contains not the slightest appreciation of Hegel's dialectic method and speculative logic. Consequently Avineri finds in Hegel only what is already present in Avineri's mind; and the major surprise for Avineri is that Hegel knew what Avineri knows. Unfortunately, about Hegel anyway, Avineri does not know much. The same ignorance about Hegel pulses through the work of the "Hegelian Marxist" Marcuse. "The tone [of] the entire Philosophy of Right", declares Marcuse, marks "the resignation of a man who knows that the truth he

represents has drawn to its close and that it can no longer invigorate the world." (1973:183) Another expert on Hegel, Raymond Plant, suggests that Hegel's "self-acknowledged failure to explain ... the problem of poverty ... demonstrated very clearly the limitations, even on its own terms, of the Hegelian enterprise in social and political philosophy". (1977:113) It is not only in Marx's time that Hegel is treated as a "dead dog"! Even while the mourners collect around the coffin, however, reports of the death of the "Hegelian enterprise" are, in Mark Twain's phrase, "greatly exaggerated".

Hegel's solution to the dilemma of bourgeois society is identical to that of Marx, with this difference: Hegel offers a much more concrete solution than Marx ever manages to achieve. This solution will be outlined in the final Chapter. For now, however, it is necessary to return to Hegel's analysis of bourgeois private property. Hegel suggests that in so far as the capitalist plays a direct role in the production process, in terms of the rational and decision-making activity described, for example, by Marx, his or her relation to the means of production is not entirely abstract. "Were there nothing", writes Hegel, "in these two relationships" to the means of production "except that rigid distinction" between the real ownership of the worker and the merely formal ownership of the capitalist, "in its rigid abstraction, then in them we would not have two overlords (domini) in the strict sense, but an owner on the one hand", i.e., the worker, "and the overlord who was the overlord of nothing", i.e., the capitalist, "on the other". But on the score of the burdens imposed there are two owners standing in relation to each other." (1976:51; my emphasis)

The resolution of the contradiction between the worker and the

capitalist, therefore, can only go in one direction: "Although their relation is not that of being common owners of a property, still the transition from it to common ownership is very easy ..." (my emphasis).

Hegel argues that this transition has already taken place with the remnants of feudal property, where the actual proceeds of the use of property are recognized as the property of the working tenant, while the landowner retains only the abstract ownership of the land. The transition to common ownership, states Hegel,

... has already begun in dominium directum when the yield of the property is calculated and looked upon as the essential thing, while that incalculable factor in the overlordship of property, the factor which has perhaps been regarded as the honourable thing about property, is subordinated to the utile which here is the rational factor. (1976:51)

Far from being "quiescent", Hegel completes his discussion of capitalist private property and its necessary, because rational, transition to common ownership of the means of production, by pointing out the difficulties and the length of time which will be involved in this transition:

It is about a millennium and a half since the freedom of personality began through the spread of Christianity to blossom and gain recognition as a universal principle from a part, though still a small part, of the human race. But it was only yesterday, we might say, that the principle of the freedom of property became recognized in some places [i.e., in France, where the Revolution swept away all feudal encumbrances and privilege]. This example from history may serve to rebuke the impatience of opinion and to show the length of time that mind requires for progress in its self-consciousness. (1976:51; my emphasis)

The reason the transition from capitalist to common ownership of the means of production will, in Hegel's phrase, be "very easy" is cogently and convincingly presented by Marx:



The transformation of scattered private property resting on the personal labour of the individuals themselves into capitalist private property is naturally an incomparably more protracted, violent and difficult process than the transformation of capitalist private property, which in fact already rests on the carrying on of production by society, into social property. In the former case, it was a matter of expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; but in this case we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people. (1976:930)

Moreover, this transition will depend, not on the "evolution of the forces of production" as modern Marxism would have it, but rather, as Hegel suggests, on the "progress [of] self-consciousness":

The recognition by [the worker] of the products [of labour] as its own, and the judgement that the separation from the conditions of its realization is improper — forcibly imposed — is an enormous [advance in] awareness ... itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell of its doom as, with the slave's awareness that he cannot be the property of another, with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a mere artificial, vegetative existence, and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production. (Marx, 1973:463)

Even once the transition to common ownership of the means of production is achieved, however, this ownership will remain that of individuals. The means of production will not become the property of the state, as has occurred in the socialist republics, they will become the private property of all the individuals who employ the means of production. Transition to state ownership simply reintroduces the alienation between the individual and the means of production, only in a much more extreme form. It is more extreme, precisely because the individual loses any chance at all of appropriating the results of his or her own labour. This is the reason why Hegel in the Philosophy of Right distinguishes between the business class and the "universal

class" of civil servants. The power of the state bureaucracy must be countered by the independent social power of the business class in order to "effectually prevent it from acquiring the isolated position of an aristocracy and using its education and skill as means to an arbitrary tyranny". (Hegel, 1976:193) For Hegel, common ownership simply implies a contract between individuals which is dissoluble only by the individuals involved.

Since my will, as the will of a person, and so as a single will, becomes objective to me in property, property acquires the character of private property; and common property of such a nature that it may be owned by separate persons acquires the character of an inherently dissoluble partnership in which the retention of my share is explicitly a matter of my arbitrary preference. (1976:42)

Private property can be abrogated in certain instances, but only by the state itself. And in a rational society, where the transition to common ownership of the means of production is complete, the interference of the state with the institution of private property must be minimal. "... Exceptions to private property cannot be grounded in chance, in private caprice, or private advantage, but only in the rational organism of the state." (Hegel, 1976:42) Hegel's insistence on the maintenance of individual property in the rational or communist society is echoed by Marx:

The capitalist mode of appropriation, which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a natural process, its own negation. This is the negation of the negation. It does not re-establish private property, but it does indeed establish individual property on the basis of the achievements of the capitalist era: namely co-operation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production by labour itself. (1976: 929; my emphasis)

Communism has nothing to do with state ownership of the means of production as is the rule in the modern socialist republics; communism merely "replaces the isolation of the workers, due to competition, with their revolutionary combination, due to association". (Marx, 1976:930; my emphasis) To paraphrase Hegel, the socialist republics, it is true "stand immediately in front of the idea" of communism; "but what thus stands on the threshold often for that reason is least adequate". (Hegel, 1975:270)

## CHAPTER 8

## THE EXTERNAL CAPITALIST STATE

1. The Corporation and the External State

It is usually supposed by commentators that Hegel's discussion of the state in the Philosophy of Right refers to the actual Prussian state of his time. "To a considerable extent", writes Marcuse, "Hegel's Philosophy of Right expresses the official theory of the ... Restoration." (1973:211) For Hegel, however, Prussia, in common with the other states of continental Western Europe and Britain, was an "external state" — the state of the bourgeoisie and its fading partner, the landed aristocracy. Civil or bourgeois society, notes Hegel, "may be prima facie regarded as the external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it". (1976: 123) The "external state" Hegel refers to is precisely "the modern representative State" which Marx describes as "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". (1969, I: 110-111) For Hegel as for Marx, capitalist or civil society incorporates "the right of subjective freedom", a right which "has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization". (Hegel, 1976:84) But the "new form of civilization" Hegel refers to is certainly not bourgeois society; the external state of the bourgeoisie is simply the point of transition to a new society. The alienation of the individual and the inversion of property rights characteristic of capitalism is only, as Marx observes,

the indispensable transition without which wealth as such, i.e. the relentless productive forces of social labour, which can form the material base of a free human society, could not possibly be created by force at the expense of the majority. This antagonistic stage cannot be avoided, any more than it is possible for man to avoid the stage in which his spiritual energies are given a religious definition as powers independent of himself.  
(1976:990)

Hegel's critique of the external state of bourgeois society follows the same lines as that later worked out by Marx. In fact, Hegel's examination of civil society anticipates developments in modern-day society not even suspected by Marx. But what has escaped the notice of virtually all commentators on Hegel is that in order for Hegel's analysis to so closely resemble Marx's, Hegel must have adopted a theoretical framework much the same as the one employed by Marx. As I have shown in Chapter 7, this is precisely the case. Moreover, since Hegel and Marx employ identical models of society, it is not surprising that their conclusions on the fate of capitalist society are also similar. In Hegel's terminology, the external capitalist state is merely a show, an appearance through which the theorist may perceive the glimmerings of a new civilization. Civil or bourgeois society, for Hegel, is a manifestly evil system, and "error arises when we take Evil as a permanent positive, instead of what it really is — a negative which, though it would fain assert itself, has no real persistence, and is, in fact, only the absolute sham-existence of negativity itself." (1975:56) Civil society is the "abstract moment ... [the] moment of reality" (1976:123) in the development of individual human freedom, and as such it is a form which will only later coalesce into a rational, free state. "The development we are studying is that whereby the abstract forms reveal themselves not as

self-subsistent but as false." (1976:233)

Hegel argues that "it is the separation between one man and another which makes civil society what it is". (1976:281) In bourgeois society the natural inequalities between individuals are allowed to take root, develop and attain absolutely free scope; the result is vast wealth at one end of the social scale and absolute penury at the other. "In these contrasts and their complexity, civil society affords a spectacle of extravagance and want as well as the physical and ethical degeneration common to them both." (1976:123) For the capitalist, civil society is simply the arena of "abstract need" or profit. Everything is subordinated to the pursuit of profit-making; and since the key to these is production, production for profit becomes an end in itself.

When civil society is in a state of unimpeded activity, it is engaged in expanding internally in population and industry. The amassing of wealth is intensified by generalizing (a) the linkage of men by their needs, and (b) the methods of preparing and distributing the means to satisfy these needs, because it is from this double process of generalization that the largest profits are derived. (1976:149; my emphasis)

To the capitalist, nothing could matter less than how his or her products are consumed provided they are sold at a profit. "A large part of the annual product ... consists of the most tawdry products ... designed to gratify the most impoverished appetites and fancies." (Marx, 1976:1045) And commodities are produced and sold precisely ... to produce and sell more commodities. "Accumulate, accumulate!" writes Marx in an extraordinary passage in Capital.

That is Moses and the prophets! "Industry furnishes the material which saving accumulates". Therefore save, save, i.e. re-convert the greatest possible portion of surplus-value or surplus-product into

capital! Accumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production: this was the formula in which classical economics expressed the historical mission of the bourgeoisie ... (1976:742)

The same idea is expressed, though in more prosaic and theoretical terms, by Hegel. He observes that the external, alienated character of capitalist production is based on finite or limited designs and ends, i.e., profit. And

In finite design ... even the executed End [the commodity] has the same radical rift or flaw as had the Means and the initial End [the design or plan of the commodity]. We have got therefore only a form extraneously impressed on a pre-existing material: and this form, by reason of the limited content of the End, is also a contingent characteristic. The End achieved consequently is only an object, which again becomes a Means or material for other Ends, and so on for ever. (1975:273)

The drive for profit transforms the capitalist into "a machine for the transformation of surplus-value into surplus capital". (Marx, 1976: 742) For Hegel, the capitalist "experiences a 'drowning in possessions and particularity', a 'serfdom' ... to money ..." (Quoted in Avineri, 1972:107) If the worker at least protests against the alienation he or she experiences under capitalism, the capitalist "has his roots in the process of alienation and finds absolute satisfaction in it ...". As a result, states Marx, "the worker stands on a higher plane than the capitalist from the outset ...". Profit, Marx observes,

is therefore the determining, dominating and overriding purpose of the capitalist; it is the absolute motive and content of his activity. And in fact it is no more than the rationalized motive and aim of the hoarder — a highly impoverished and abstract content which makes it plain that the capitalist is just as enslaved by the relationships of capitalism as is his opposite pole, the worker, albeit in a quite different manner. (1976:990)

According to Hegel, it is precisely the alienation involved in the abstract pursuit of profit and riches, as well as the desire to establish a stable source of capital, which ultimately gives rise to the large corporation in modern society. The movement of civil society, and especially the development of international trade and imperialism, creates giant firms and monopolies which drive out smaller businesses. "Wealth, like any other mass makes itself into a power. Accumulation of wealth takes place partly by chance, partly through the universal mode of production and distribution. Wealth is a point of attraction ... It collects everything around itself — just like a large mass attracts to itself the smaller one ... Acquisition becomes a many-sided system which develops into areas from which smaller businesses cannot profit." (Hegel, Quoted in Avineri, 1976:97) But the very creation of wealth leads the owners into a search for respectability. "Unless he is a member of an authorized Corporation (and it is only by being authorized that an association becomes a Corporation)," writes Hegel,

an individual is without rank or dignity, his isolation reduces his business to mere self-seeking, and his livelihood and satisfaction become insecure. Consequently, he has to try to gain recognition for himself by giving external proofs of his success in his business, and to these proofs no limits can be set. He cannot live in the manner of his class, for no class really exists for him, since in civil society it is only something common to particular persons which really exists, i.e., something legally constituted and recognized. Hence he cannot achieve for himself a way of life proper to his class and less idiosyncratic. (1976:153-154)

The transformation of the old-style capitalist, as exemplified by the "robber barons" of the U.S.A., into the respectable modern corporation manager, whose image is enhanced by the "philanthropic" foundation, (a



transformation discussed also by Marx (1967, III:436) ) is anticipated by Hegel. The "conspicuous consumption" of the wealthy has become an object of contempt rather than of pride, as Hegel predicts it would: "The wealthy perform their duties to their fellow associates and thus riches cease to inspire either pride or envy, pride in their owners, envy in others. In these conditions rectitude obtains its proper recognition and respect." (1976:154) The displays of wealth indulged by tycoons of an earlier era, have become to the modern day big businessman "merely vulgar display and cheap shenanigans". (Baran and Sweezy, 1966:31) As Henry Ford II puts it (perhaps less than candidly: he has been reported as saying to his employees: "Remember whose name is on the front of the building"):

The modern corporation or joint-venture capitalism has largely replaced tycoon capitalism. The one-man-band owner-manager is fast being replaced by a new class of professional managers, dedicated more to the advance of the company than to the enrichment of a few owners. (Quoted in Baran and Sweezy, 1966:30)

In his Late Capitalism, Mandel suggests that "whereas the average capitalist in the 19th century respected the law as a matter of course, in the interests of the orderly peace and quiet of his own business, the average capitalist of the 20th century lives more and more on the margin of the law, if not in actual contravention of it." (1968: 511-512) Mandel goes on to refer to the bulky files of U.S. government agencies, such as the Federal Trade Commission, and to the Watergate and Tanaka Affairs to prove his point. The sunny picture Mandel paints of nineteenth-century capitalism is against all evidence of the period. Capitalism has been characterized from its birth by the fact that commodities represent only money or exchange-value for the capitalist; and even things which are not intrinsically commodities "may be

converted into commodities by being exchanged for money. Hence," says Marx, "the connection between venality and corruption and the money relationship. Since money is the transformed shape of the commodity it does not reveal what has been transformed into it: whether conscience, virginity or horse dung." (1976:1073) Further, "if money ... 'comes into the world with a congenital bloodstain on one cheek', capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt." (Marx, 1976:925-926) In any case, the scandals and violations Mandel refers to are such simply because a law, and the appropriate investigating agencies, now exist to expose and deal with them, however inadequately. Bribery, scandal, murder and corruption are not new to capitalism, but their exposure, publication and punishment are.

The emergence of the giant corporation within bourgeois society produces a whole series of government agencies designed to control and regulate its activity. As Marx suggests, the corporation "establishes a monopoly in certain spheres and thereby requires state interference". (1967, III:438) Subjective and contingent actions may be tolerated by society when they occur within individual small firms, but they cannot be allowed in large corporations where a single decision is likely to affect large numbers of people.

... the subjective willing which is permissible in actions harmful per se and in the private use of property, also comes into external relation with other single persons, as well as with public institutions, other than law courts, established for realizing an external end. This universal aspect makes private actions a matter of contingency which escapes the agent's control and which either does or may injure others and wrong them. (Hegel, 1976:146)

The extent and scope of the activities of public agencies vis à vis business is a problem for the bourgeois mind, rather than for the theorist. "These details are determined by custom, the spirit of the rest of the constitution, contemporary conditions, the crisis of the hour, and so forth." (Hegel, 1976:146) In wartime, however, the authority of the external state over business is likely to be very great, since "many a thing, harmless at other times, has to be regarded as harmful". (Hegel, 1976:276)

For Hegel, the proliferation of government agencies to regulate and control industry — a proliferation especially remarkable in the North American heartland of the modern multi-national corporation, where consumer products are subject to health and safety controls almost unknown in many countries — is to be expected. "When reflective", i.e., bourgeois, "thinking is very highly developed the public authority may draw into its orbit everything it possibly can, for in everything some factor may be found which might make it dangerous in one of its bearings." (1976:276)

Unlike Marx, Hegel is keenly aware of the factors in bourgeois society which are likely to increase the rational control of the public authority over the corporations. Much of this development is not anticipated in Marx's writings and it is under-emphasized even in the recent writings of Western Marxists, mainly because Western Marxism lacks the theoretical tools required to comprehend it. The reason for Hegel's superiority over Marx in this regard is that Hegel's chief concern is with the growth of rational consciousness or ideology in the mind of the individual, even within the external capitalist state. In the writings published during his life-time at least, Marx gives the

impression that he did not expect capitalism to survive for long, and he therefore left off considering many developments, perhaps supposing them to be impossible in bourgeois society. This tendency, of course, is far from absolute and the Grundrisse and the planned Part Seven of Volume 1 of Capital (1976:948-1084) contain many brilliant anticipations of novel developments within modern capitalism. In this respect, Marx is much more imaginative than are his present-day followers.

In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel foresees a whole range of developments in civil society which are only now coming into fruition. Thus the modern consumer movement, which has achieved a strong and increasing grip especially in North America, is anticipated by Hegel. "The differing interests of producers and consumers", he observes, "may come into collision with each other, and although a fair balance between them on the whole may be brought about automatically, still their adjustment also requires a control which stands above both and is consciously undertaken." Until quite recently, of course, the notion of "let the buyer beware" was shared by business and consumers alike. But the great shift in the outlook of consumers which occurred in the early 1960's in North America, and which focused initially on automobile safety and food prices, realized an advance in consciousness urged by Hegel:

The right to the exercise of ... [public] control in a single case (e.g. in the fixing of prices of the commonest necessities of life) depends on the fact that, by being publicly exposed for sale, goods in absolutely daily demand are offered not so much to an individual as such but rather to a universal purchaser, the public; and thus both the defence of the public's right not to be defrauded, and also the management of goods inspection, may lie, as a common concern with a public authority. (1976:147)

In addition to these activities, of course, the external capitalist state is also extended to include a whole range of services which facilitate the scope, expansion and efficiency of industry, as well as economic direction per se, which will be discussed below. Also the state takes a larger and larger role in such areas as public health, social administration, and so on. "These universal activities and organizations of general utility call for the oversight and care of the public authority." (1976:147) In Hegel's time, as in our own, a debate raged as to the extent to which government should be allowed to interfere in civil society. For Hegel, however, the public responsibility of the state always takes precedence over the accidental and capricious sphere of business and commerce. "The individual must have a right to work for his bread as he pleases, but the public also has the right to insist the essential tasks shall be properly done. Both points of view must be satisfied, and freedom of trade should not be such as to jeopardize the general good." (1976:277)

## 2. Class, Consumption, and Freedom in the External State

Hegel rejects the notion, such as that put forward by Marx in the Communist Manifesto, that the rule of law in bourgeois society is simply "the will of [the capitalist] class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of [the bourgeoisie]". (1969, I: 123) Hegel is concerned with the rational aspects of the external capitalist state; he is well aware that bad states exist, but what

merely exists also in due time ceases to do so. Hegel's critique of the British state in 1831, for example, rivals in vehemence Marx's dissection of the French regime in The Civil War in France (1966). Consider, for instance, Hegel's account of the condition of the Irish under British rule:

It is well known that the majority of the Irish population adheres to the Catholic Church. The property that once belonged to it, the churches themselves, tithes, the obligation of parishioners to keep the church buildings in good repair and to provide furnishings for worship and wages for sextons, etc., all this has been taken away from it by right of conquest and made the property of the Anglican Church ... Even the Turks have generally left alone the churches of their Christian, Armenian, and Jewish subjects; even where these subjects have been forbidden to repair their churches when dilapidated, they were still allowed leave to buy permission to do so. But the English have taken all the churches away from their conquered Catholic population ... The Irish, whose poverty and misery and consequential degradation and demoralization is a standing theme in Parliament, acknowledged by every Ministry, are compelled, out of the few pence they may have, to pay their own priest and construct a place for their services. (1964:306)

But a critique of the state is not a theory of the state. While Marx's writings are replete with devastating analyses of particular states, he provides no overall theory of the state. Nevertheless, his criticisms of the capitalist state are taken by his followers for an overall theory of the state, rather than a guide for the construction of such a theory. A critique of the state can only be ultimately convincing if it is carried out within the framework of some notion of what a state is. In the writings of Western Marxism, however, this notion is left extremely vague, if, indeed, it is present at all. Hegel outlines his approach to the theory of the state as follows:

In considering the Idea of the state, we must not have our eyes on particular states or on particular institutions ... On some principle or other, any state may be shown to be bad, this or that defect may be found in it; and yet, at any rate if one of the mature states of our epoch is in question, it has in it the moments essential to the existence of the state. But since it is easier to find defects than to understand the affirmative, we may readily fall into the mistake of looking at isolated aspects of the state and so forgetting its inward organic life. The state is no ideal work of art; it stands on earth and so in the sphere of caprice, chance, and error, and bad behaviour may disfigure it in many respects ... The affirmative, life, subsists despite ... defects, and it is this affirmative factor which is our theme here. (1976:279; my emphasis)

Marx's view of the capitalist state as expressed in the Communist Manifesto is carried over to the present by thinkers like Mandel (1978: 475) and Ralph Miliband (1977:90) who argue that the state and law under capitalism constitute a repressive apparatus designed mainly to serve the interests of the ruling capitalist class. Far from being original to Marxism, however, this view represents common sense thinking on the subject and fails to explain even the first aspect of the state. Ironically, many of the leading exponents of Western Marxism hold positions in that state-supported institution par excellence, the university; and all of them are dependent on the state to such an extent that if the services provided by the state were not available to them they might even begin to revise their theory of the state. "... Men's apparent sentiment towards the state", writes Hegel,

is to be distinguished from what they really will; inwardly they really will the thing, but they cling to details and take delight in the vanity of pretending to know better. We are confident that the state must subsist and that in it alone can particular interests be secured. But habit blinds us to that on which our whole existence depends. When we walk the streets at night in safety, it does

not strike us that this might be otherwise. This habit of feeling safe has become second nature, and we do not reflect on just how this is due solely to the working of special institutions. Common-place thinking often has the impression that force holds the state together, but in fact its only bond is the fundamental sense of order which everybody possesses. (1976:282)

The notion that force holds the capitalist state together is, of course, Lenin's position. For Lenin, "the state is an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class". (1970, II:294) Consequently, Lenin advocates that the bourgeois state should be destroyed and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yet one of the incontestable results of the Russian Revolution was the falsification of the Leninist theory of the state. "Lenin", writes Trotsky, "did not succeed ... either in his chief work dedicated to this question (State and Revolution), or in the programme of the party, in drawing all the necessary conclusions as to the character of the state from the economic backwardness and isolatedness of [Russia]." (1970:58) The state is not simply the instrument of the ruling class — a superstructure standing above society — so much as it is an organism which expresses the level of consciousness and the needs of all its members. Lenin's failure to smash the Russian state follows from this fact. "Russia", states Hegel, "... has a mass of serfs on the one hand and a mass of rulers on the other." (1976:291) The Soviet State which emerged from the Revolution of 1917 simply recreated, though on a higher level, this subservient relation between the people and their rulers. It created, as admitted at the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U., "a bureaucratic and police autocracy", a regime in which people continued "the habit of never thinking for themselves". (Claudin, 1975:86)



As Fernando Claudin points out, the Russian Revolution took place "in a backward country where the overwhelming majority of the people were peasants and where there were no democratic traditions or institutions". (1975:117) In the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, Marx points out that a nation of peasants is unlikely to develop an independent class- or self-consciousness among its members, a fact which makes it vulnerable to autocratic rule. "Insofar", writes Marx of the French peasantry,

as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in a hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely local interconnection among these smallholding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class.  
(1969, I:479)

For Marx, class consciousness is an indispensable requirement for the development of what he calls a class in and for itself, an active class, capable and willing to put its interests into action on the political stage. The peasantry remains a class in itself, and fails to create an independent political consciousness among its individual members. A state based predominantly on this class, as was Russia in 1917 and China in 1949, will inevitably reflect the consciousness of individuals who, politically at least, are unable to think for themselves.

For both Hegel and Marx, classes in modern society are based on the relationship of groups of people to the "system of needs", or the means of production. "The infinitely complex, criss-cross, movements of reciprocal production and exchange, and the equally infinite multiplicity of means", notes Hegel,

become crystallized, owing to the universality inherent in their content, and distinguished into general groups. As a result, the entire complex is built up into particular systems of needs, means, and types of work relative to these needs, modes of satisfaction and of theoretical and practical education, i.e. into systems, to one or other of which individuals are assigned — in other words, into class divisions. (1976:130-131)

The agricultural class within civil society, the class of landowners and peasants, is dependent on nature and the soil, as well as on demands for its produce which are generated outside their circle of life. As a result, no independent or reflective consciousness is created within its members. "The agricultural ... conditions of life", says Hegel, "brings with it the relation of lord and serf." (1956:420) Unlike the other classes in civil society the agricultural class is incapable of developing a "particularity become objective to itself". (Hegel, 1976: 132) That is, it remains, as Marx puts it, a class in itself. "The agricultural mode of subsistence", writes Hegel,

remains one which owes comparatively little to reflection and independence of will, and this mode of life is in general such that this class has the substantial disposition of an ethical life which is immediate, resting on family relationship and trust. (1976:131)

When the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia they found themselves in control precisely of a nation of peasants. Even the Russian working class itself was at a low level of development: "... Side by side with the dreamer and the hero", writes Deutscher, "there lived in the Russian worker the slave; the lazy, cursing, squalid slave, bearing the stigmata of his past." (1965, I:321) The peasants, of course, were even more backward than the working class. One Bolshevik leader, Pyatakov, exclaimed about Russian peasants newly recruited as miners: "Idiots! Barbarians! Illiterates! Even we did not know what a savage

nation we had made a revolution with.'" 'Quoted in Deutscher, 1977: 55) The suspicious temperament of the peasant pervaded the entire ruling stratum of the Russian Communist Party, so that even in 1921, when the Revolution was still young, incidents occurred which make the paranoid Nixon Presidency look like a paragon of rationality.

"Brandler", writes Deutscher, referring to the leader of the German Communist Party in 1921-23, "recalls a telephone conversation he had with Lenin in 1921. There were crackling noises on the line all the time, and Lenin said: 'Again some idiot is trying to listen in.' Brandler adds that everybody was eavesdropping on everybody — even Dzerzhinsky's [the head of the secret police] phone was tapped." (1977:53)

According to Hegel, every individual within bourgeois society must belong to a social class, for only through such membership does a person become "something definite, i.e. something specifically particularized". As a result, everyone must restrict "himself exclusively to one of the particular spheres of need". (1976:133) The class membership of an individual is a vital aspect of his or her life and personality. "In this class system", Hegel observes,

the ethical frame of mind therefore is rectitude and esprit de corps, i.e. the disposition to make oneself a member of one of the moments of civil society by one's own act, through one's energy, industry, and skill, to maintain oneself in this position, and to find oneself in this position, and to fend for oneself only through this process of mediating oneself with the universal [society], while in this way gaining recognition both in one's own eyes and the eyes of others. (1976:133)

Social class, in other words, is the mediating institution between the individual and society; it is the link which assures the essential identity of a person with society.

The progressive movement of bourgeois society extinguishes the differences in temperament between the members of the agricultural class and those of the business class. The substantial content of the activity of the agricultural class, i.e., farming, remains the same, but the consciousness and the social relations of this class, "its form and ... its power of reflection" are raised to the level of the business class. (Hegel, 1976:132)

The business class, which as argued above, includes both the capitalist and the worker, has an entirely different ideology or consciousness from the agricultural class. Its relation to the system of needs is rational and self-determining, and the rationality developed through work is reflected in the political sphere as well. Membership in the business class of the external capitalist state is conditioned "partly by ... unearned principal (... capital) and partly by ... skill ..." (Hegel, 1976:130) Wealth and capital, of course, are restricted to an ever diminishing group within the business class, but nevertheless, in contrast with the agricultural class, the business class is characterized by social mobility and job changes from one sphere to another. "... What happens here by inner necessity occurs at the same time by the mediation of an arbitrary will, and to the conscious subject it has the shape of being his own will." (1976: 132) Capitalist society differs from Indian caste society as well as from feudalism in that here even within particular classes "their members can maintain their individuality". In India, however, "we are met ... by the peculiar circumstance that the individual belongs to such a class essentially by birth, and is bound to it for life." "... The individual", notes Hegel, "ought properly to be empowered to

choose his own occupation." (1956:144, 147) And however limited this choice may be in bourgeois society, it is nevertheless real.

Hegel's emphasis on the importance of social mobility and versatility of skill among the members of the business class is also found in Marx, although it is largely absent from the writings of Western Marxists. Under capitalism, observes Marx,

there is scope for variation (within narrow limits) to allow for the worker's individuality, so that partly as between different trades, partly in the same one, we find that wages vary depending on the diligence, skill or strength of the worker, and to some extent of his actual personal achievement ... Although, as we have shown, the latter do not affect the general relationship between capital and labour ... the result differs for the individual worker, and it does so in accordance with his particular achievement .... Certain though it may be that the mass of work must be performed by more or less unskilled labour ... it nevertheless remains open to individuals to raise themselves to higher spheres by exhibiting a particular talent or energy. In the same way there is an abstract possibility that this or that worker might conceivably become a capitalist and the exploiter of the labour of others. (1976:1032)

For Hegel as for Marx, the mediation of the arbitrary will of the individual with civil society and the state, as achieved through social mobility and the versatility of skill of the individual, "is the more precise definition of what is primarily meant by freedom in common parlance". (Hegel, 1976:133)

Marx never fully worked out his theory of social class, and the only comprehensive attempt he made to do so remains a fragment at the conclusion of Volume III of Capital. There Marx discusses "the three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production", namely, "wage-labourers, capitalists and landowners". Like Hegel, Marx suggests that "landed property" will be transformed "into

the form of landed property corresponding to the capitalist mode of production". But Marx offers no sustained discussion of class beyond some very general remarks regarding the source of income of the three great classes, and the difficulty of fitting "physicians and officials" into these categories. (1967, III:885-886)

By contrast, Hegel's discussion of class in the Philosophy of Right is thorough and comprehensive. But the difficulty in grounding Hegel's theory of class into a Marxist framework is that Hegel, as pointed out in the last chapter, does not distinguish between the worker and the capitalist, but treats them as an identity within a contradictory or polar unity. Consequently, Hegel does not distinguish between the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat as, of course, is done in virtually all Marxist accounts of class and class consciousness. The reason for this is that Hegel believes that the consciousness of the two groups is, or will become, virtually identical. It is this belief which leads Hegel to suggest that the bourgeois mode of production along with the legal system which expresses its property relations — "the state as civil society, or state external" (1969:257) — will eventually be transformed into the rational state where common ownership of the means of production by individuals will prevail. (1967:51)

For Hegel, civil society is precisely the arena in which the consciousness of the worker and that of the capitalist are educated through conflict and struggle into the rational — or communist — state. It is part of the dialectic movement, says Hegel, "... that the limitations of the finite do not merely come from without: that its own nature is the cause of its abrogation, and that by its own act

it passes into its counterpart." (1975:116) This belief is also implicit in Marx's discussion of capitalism, especially in the Grundrisse (1973) and the planned Part Seven of Capital, Volume I, entitled "Results of the Immediate Process of Production". (1976) Along with the business and agricultural classes, Hegel, as I will outline below, also discusses a class rarely mentioned by Western Marxism, the "universal class" — that of civil servants — and also the poor, a group Marx refers to in Capital as the "lumpenproletariat". (1976:797) Both these groups are for Hegel, a growing and progressively more predominant section within civil or bourgeois society.

A chief problem for Marxist accounts of class and class struggle in bourgeois society is the integration or "bourgeoisification" of the worker into modern capitalist society. This problem is particularly acute in North America where very large and politically conscious groups have forced changes on the existing system with little or no assistance from the organized working class movement. Moreover, Marxists have found themselves outflanked by advances initiated by both management and the workers in the actual production system. Marx observes that this progressive movement was also occurring in mid-nineteenth century bourgeois society. For Marx, however, this phenomenon is not "vulgar reformism" or a "band-aid approach" to the contradictions of capitalism as it is for the epigones within Western Marxism. Rather it is a herald of the new communist society. "... Those members of the ruling classes", he writes,

who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system — and they are many — have become the obtrusive and full-mouthed apostles of co-operative production. If

co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the Capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production — what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, "possible" Communism? (1966:73)

One result of the real advances achieved by individuals in bourgeois society is that the progressive element within the educated middle class, which more and more secures employment in the state, finds itself isolated from the organized working class and at the same time allied with the poor and the dispossessed in the struggle for social change. The dynamic of this process is presciently outlined by Kant. "Skill", he writes,

can hardly be developed in the human race otherwise than by means of inequality between men. For the majority, in a mechanical kind of way that calls for no special art, provide the necessaries of life for the ease and convenience of others who apply themselves to the less necessary branches of culture in science and art. These keep the masses in a state of oppression, with hard work and little enjoyment, though in the course of time much of the culture of the higher classes spreads to them also. But with the advance of this culture — the culminating point of which, where devotion to what is superfluous begins to be prejudicial to what is indispensable, is called luxury — misfortunes increase equally on both sides. With the lower classes they arise by force of domination from without, with the upper from seeds of discontent within. (1973:95; my emphasis)

A great irony of modern politics is that the radical intellectuals within the middle class cling to the Marxist theory of the polarization of bourgeoisie and proletariat and the disappearance of intervening classes, the more tenaciously, the less adequate that model is for contemporary social conditions. As Hegel suggests, the educated



middle class "is ... in general ... most open to ... abstractions" which "consist in general ideas about freedom, equality, the people, its sovereignty, etc." (1964:330) The affinity of the middle class for abstractions is as evident today as it was in Hegel's time; and it is expressed in the cries about the "betrayal perpetrated by social democracy" which the intellectuals see at work in most Western countries. This "betrayal" is characteristic even of Communist Parties which are approaching power, as they are in France and Italy. Social democracy, however, is not a betrayal but the realization of the values of the organized working class, or at least the attempt to put these values into practice. The fact that social democracy makes compromises with the bourgeoisie, and carries out programmes favourable to capitalist interests, simply illustrates Hegel's thesis that the ideology or consciousness of the owners and the workers is not poles apart, as suggested by orthodox Marxist theory. In other words, it is not the reality, but the theory which is at variance with the facts. Social democracy is active politics, the unity of theory with reality, and reality is often unkind to abstractions.

The situation in which Western Marxism finds itself today bears an uncanny resemblance to one described by Hegel almost 150 years ago. He observes that the English Reform Bill of 1831 jeopardized the interests of "the class that has hitherto dominated Parliament, the class that afforded to every Ministry ready-made material for [maintaining] the existing system of social life". This class of landed aristocrats and the big bourgeoisie "will suffer modification as a result of introducing [into Parliament] new men and different principles". These democratic recruits to Parliament are likely to

bring with them "claims of a new kind, which hitherto have scarcely come to halting and involuntary expression and have been not so much demanded as vaguely feared ..." This is precisely the situation in Western Europe today with the introduction of social democracy into government. But the fact that social democracy is halting and even retrograde in its enaction of its own principles has little to do with betrayal, conscious or otherwise, of working-class interests. "If", notes Hegel,

we grasp this hitherto different character of an opposition as it appears in France, it is most distinctively expressed in the surprise, expressed recently in France at every change of Ministry, that individuals coming out of opposition into power now acted on almost the same maxims as their supplanted successors. In French opposition papers we read naive complaints that so many excellent individuals become backsliders as a result of their progress through office and become false to the left to which they belonged earlier, i.e. that, while of course they had previously granted in abstracto that there had to be a government they have now learnt what a government really is and that something more is needed for it than principles. (1964:328-329)

If modern social democracy fails in the end to bring about the changes for which it has a mandate, it will have to turn once again to the working class and the sectarian parties of the radical middle class as well as to the poor. The result will be as Hegel describes:

The people would be a power of a different kind; and an opposition which, erected on a basis hitherto at variance with the stability of Parliament, might feel itself no match for the opposite party in Parliament, could be led to look for its strength to the people, and then introduce not reform but revolution. (1964:330)

Marxist theories of the state fail precisely because they take an alienated or external view of the state. As in Hegel's time, the

only rational posture toward the state is supposed to be a critical or hostile one; expressions favourable to the state are felt to be "reformist" or even reactionary. "At the present time," writes Hegel, "the idea that freedom of thought, and of mind generally, evinces itself only in divergence from, indeed in hostility to, what is publicly recognized, might seem to be most firmly rooted in connexion with the state ..." (1976:4) Hegel argues, however, that the state embodies human rationality, and that the problem of philosophy, or social science, is to discover the elements of that rationality. As we have seen, this is not to deny that there are bad states or unhealthy governments, or that the state is not altogether what it could be. "... The intelligent observer may meet much that fails to satisfy the general requirements of right; for who is not acute enough to see a great deal in his own surroundings which is really far from what it ought to be?" (1975:10) Nevertheless, as Hegel puts it, "The laws regulating ... civil society are the institutions of the rational order which glimmers in them." (1976:281)

The consciousness and interests of all the people within a state are the elements of cohesion which hold the state together. If it lacks this essential aspect of cohesion, remarks Hegel,

the state is left in the air. The state is actual only when its members have a feeling of their own self-hood and it is stable only when public and private ends are identical. It has often been said that the end of the state is the happiness of its citizens. That is perfectly true. If all is not well with them, if their subjective aims are not satisfied, if they do not find that the state as such is the means to their satisfaction, then the footing of the state itself is insecure. (1976:281)

The constitution of a state is perpetually reproduced by the collective

efforts of the individuals within it. But "If the state and its constitution fall apart, if the various members of the organism free themselves, then the unity produced by the constitution is no longer an established fact." (1976:282)

"What is rational is actual," writes Hegel in the Philosophy of Right, "and what is actual is rational." (1976:10) This statement expresses the core of the dialectic method. But it has led to much misunderstanding of Hegel's position, especially as expressed in the belief that Hegel is here offering a carte blanche for the existing system. In fact, however, Hegel's statement simply refers to the essential relationship between individual, his or her social class, and the state. Hegel writes in the History of Philosophy that the function of the state is to fill "man's requirements. For what is real, is rational. The point to know, however," Hegel continues,

is what exactly is real; in common life all is real, but there is a difference between the phenomenal world and reality. The real has an external existence, which displays arbitrariness and contingency, like a tree, a house, a plant, which in nature come into existence. What is on the surface in the moral [social] sphere, men's action, involves much that is evil, and might in other ways be better; men will ever be wicked and depraved, but this is not the Idea. If the reality of the substance is recognized, the surface where the passions battle must be penetrated. The temporal and the transitory certainly exists and may cause us trouble enough, but in spite of this it is no true reality ...  
(1894:96)

The external capitalist state, like any other, fills the requirements of the individuals within it. And along with its negative elements, which are detailed below, it contains the glimmerings, the aspects of a rational order. Even the constitutional monarchy of Hegel's period, a system of government which for Hegel — as I will demonstrate in the

concluding chapter — is merely a transitory form of the state; even this state has its rational aspects: "... The right", notes Hegel,

that there must be one man at the head of affairs seems contingent ... if it is treated as abstract and as posited. This right, however, is inevitably present both as a felt want and as a requirement of the situation. Monarchs are not exactly distinguished for bodily prowess or intellectual gifts, and yet millions submit to their rule. Now to say that men allow themselves to be ruled counter to their own interests is preposterous. Men are not so stupid. It is their need, the inner might of the Idea, which, even against what they appear to think, constrains them to obedience and keeps them in that relation. (1976:289; my emphasis)

The external state of the bourgeoisie is not, as Western Marxists suppose, an illusion foisted on the workers to keep them in their place. If it is an illusion, it is a shared illusion of the worker and the capitalist alike. An example from recent history might serve to illustrate this point. The force of the illusion of the external capitalist state persuaded the working class in the United States to brush aside the leadership of the Communist Party in the 1930's and opt instead for Roosevelt's New Deal. The U.S. workers and capitalists alike later provided the vital war material necessary for the Red Army to contain and turn back fascism; later they joined with the Soviets to liberate Europe. The decision of the U.S. working class to reject both fascism and communism may well have stemmed from an illusion, but it was, in Marx's phrase, "a necessary illusion". (1973:509) Moreover, considering the theoretical and practical poverty of Western Marxism at that time, not to mention the barbaric nature of the Soviet alternative it held up so hopefully to the U.S. workers, who is to say that the workers succumbed to an illusion? No doubt possibilities and

more possibilities could be raised to refute this argument. But as Hegel says, "Everything ... is as impossible as it is possible." The thing, however, is to "stick to the actual ..." (1975:203-204) And the actual in this case meant the defeat of fascism in Europe.

The Western Marxist notion that the working class is held in thrall by, and integrated into, the external capitalist state by the conscious or unconscious manipulation of the bourgeoisie merely conceals a middle class elitism common to intellectuals. This elitism forms an essential element of Western Marxist theory and does not help to popularize the socialist alternative in the U.S. and Canadian working class, which unlike its European counterpart, admits no superiority to the intellectuals. Contrary to Western Marxist opinion, the working class is not deceived by the capitalists: nor is it any more prey to false consciousness than are the theorists of Western Marxism. The goals of bourgeois society are also the goals of the workers within it. "A great genius," writes Hegel, ironically referring to Frederick the Great,

propounded as a problem for a public essay competition 'whether it be permissible to deceive a people'. The answer must have been that a people does not allow itself to be deceived about its substantive basis, the essence and specific character of its mind. On the other hand, it is self-deceived about the manner of its knowledge of these things and about its corresponding judgement of its actions, experiences, etc.  
(1976:205)

According to Marx, the worker and the capitalist, as well as the political economist, share the same distorted vision of capital and the labour process. "... The capitalist, the worker and the political economist .. all think of the physical elements of the labour process as capital just because of their physical characteristics." (1976:1007-

1008) Similarly, the worker entertains an illusory view of the state which is more or less identical to that of the bourgeoisie and its apologists; a view which "is of course consolidated, nourished and inculcated by the ruling classes by all means available". (Marx, 1973: 165) If for the capitalist "money becomes an end rather than a means ..." (Marx, 1973:332) it is also an end for the workers. "The more production becomes the production of commodities", writes Marx, "the more each person has to, and wishes to, become a dealer in commodities, then the more everyone wants to make money, either from a product, or from his services, and this money-making appears as the ultimate purpose of activity of any kind." (1976:1041) The organic relation between the worker and the capitalist is recreated in the state, since "every form of production creates its own legal relations, form of government, etc."; the mode of production and the state, therefore, "are organically related". Moreover, if the worker is subordinated to the capitalist in the production process, this relation also appears in the state itself: "the right of the stronger prevails in ... 'constitutional republics' as well" as in other types of government, "only in another form". (Marx, 1973:88)

The essential question, however, is not whether the state is an instrument for the oppression of the worker, since this oppression is pre-supposed in the economic system itself. The essential question is, rather, what are the elements in the state through which the worker, no less than the capitalist, finds expression and meaning for his or her individuality. The answer to this question will provide not only the justification for the external capitalist state, but also the reason for its merely transitory and phenomenal existence. "The

state", says Hegel,

is actual, and its actuality consists in this that the interest of the whole is realized in and through particular ends. Actuality is always the unity of universal and particular, the universal dismembered in the particulars which seem to be self-subsistent, although they really are upheld and maintained only in the whole. (1976:283)

Hegel distinguishes the state in the "strictly political" sense, i.e. as the government and constitution, from the state as such, i.e., society in general with its network of laws, customs and social relations. (1976:163) "... The state, as the mind of a nation," he writes, "is both the law permeating all relationships within the state and also at the same time the manners and consciousness of its citizens." In the same way, however, "the constitution", i.e., the political embodiment of the state, "depends on the character and development of [the nation's] self-consciousness". Accordingly, the constitution merely reflects the development of the self-consciousness or political awareness of the individuals within a state. "In its self-consciousness its [the nation's] subjective freedom is rooted and so, therefore, is the actuality of its constitution." (1976:178-79) The U.S.S.R. and the other socialist republics have highly advanced constitutions, but these constitutions remain dead and lifeless, precisely because they fail to reflect the actual (low) political and self-conscious awareness of the mass of individuals within these states. "A constitution", remarks Hegel,

is not just something manufactured; it is the work of centuries, it is the Idea, the consciousness of rationality so far as that consciousness is developed in a particular nation ... A nation's constitution must embody its feeling for its rights and its position, otherwise there



may be a constitution there in an external way, but it is meaningless and valueless.  
(1976:286-287)

The length of time required for the development of the self-consciousness of individuals within a nation explains the perennial disappointment experienced by radicals in the West at the perversion of socialist principles whenever they are applied through revolution in backward countries. The abstract theory propounded by Western Marxists leads them to believe that a transformation in the mode of production ought to lead to an equivalent transformation in the ideological superstructure. This is merely what Hegel would call a dream of the understanding or bourgeois consciousness which is prey to the notion that ideas or ideology as they appear in the minds of individuals "are nothing but chimeras" as opposed to what the bourgeois mind takes to be concrete, actual reality. "The divorce between idea and reality", notes Hegel,

is especially dear to the analytic understanding which looks upon its own abstractions, dreams though they are, as something true and real, and prides itself on the imperative "ought", which it takes especial pleasure in prescribing even on the field of politics. As if the world had waited on it to learn how it ought to be, and was not! (1975:9-10)

The abstract consciousness of modern Western Marxism presents a particular danger to itself, first, because it fails to adequately acknowledge (and theorize) the presence and achievement of rationality and freedom in the advanced Western countries, taking them rather for granted, and therefore jeopardizing their further existence (as the German Communist Party did in the early 1930's (Claudin, 1975:127-165)); and, second, because by placing exaggerated importance on revolutions in the Third World for national politics in the West, it only

undermines in the eyes of the workers in the capitalist countries the liberating potential of communism and communist ideas, and theoretically negates the real achievements of the very workers whose cause they claim to support.

The rationality and freedom achieved in the Western capitalist democracies, however limited they may be, and however flawed their application, are the result precisely of the educational process experienced by individuals in bourgeois society through their labour and activity in the production system. This liberating and educational effect of labour under capitalism is for both Hegel and Marx, the key factor in the transition to a new and higher form of civilization.

"... The severe discipline of capital, acting on succeeding generations", writes Marx, "develops general industriousness as the general property of the new species..." The "ceaseless striving" of capital "towards the general form of wealth", he continues,

drives labour beyond the limits of natural paltriness ... and thus creates the material elements of the rich individuality which is as all-sided in production as in consumption, and whose labour also therefore appears no longer as labour, but as the development of activity itself ... This is why capital is productive; i.e. an essential relation for the development of the social productive forces.  
(1973:325)

A fundamental aspect of the dialectic method is that it emphasizes the positive and creative aspects of the development of individual human consciousness in history. Thus the external, negative and critical methodology of Western Marxism is the reverse of the dialectic method. Instead, therefore, of emphasizing the liberating effects of capitalism, as do Hegel and Marx, Western Marxism concentrates on the impending approach of the "death agony" of "late capitalism" — a mode

of production which is supposed to collapse under the sheer weight of its own contradictions. It is, of course, easy to find the negative factors which are supposed to lead to the disappearance of a social system; it is more difficult, as well as more scientific, to look for the positive features which will eventually cause the system to transcend itself.

Marx's writings on the capitalist mode of production, especially in the Grundrisse (1973) and Part Seven of Capital (1976), should be read as a dialogue with Hegel. Marx's emphasis on the liberating effects of capitalism, for example, merely repeats a similar emphasis in Hegel's Philosophy of Right. For Hegel, civil or bourgeois society is devoted to satisfying the particular needs of individuals; nevertheless the universal relationships formed in bourgeois society give it a rational or social character. "The aim" of capitalist society, writes Hegel,

is the satisfaction of subjective particularity, but the universal asserts itself in the bearing which this satisfaction has on the needs of others and their free and arbitrary wills. The show of rationality thus produced in this sphere of finitude is the Understanding, and this is the aspect which is of most importance in considering this sphere and which itself constitutes the reconciling element within it. (1976:126)

Marx repeats Hegel's observation in a similar passage in the Grundrisse:

... capital creates the bourgeois society, and the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond itself by members of society. Hence the great civilizing influence of capital; its production of a stage of society in comparison to which all earlier ones appear as mere local developments of humanity ... (1973:409-410)

The most dramatic feature of capitalism is its constant creation of new needs and the means for their satisfaction. This richness in

production and consumption leads to a corresponding richness in the individuality of persons within capitalism. The identity between production and consumption leads Hegel to suggest that only under bourgeois society does the "concrete, i.e. social" individual — the "universal person" (1976:127, 134) become a reality. "Here at the standpoint of" civil society, writes Hegel, "what we have before us is the composite idea which we call man. This is the first time, and indeed properly the only time, to speak of man in this sense." (1976:127)

For Hegel, the many-sided production and consumption, the creation of new branches of industry, and so on, within bourgeois society produce in the individual a sense of "refinement, i.e. a discrimination between these multiplied needs, and judgement on the suitability of means to their ends". (1976:127) Moreover, the universality of social needs, their dependence on the ideas and opinions of individuals themselves rather than on external necessity, have in them "the aspect of liberation". (1976:128) This liberating aspect of capitalism is also pointed out by Marx, who observes that the bourgeois mode of production leads to

the discovery, creation and satisfaction of new needs arising from society itself, the cultivation of all the qualities of the social human being, production of the same in a form as rich as possible in needs, because rich in qualities and relations — production of this being as the most total and universal possible social product, for, in order to take gratification in a many-sided way, he must be capable of many pleasures ... hence cultured to a high degree ...

For Marx, the creation of the "social human being" is not something which must await the coming of communism, rather it is "a condition of production founded on capital". (1973:409; my emphasis)

The Western Marxist critics of the external capitalist state have all but ignored this humanizing moment, and echo their bourgeois opponents who lament the existence of "self-satisfied materialism and consumerism" among the masses. Baran and Sweezy, for example, believe that "advertising, product differentiation, artificial obsolescence, model changing, and all the other devices of the sales effort" are superfluous creations of a monopoly capitalism driven to any means to preserve itself and prevent stagnation. (1966:141) While paying lip-service to the civilizing aspects of consumer society, Mandel draws essentially the same conclusions as Baran and Sweezy. The factors in consumer society which have made possible the liberation of women and children, for example, are for Mandel signs of "decay" and "the historical decline of an entire social system and mode of production". (1978:502, 570) Accordingly, Mandel laments "the rapid decline of the production of immediate use-values within the family, previously cared for by the worker's [sic!] wife [sic!], mother [sic!] and daughter [sic!]" . As a result of this decline, "the material basis of the individual family disappears in the sphere of consumption ..." Witness of this decline, states Mandel,

is provided by the rise of a pronounced "teenager" market, the growing consumption of working class youth outside the working class family, the increasingly sharp separation of the generation of pensioners from the generation of adults, and so on. There is no need to stress the serious psychic damage resulting from such atomization (neglected children, lonely adults, old people wasting away). (1978:391)

The critique of consumer society by the exponents of Western Marxism contrasts strongly not only with the writings of Hegel and Marx, but also with classical Marxism, as expressed, for example, by Trotsky.

For Trotsky, the freedom of consumption in capitalist society is precisely what differentiates it from the authoritarianism of the U.S.S.R. "... The very scope of human demands", he writes, "changes fundamentally with the growth of world technique. The contemporaries of Marx knew nothing of automobiles, radios, moving pictures, aeroplanes. A socialist society, however, is unthinkable without the free enjoyment of these goods." Trotsky argues that capitalist society in the 1930's was approaching "'The lowest stage of Communism'", and he bitterly contrasts the privileged consumption of the Russian bureaucracy with the generalized consumption which was even then appearing in Western capitalist society:

How many years are needed in order to make it possible for every Soviet citizen to use an automobile in any direction he chooses, refilling his gas tank without difficulty en route? In barbarian society the rider and the pedestrian constituted two classes. The automobile differentiates society no less than the saddle horse. So long as even a modest "Ford" remains the privilege of a minority, there survive all the relations and customs proper to a bourgeois society. And together with them there remains the guardian of inequality, the state. (1970:57-58)

The critique of consumerism stems from the assumption that the working-class individual is somehow different from his or her bourgeois counterpart. But the worker and the bourgeois are not really so different, and the goal of bourgeois striving is also the goal of the worker. Thus the "keeping up with the Jones's" syndrome so obvious in advanced capitalist societies is simply bourgeois striving as it appears in working class and middle class individuals. This syndrome is precisely the manifestation of the demand for equality among individuals within civil society. The development of the social

relations of the individual stimulated by production and consumption under capitalism "becomes", writes Hegel,

a particular end-determinant for means in themselves and their acquisition, as well as for the manner in which needs are satisfied. Further, it directly involves the demand for equality of satisfaction with others. The need for this equality and for emulation, which is the equalizing of oneself with others, as well as the other need also present here, the need of the particular to assert itself in some distinctive way, become themselves a fruitful source of the multiplication of needs and their satisfaction. (1976:127-128; my emphasis)

The widening of the consumer choice of the worker in bourgeois society, the greater flexibility in purchases, as well as the increased access to production and goods made possible by the extension of consumer credit to the working class individual in the form of universal credit cards, are not portents of the decay of capitalism as Western Marxism contends, but rather necessary and predictable moments of capitalist production itself. They are also heralds of the free goods society of the future, where individual consumption will be disciplined and controlled by the cultured and civilized consciousness of the social individual. In this society, notes Trotsky, "money will become ordinary paper slips, like trolley or theatre tickets", which, incidentally, have already been made almost obsolescent in North America by the credit card. "As Socialism advances", Trotsky continues, "these slips will disappear, and control over individual consumption — whether by money or administration — will no longer be necessary when there is more than enough of everything for everybody!" (1964:217)

"... Free exchange among individuals", states Marx, "who are associated on the basis of common appropriation and control of the means of production ... presupposes the development of material and cultural

conditions" within the capitalist mode of production. (1973:159)

These conditions are outlined by Hegel: The "intelligence" of the individual within civil society,

with its grasp of distinctions, multiplies ... human needs, and since taste and utility become criteria of judgement, even the needs themselves are affected thereby. Finally, it is no longer need but opinion which has to be satisfied, and it is just the educated man who analyses the concrete into particulars. The very multiplication of needs involves a check on desire, because when many things are in use, the urge to obtain any one thing which might be needed is less strong, and this is a sign that want altogether is not so imperious. (1976:269; my emphasis)

As Marx puts it, it is precisely through the consumption and expenditure habits of the free worker that "He learns to control himself, in contrast to the slave, who needs a master." (1976:1033)

Contemporary Marxist critics of capitalist society often focus on advertising and distribution costs under capitalism. "... It can be accepted without further ado", writes Mandel, "that the majority of these expenditures are not determined by the interests of consumers but by specific condition and contradictions of the capitalist mode of production." (1978:399) Mandel points out that these costs absorb more than 50% of U.S. national income. There is, no doubt, much wastage involved in advertising, packaging and distribution costs, but it is symptomatic of the abstraction of the Marxist mind that it ignores the incredible efficiency and rationality brought about by the North American marketing and distribution effort. What immediately strikes the U.S. or Canadian citizen abroad is precisely the wastage in the energy of the consumer involved in inefficient marketing distribution and research. One reason for the myopia of Marxist theory in this respect is its tendency to discount or ignore anything which relates to



the time and effort of the domestic purchaser, who, of course, is usually a woman, and whose effort therefore is outside the purview of the "theoretician", who is usually a man. Trotsky who, alone among the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution, maintained close contacts with events in the U.S.A. and Canada, also recognized the value of the U.S. consumer market effort:

Nowhere else has the study of the internal market reached such intensity as in the United States. It has been done by your banks, trusts, individual business men, merchants, travelling salesmen, and farmers as part of their stock in trade.

A socialist government in the U.S.A., Trotsky adds,

will simply abolish all trade secrets, will combine all the findings of these researches for individual profit, and will transform them into a scientific system of economic planning. In this your government will be helped by the existence of a large class of cultured and critical consumers. By combining the nationalized key industries, your private businesses and democratic consumer cooperation, you will quickly develop a highly flexible system for serving the needs of your population. (1964:217)

Along with many other critics, Mandel complains that the sovereignty of the consumer much touted by bourgeois apologists is actually a myth since "these 'sovereign consumers' first have to be persuaded of their new needs through advertising". (1978:398) Both Marx and Hegel, however, observe that the essence of universal rather than merely necessary human needs is precisely that they must be stimulated and goaded through advertising and example, otherwise they simply would not exist. "What the English call 'comfort'", writes Hegel,

is something inexhaustible and illimitable. [Others can discover to you that what you take to be] comfort at any stage is discomfort, and these discoveries never come to an end. Hence the need for greater comfort does not exactly

arise from within you directly; it is suggested to you by those who hope to make a profit from its creation. (1976:269)

For Marx, consumer advertising reflects nothing less than an essential aspect of the civilizing moment of capitalism. Thus where Western Marxism sees advertising as part of the "irrational system" and a ploy to avoid economic stagnation by foisting consumption on the worker (Baran and Sweezy, 1966:128-131), Marx views it as a necessary and progressive force which allows the worker "his only share of civilization which distinguishes him from the slave ...". The capitalist, says Marx,

searches for means to spur [the worker] to consumption, to give his wares new charms, to inspire them with new needs by constant chatter etc. It is precisely this side of the relation of capital and labour which is an essential civilizing moment, and on which the historic justification, but also the contemporary power of capital rests. (1973:287; my emphasis)

The development of the consumer society in the advanced Western countries simply reflects and strengthens the foundation of democracy and individual freedom in the external capitalist state. This relation, entirely overlooked by Western Marxism, is repeatedly stressed by both Hegel and Marx. According to Marx, the competition between capitalists for the purchases of the worker means that the individual capitalist relates to the worker as an equal. The competition of the capitalists for the worker's wages fragments their class power and sets up a pluralistic network of competing social powers. "... It is the competition among capitals", writes Marx,

their indifference to and independence of one another, which brings it about that the individual capital relates to the workers of the entire remaining capital not as to workers ... What precisely distinguishes capital from the master-servant relation is that the worker confronts him as a consumer and possessor of exchange values,

and that in the form of the possessor of money, in the form of money he becomes a simple centre of circulation — one of its infinitely many centres, in which his specificity as a worker is extinguished. (1973:420-421)

Money procures to the worker a certain social power which he or she can exercise in the market place. The worker receives his or her wages "in the shape of money, exchange-value, the abstract social form of wealth". And this "exchange-value, abstract wealth" remains in the worker's

mind as something more than a particular use-value hedged round with traditional and local restrictions. It is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever use-value he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and, as the owner of money, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the sellers of goods as any other buyer. Of course, the conditions of his existence — and the limited amount of money he can earn — compel him to make his purchases from a fairly restricted selection of goods. But some variation is possible as we can see from the fact that newspapers, for example, form part of the essential purchases of the urban English worker. He can save or hoard a little. Or else he can squander his money on drink. But even so he acts as a free agent; he must pay his own way; he is responsible to himself for the way he spends his wages. (Marx, 1976:1033)

While the purchasing power of the worker is severely limited, it is nevertheless a social power which assures the independence and freedom of the worker:

The general exchange of activities and products, which has become a vital condition for each individual — their mutual interconnection — here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing. In exchange value, the social connection between persons is transformed into a social relation between things; personal capacity into objective wealth. The less social power the medium of exchange possesses ... the greater must be the power of the community which binds the individuals together, the patriarchal relation, the community

of antiquity, feudalism and the guild system. [But under capitalism] each individual possesses social power in the form of a thing. (1973:157-158; my emphasis)

Before 1917, the great mass of the Russian people lacked precisely this autonomous power, this medium of exchange, and the institutions of Czardom reflected its absence. In this society, individuals could make their collective will felt only by violence. "In despotisms", Hegel argues: "where there are only rulers and the people, the people is effective, if at all, only as a mass destructive of the organization of the state." (1976:292) But the new Soviet state which arose out of the destruction of the old regime failed to place any effective social power in the hands of the individual. But as Trotsky points out, socialism must be based precisely on individual centres of social power expressed as money; otherwise it degenerates into autocracy. Socialism in the United States, he writes,

will be made to work, not by bureaucracy and not by policement, but by hard cold cash. Your almighty dollar will play a principal part in making your new soviet system work. It is a great mistake to try to mix a "planned economy" with a "managed currency". Your money must act as regulator with which to measure the success or failure of your planning. Your "radical" professors are dead wrong in their devotion to "managed money". It is an academic idea which could easily wreck your entire system of distribution and production. That is the great lesson to be derived from the Soviet Union, where bitter necessity has been converted into official virtue in the monetary realm. (1964:217)

In the Soviet Union all power went to the state in a vast effort of social development; individual consumption requirements were sacrificed to the immediate demands of large-scale industry, or what Marx calls "fixed capital". This situation, however, is the exact opposite of what is necessary to the development of a socialist or even a

communist society. Communist society cannot be based on large-scale industry to the detriment of the needs of consumers. The development of the productive forces under communism must be based first of all on an economy which already provides adequate consumer goods for individuals.

The part of production which is oriented towards the production of fixed capital does not produce direct objects of individual gratification, nor direct exchange values. Hence, only when a certain degree of productivity has already been reached — so that a part of production time is sufficient for immediate production — can an increasingly large part be applied to the production of means of production. This requires that society be able to wait; that a large part of the wealth already created can be withdrawn both from immediate consumption, in order to employ this part for labour which is not immediately productive. (1973:707)

But Russia was in no way "able to wait", and its course of development followed the lines already suggested by Engels:

The process of the replacement of no less than 500,000 large landowners and approximately 80 million peasants can only be accomplished at the cost of terrible suffering and convulsions. History is the cruellest of goddesses, and she drives her chariot of triumph over mountains of corpses — not only in war, but also in "peaceful" economic development. (Quoted in Rosdolsky, 1977:464)

Under Soviet "communism", the individual had no access to autonomous social power in the form of exchange-value and money. The result was predictable: "Rob the thing of this social power," says Marx, "and you must give it to persons to exercise over persons." (1973:158)

The modern socialist republics are generally considered to be instances of "the dictatorship of the proletariat", or even of the dictatorship of a "new class". In fact, however, as I pointed out in Chapter 7, they are instances of the autocratic rule of what Hegel calls, "the middle class, the class in which the consciousness of right

and the developed intelligence of the mass of the people is found". (1976:193) According to Hegel, the middle class should be distinguished from the business and agricultural classes, for it is the middle class which supplies the bulk of recruits to the "universal class" of civil servants and the professions. "The universal class ...", he writes, "has for its task the universal interests of the community. It must therefore be relieved from direct labour to satisfy its needs, either by having private means or by receiving an allowance from the state which claims its industry, with the result that the private interest finds its satisfaction in its work for the universal [society]." (1976: 132) As we have seen, Hegel argues that the middle class must be counter-balanced by the business class from below and also by the head of state from above. Only these forces "effectually prevent it from acquiring the isolated position of an aristocracy and using its education and skill as an arbitrary tyranny". (1976:193) The middle class, notes Hegel, is an essential element in the modern state for "a state without a middle class must ... remain on a low level". But the middle class can be developed in a healthy state,

only by giving authority to spheres of particular interests, which are relatively independent, and by appointing an army of officials whose personal arbitrariness is broken against such authorized bodies. Action in accordance with everyone's rights, and the habit of such action, is a consequence of the counterpoise of officialdom which independent and self-subsistent bodies create. (1976:291)

The socialist republics and many Third World countries are lacking precisely the elements of civil society capable of countervailing the power of the educated middle class. The result is an "arbitrary tyranny" of the intelligentsia; and since no one is less tolerant of the expression of divergent ideas than the intellectual, the free

exchange of ideas in the communist countries is severely limited. Under Stalin, the strength of the middle class in the U.S.S.R. was continually decimated precisely to curb its growing power. "It was one of the effects of the purges", Deutscher points out, "that they prevented the managerial groups from consolidation as a social stratum. Stalin whetted their acquisitive instincts and wrung their necks." The middle class was prohibited by Stalin from becoming a possessing class, a business class — "they could not start accumulating capital while they were hovering between their offices and the concentration camps". Moreover, the middle class in the U.S.S.R. is unlikely to develop into a possessing class, even without Stalin, since its "power and privileges is bound up with the national ownership of the productive resources ..." (Deutscher, 1965, III:306-307, 305) Western Marxism itself tends to represent not the working class, but rather the radical elements of the middle class posing as a universal class, the representative of the worker and the poor. This leads to the failure of Western Marxism to theorize and appreciate the reality of bourgeois society as well as the role of the capitalist and the worker in its progressive development.

### 3. Work and the Social Individual in Capitalist Society

For Hegel, the external capitalist state is the sphere in which the "particularity" of the individual "is educated up to subjectivity". Capitalism constitutes a "barrier" under which the social individual matures until he or she "overcomes it and attains" his or her

"objective reality in the finite". The universal interests of society are unknown to the individual in bourgeois society since he or she looks after only purely personal and selfish interests. As a result, even education itself is treated as "a mere means" to the satisfaction of needs, "the pleasures and comforts of private life". The education achieved by the individual attains only the level of the understanding or bourgeois mind; and freedom remains merely formal since civil society "is implicitly inimical to mind's appointed end, freedom". Nevertheless, education teaches the individual that in society "it has to do here only with what it has itself produced and stamped with its own seal". Education within capitalism is the hard struggle of work and self-realization; it is a class struggle, where the individual attains self-consciousness within the framework of his or her social role in the system of production. "The final purpose of education", remarks Hegel,

is liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still; education is the absolute transition from an ethical substantiality which is immediate and natural to one which is intellectual and so infinitely subjective and lofty enough to have attained universality of form. In the individual subject, this liberation is the hard struggle against pure subjectivity of demeanour, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of desire.

The result of education under capitalism, then, is the social individual, "the infinitely free subjectivity", an "individuality" which is "genuinely existent in its own eyes". (1976:125-126) In the Grundrisse, Marx repeats Hegel's observations on the educational movement of capital — the creation of the social individual. The result of bourgeois production, writes Marx,

is the tendentially and potentially general development of the forces of production — of wealth as such — as a basis ... The basis as the possibility of the universal development of the individual, and the real



development of the individuals from this basis as a constant suspension of its barrier, which is recognized as a barrier, not taken for a sacred limit. Not an ideal or imagined universality of the individual, but the universality of his real and ideal relations. Hence also the grasping of his own history as a process, and the recognition of nature ... as his real body. (1973:542)

For both Hegel and Marx, education in capitalist society is "practical education acquired through working". This education, says Hegel,

consists first in the automatically recurrent need for something to do and the habit of simply being busy; next, in the strict adaptation of one's activity according not only to the nature of the material worked on, but also, and especially, to the pleasure of other workers; and finally in a habit, produced by this discipline, of objective activity and universally recognized aptitudes. (1976:129)

Hegel emphasizes the "flexibility and rapidity of mind" developed by the worker in the labour process, the "ability to pass from one idea to another, to grasp general and complex relations, and so on". (1976:129) Marx also stresses this development; moreover, he is convinced that the flexibility and versatility of the worker is most highly developed in North America. "We can see this versatility, this perfect indifference towards the particular content of work and the free transition from one branch of industry to the next, most obviously in North America, where the development of wage labour has been relatively untrammelled by the vestiges of the guild system, etc." (1976:1034) Although Marx refers here only to the United States, much the same development has also occurred in Canada, as is evidenced in the close relations of the U.S. and Canadian labour movement.

For Marx, the versatility of the individual worker in North America stems precisely from the fact that money, rather than the nature of the

work itself, is the absolute goal of the worker. If the capitalist is driven by the desire for money, so is the worker; both share the same bourgeois values. The worker, writes Marx, is driven by "the compulsion to perform surplus labour"; this compulsion, in turn, "implies also the necessity of forming needs, and creating the means of satisfying them, and of supplying quantities of produce well in excess of the traditional requirements of the worker". (1976:1026) The drive for profit under capitalism, then, also implies vastly increased living standards among the workers. Capital is infinitely versatile, and shows complete indifference to the type of production it finances; this indifference "is extended by capital to the worker. He is required to be capable of the same flexibility or versatility in the way he applies his labour-power". (1976:1013) The worker in advanced capitalist society loses interest in the work itself; the influence of traditional craftsmanship vanishes. The worker is no longer a shoemaker or a baker; he or she is motivated only by money and the "leisure time" required to develop his or her universal interests "independently of material production ..." (1976:1026) "Just as capital", notes Marx,

... views with indifference the particular physical guise in which labour appears in the labour process, whether as a steam engine, dung heap or silk, so too the worker looks upon the particular content of his labour with equal indifference. His work belongs to capital, it is only the use-value of the commodity that he has sold, and he has only sold it to acquire money and, with money, the means of subsistence. A change in his mode of labour interests him only because every specific mode of labour requires a different development of his labour-power. (1976:1013)

The desire of the worker for self-improvement, and the ambition spurred on by the capitalist mode of production, forms a vital aspect of

his or her relationship to the new generation of workers. "The free worker", states Marx, "is in principle ready and willing to accept every possible variation of his labour-power and activity which promised higher rewards ..." (1976:1034) But should these higher rewards evade the worker's grasp he or she will encourage the rising generation to become educated and thereby increase its versatility and earning power in industry. If the worker's "indifference to the particular content of his work does not give him the power to vary his labour-power to order, he will express his indifference by inducing his replacements, the rising generation, to move from one branch of industry to the next, depending on the state of the market". The versatility of the worker is expressed in the ability of capital itself to invade new areas of production and conquer new territory for the capitalist system. "The more highly capitalist production is developed in a country, the greater the demand will be for versatility in labour-power, the more indifferent the worker will be towards the specific content of his work and the more fluid will be the movement of capital from one sphere to the next." (1976:1013-1014)

The traits Marx perceives in the worker are nowhere more developed than in North America; a fact which makes the traditional notion of socialism — with its ascetic and authoritarian tinge — much less appealing to the North American working class than to its European counterpart. "... The fundamental character of the community", Hegel observes, referring to the U.S.A., is "... the endeavour of the individual after acquisition, commercial profit, and gain; the predominance of private interests, devoting itself to that of the community only for its own advantage." (1956:85) But these traits are vital to the

development of the independent self-consciousness of the social individual and, therefore, to the development of a new social order.

As Hegel observes, "America is the land of the Future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World's History shall reveal itself ..." (1956:86) "... The free worker's work", states Marx, is "more intensive, more continuous, more flexible and skilled than that of the slave, quite apart from the fact that they fit him for a quite different historical role." (1976:1033; my emphasis)

Marx's observations on the relation of labour and capital in the United States, and its contrast with that relation in Europe and England, are worth quoting in full precisely because Marx here emphasizes the identity of the consciousness of the capitalist and the worker, an identity ignored by Western Marxist theory:

Nowhere does the fluidity of capital, the versatility of labour and the indifference of the worker to the content of his work appear more vividly than in the United States of ... America. In Europe, even in England, capitalist production is still affected and distorted by hangovers from feudalism. The fact that baking, shoemaking, etc. are only just being put on a capitalist basis in England is entirely due to the circumstance that English capital cherished feudal preconceptions of "respectability". It was "respectable" to sell Negroes into slavery, but it was not respectable to make sausages, boots or bread. Hence all the machinery which conquers the "unrespectable" branches of capitalism comes from America. By the same token, nowhere are people so indifferent to the type of work they do as in the United States, nowhere are people so aware that their labour always produces the same product, money, and nowhere do they pass through the most divergent kinds of work with the same nonchalance. (1976:1014)

The versatility of the U.S. worker is reflected today in the attitudes of college and university graduates. The unemployment rate for graduates in the United States is lower than in Western Europe precisely

because one-half of U.S. graduates have taken jobs in which they are underemployed relative to their education. They are, in other words, indifferent to the nature of their jobs and willing to work alongside men and women with a lower educational level. "... American students", write Cookson and Walker, "are much more flexible in their job ambitions than ... their counterparts in Europe." (1978:VII)

For Marx, North America is important, not because capitalism is there about to enter its "final death agony", but because a flourishing capitalist economy offers the best evidence for the inevitability and the future power of socialism. As Colletti suggests, "in any genuine Marxist perspective, the United States of America should be the maturest society in the world for a socialist transformation ..."

(1977:347) Marx argues that a socialist society is one "in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence indifference". Labour is nothing but the means to create wealth, and a society where wealth and gain are the paramount ambitions is also the most advanced society. There labour no longer dominates the individual, but rather the individual dominates labour; labour "has ceased to be organically linked with individuals in any specific form. Such a state of affairs", Marx continues, "is at its most developed in the most modern form of existence of bourgeois society — in the United States."

(1973:104)

Marx's and Hegel's emphasis on the educational aspects of modern capitalism, as well as their insistence that education is an historic product which takes generations to achieve, may yet influence modern Western Marxism to abandon its abstract adulation of "socialism" as it

appears either in the Soviet Union or China. "One could say that this indifference towards particular kinds of labour," notes Marx, as though anticipating the neo-Stalinist and Maoist tendencies in the modern left,

appears e.g. among the Russians as a spontaneous inclination. But there is a devil of a difference between barbarians who are fit by nature to be used for anything, and civilized people who apply themselves to everything. And then in practice the Russian indifference to the specific character of labour corresponds to being embedded by tradition within a very specific kind of labour, from which only external influence can jar them loose.  
(1973:105)

In the Grundrisse Marx suggests that "in France, owing to its peculiar social formation, many a thing is considered socialism that counts in England as political economy." (1973:885) With equal validity one could say that many a thing is considered socialism in the U.S.S.R. and China that counts as political economy in the United States and Canada. This observation is verified in that the U.S.S.R. at least has made catching up with the U.S.A. a national goal. (Mandel, 1977:514)

The indifference to specific types of labour shown by the modern worker prepares the way for the replacement of labour by machinery and automatic processes. The versatility of the worker means that the division of labour in industry can proceed without encountering resistance from the worker. "The road" to automatic processes, notes Marx,

is ... dissection ... through the division of labour, which gradually transforms the workers' operations into more and more mechanical ones, so that at a certain point a mechanism can step into their places ... Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather the human being comes to relate more as a watchman and regulator to the production process itself ... He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. (1973:704-705)

The introduction of automatic processes, in turn, undermines the basis of capitalist production since this production is based precisely on the exchange-values created by the worker. Where the worker no longer takes a direct role in production, and where the number of workers required to produce commodities is constantly diminished relative to the amount of production itself, then the capitalist no longer has an adequate market for his or her commodities. At the same time, the reliance of capitalist production on automatic processes shows the absolute dependence of the capitalist on what Marx calls, "the social intellect". Capital no longer appears as the achievement of single capitalists, but rather as the collective achievement of society, or the social individual, as embodied in the science and technology employed by the giant corporation. Accordingly, the responsibility for research and development in advanced capitalist societies is more and more becoming the prerogative of the state. "In the production of large-scale industry," states Marx,

... just as the conquest of the forces of nature by the social intellect is the precondition of the productive power of the means of labour as developed into the automatic process, on the one side, so, on the other, is the labour of the individual in its direct presence posited as suspended individual, i.e. as social, labour. Thus the ... basis of this mode of production falls away. (1973:709)

Marx's striking analysis of the development of automatic processes under capitalism, which shows precisely how the positive movement of capital in a booming bourgeois economy leads to the suspension or transcendence of the capitalist mode of production, is taken from a similar analysis in Hegel's Philosophy of Right. "The universal and objective element in work", writes Hegel,

... lies in the abstracting process which effects the subdivision of needs and means and thereby eo ipso subdivides production and brings about the division of labour. By this division, the work of the individual becomes less complex, and consequently his skill at his section of the job increases, like his output. At the same time, this abstraction of one man's skill and means of production from another's completes and makes necessary everywhere the dependence of men on one another and their reciprocal relation in the satisfaction of their needs. Further, the abstraction of one man's production from another's makes work more and more mechanical, until finally man is able to step aside and install machines in his place. (1976:129)

#### 4. Law and Justice in the External Capitalist State

According to Hegel, the development and education of the individual within the business class through work and industry creates a rational and self-dependent consciousness in the individual. This consciousness is shared by both the capitalist and the worker; thus the "bourgeois values" of law, liberty and individual freedom are no less the worker's than they are the capitalist's. "In the business class", notes Hegel,

... intelligence is the essential thing ... the individual is thrown back on himself, and this feeling of self-hood is most intimately connected with law and order. The sense of freedom and order has therefore arisen above all in the towns. (1976:270)

The notion of law and order strikes the abstract consciousness of Western Marxism as a mere shibboleth for the defence of the privileges of the capitalist class. Indeed, in bourgeois society, where inequality and disparities of wealth and power are the rule rather than the exception, the rule of law is bound to reflect these



disparities. Notes Hegel,

That the citizens are equal before the law contains a great truth, but which so expressed is a tautology: it only states that the legal status in general exists, that the laws rule. But, as regards the concrete, the citizens — besides their personality — are equal before the law only in these points when they are otherwise equal outside the law. Only that equality which (in whatever way it be) they, as it happens, otherwise have in property, age, physical strength, talent, skill, etc. ... only it can make them ... equal in the concrete ... The laws themselves, except in so far as they concern that narrow circle of personality, presuppose unequal conditions, and provide for the unequal legal duties and appurtenances resulting therefrom. (1969:266)

While "law and order" has certainly been employed as a means to combat the claims of the workers; it is also an essential element in the defence and development of these claims. The following passages from Marx's discussion of the English Factory Acts in Capital provide an example of the fundamental importance of law and legislation for the working class:

As soon as the working class, stunned at first by the noise and turmoil of the new system of production, had recovered its senses to some extent, it began to offer resistance, first of all in England, the native land of large-scale industry. For three decades, however, the concessions wrung from industry by the working class remained purely nominal. Parliament passed five Labour Laws between 1802 and 1833, but was shrewd enough not to vote a penny for their compulsory implementation, for the necessary official personnel, etc. They remained a dead letter .... The factory workers, especially since 1838, ... made the Ten Hours Bill their economic, as they ... made the Charter [which called for universal male suffrage and various electoral reforms, their political election cry. Some of the manufacturers, even, who had run their factories in conformity with the Act of 1833, overwhelmed Parliament with representations on the immoral "competition" of their "false brethren", who were able to break the law because of their greater impudence or their more fortunate local circumstances.

The victories eventually achieved by the working class were reflected in the details of work legislation enacted by Parliament. "... These highly detailed specifications", notes Marx,

which regulate, with military uniformity, the times, the limits and pauses of work by the stroke of the clock, were by no means a product of the fantasy of Members of Parliament. They developed gradually out of circumstances as natural laws of the modern mode of production. Their formulation, official recognition and proclamation by the state were the result of a long class struggle. (1976:390-395)

As Marx points out, bourgeois respectability, liberty, and law and order are vital aspects of the consciousness of the modern worker. The worker, no less than the capitalist, is anxious for law and liberty; he or she desires to have responsibility for the products of labour, and is keen to ensure that the commodities he or she produces are satisfactory to the consumer. "The free worker", says Marx,

is impelled by his wants. The consciousness (or better: the idea) of free self-determination, of liberty, makes a much better worker of the [free individual] than of the [slave], as does the related feeling (sense) of responsibility; since he, like any seller of wares, is responsible for the goods he delivers and for the quality which he must provide, he must strive to ensure that he is not driven from the field by other sellers of the same type as himself ... [and] must maintain his own position, since his existence and that of his family depends on his ability continuously to renew the sale of his labour-power to the capitalist. (1976:1031)

Hegel argues that the development of the United States in particular may be understood in terms of the shared values held by the worker and the capitalist for law, liberty and individual freedom. The United States was colonized by "industrious Europeans, who betook themselves to agriculture, tobacco and cotton planting, etc." The interests of these individuals "was given to labour, and the basis of their existence

as a united body lay in the necessities that bind man to man, the desire of repose, the establishment of civil rights, security and freedom, and a community arising from the aggregation of individuals as atomic constituents; so that the state was merely something external for the protection of property". (1956:84; my emphasis)

Hegel's views on the United States are shared by Marx and Engels. "Everything in America", exclaims Engels, "has to be new, everything has to be rational, everything has to be practical, consequently everything is different from the way it is with us." (Quoted in Kapp, 1976: 278) Marx is particularly fascinated with the national ethos of the United States — with what he calls, "Yankee universality". (1973: 888) The U.S.A., he writes, is

a country where bourgeois society did not develop on the foundation of the feudal system, but developed rather from itself; where this society appears not as the surviving result of a centuries-old movement, but rather as the starting point of a new movement, where the state, in contrast to all earlier national formations, was from the beginning subordinate to bourgeois society, to its production, and never could make the pretence of being an end-in-itself; where, finally, bourgeois society itself, linking up with the enormous natural terrain of a new one, has developed to unheard-of freedom of movement, has far outstripped all previous work in the conquest of the forces of nature, and where, finally, even the antitheses of bourgeois society itself appear only as vanishing moments. (1973:884)

The peculiar fascination exercised by law and civil liberties over the U.S. national consciousness results precisely from the ethic of law, liberty and freedom spawned by a bourgeois mode of production untrammelled by feudal remnants and given a vast virgin territory in which to spread its wings. But for Hegel, capitalist jurisprudence as expressed, for example, in the U.S.A., no less than bourgeois economy, is a product of the development of individual consciousness and

rationality. If bourgeois production paves the way for communist production relations, bourgeois law has within it the elements of a rational or communist jurisprudence. The administration of justice under capitalism is essentially a process of struggle and education; it is through knowledge about the law and its application that men and women attain consciousness of their individual rights and freedoms, as well as of their responsibilities. Without this necessary process of development, the transformation to a higher form of civilization is impossible. "It is as a result of the discipline of comprehending the right that the right first becomes capable of universality." (Hegel, 1976:271) Bourgeois law or right is far from perfect, and it is this imperfection which leads to the call for "systematization, i.e. elevation to the universal, which our time is pressing for without limit". (Hegel, 1976:271) But it is in that bourgeois society, par excellence, the United States, that — especially after the great civil rights movement and struggle of the 1960's — individual rights and freedoms have reached their highest attainment in the modern world; and this achievement is based on education about the rule of law:

It is part of education, of thinking as the consciousness of the single in the form of universality, that the ego comes to be apprehended as a universal person in which all are identical. A man counts as a man in virtue of his manhood alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc. This is an assertion which thinking ratifies and to be conscious of it is of infinite importance. (1976:134)

For Hegel, modern bourgeois society is based on the rule of law; and it was the law of the external state of civil society which first began to offer protection to the rights of the individual. "The state", he points out,

is universal in form, a form whose essential principle is thought. This explains why it was in the state that freedom and science had their origin. It was a church, on the other hand, which burnt Giordano Bruno, forced Galileo to recant on his knees his exposition of the Copernican view of the solar system, and so forth. (1976:172)

In its critique of the state, of course, Western Marxism has ever before its eyes the example provided by the fascist states of Italy, Germany and Spain. These, however, were not capitalist democracies but crude dictatorships which conformed hardly at all to the concept of the external capitalist state. Employing the fascist state as a means to criticize the notion of the bourgeois state is like comparing an abortion to a living person. "If", notes Hegel,

on considering the human organization in its concrete aspect, we assert that brain, heart, and so forth is essential to its organic life, some miserable abortion may be adduced, which has on the whole the human form, or parts of it — which has been conceived in a human body and has breathed after birth therefrom — in which nevertheless no brain and no heart is found. If such an instance is quoted against the general conception of a human being — the objector persisting in using the name, coupled with a superficial idea respecting it — it can be proved that a real concrete human being is a truly different object; that such a being must have a brain in its head, and a heart in its breast. (1956:65)

Modern communism might have been spared the disgusting spectacle afforded by the Moscow Trials in the 1930's and the execution or assassination of every surviving leader of the Russian Revolution (with the exception, of course, of Stalin), if it had not so blatantly thrown aside the "corrupt bourgeois law" of the external capitalist state.

The first requirement of law, notes Hegel, is that it be known by the ordinary citizen. "Law is concerned with freedom, the worthiest

and holiest thing in man, the thing man must know if it is to have obligatory force for him." (1976:273) Law must be rational, and the mark of rationality is clarity and simplicity of expression. "Thought is ... simply its manifestation; clearness is its nature and itself." (Hegel, 1892:89) Hegel criticizes the modern situation in which "knowledge of the law of the land is accessible only to those who have made it their professional study". (1976:138) For Hegel, the vulgar monopoly of the law exercised by the legal profession is one of the greatest shortcomings of the administration of justice in civil society. "The legal profession, possessed of a special knowledge of the law, often claims this knowledge as its monopoly and refuses to allow any layman to discuss the subject." (1976:272) The legal profession "makes itself an exclusive clique by the use of a terminology like a foreign tongue to those whose rights are at issue". Far from being a frivolous restriction of trade, the legal monopoly violates the most fundamental rights of the citizen:

the members of civil society ... are kept strangers to the law ... and they become the wards, or even in a sense, the bondsmen, of the legal profession. They may indeed have the right to appear in court in person and to "stand" there (in judicio stare), but their bodily presence is a trifle if their minds are not there also, if they are not to follow the proceedings with their own knowledge, and if the justice they receive remains in their eyes a doom pronounced ab extra. (1976:145)

With the development of civil society and the universal inter-connection of individuals, violation of the law comes to be seen as "a danger to society and therefore the magnitude of the wrongdoing is increased". Crime is no longer viewed as a violation of the person of a particular individual, but rather the abrogation of the rights of every person within society. By contrast, in ancient times, "the

citizens did not feel themselves injured by wrongs which members of the royal house did to one another." (1976:140) Yet it is just because of the inner strength and universality of the mature civil society that punishment for crime is far less extreme than in earlier social forms. "While", states Hegel,

it would be impossible for society to leave a crime unpunished, since that would be to posit it as a right, still since society is sure of itself, a crime must always be something idiosyncratic in comparison, something unstable and exceptional ... In this light, crime acquires a milder status, and for this reason its punishment too becomes milder. (1976:274)

The degree of punishment attached to a crime is a function of the development of the consciousness of the social individual: the higher the general education of all individuals, the lower the punishment. "... With the advance of education opinions about crime become less harsh, and to-day a criminal is not so severely punished as he was a hundred years ago. It is not exactly crimes or punishment which change but the relation between them." (1976:246) At the turn of the nineteenth century, when Hegel was writing, almost 200 crimes on the English statute books called for the death sentence.

Just as the use-value of commodities in civil society is expressed as exchange-value, or money, the punishment of crime also takes on an abstract, universal value. The identity between crime and punishment "is not an equality between the specific character of crime and that of its negation; on the contrary, the two injuries are equal only in respect of their implicit character, i.e. in respect of their 'value'". (Hegel, 1976:72) Thus prison sentences replace corporal punishment in bourgeois society, and the more barbarous forms of punishment, like flogging, amputation, torture and so forth, disappear (or are carried

on surreptitiously against political suspects as by the British in Northern Ireland, and by the West Germans). Eventually, as in most Western countries, even capital punishment disappears or becomes "rarer, as in fact should be the case with this most extreme punishment".

(Hegel, 1976:247)

##### 5. Poverty, Imperialism and the External Capitalist State

If bourgeois society creates an abundance of consumer goods, raises living standards, fosters the interests of law, liberty and (capitalist) private property, it also — and no less inexorably — produces an ever-increasing mass of the dispossessed and the unorganized. "In this same process", writes Hegel, in an already cited passage,

... dependence and want increase ad infinitum, and the material to meet these needs is permanently barred to the needy man because it consists of external objects with the special character of being property, the embodiment of the free will of others, and hence from his point of view its recalcitrance is absolute. (1976:128)

The liberation achieved in consumer society, as Hegel observes, is "abstract since the particularity of the ends remains [its] basic content". (1976:128) Private property is "the reality of the free will of a person, and for that reason [it is] ... for any other person inviolable"; it is the means whereby "mind attains to being-for-self, the objectivity of mind receives [through private property] its due". Nevertheless, "the full realization of ... freedom ... in property is still incomplete, still [only] formal ..." (1969:21-22) If, as in



the U.S.A., individuals are motivated only by their own self-interest; and if this self-interest is realized only in property, in external objects, then those who have no access to property are ignored, repressed and humiliated. "If you're so smart, why aren't you rich?" becomes the national slogan. The abstraction of value is concretely registered in money and theoretically achieved in the notion of God, a strange unity expressed on every greenback: "In God we trust." The externality of property, the vanity of self-interest, and the pettiness of personality makes the U.S.A., among the most religious countries in the world.

Since the bourgeois concept of the state is the "state external" (Hegel, 1969:257) — an institution devoted merely to the protection of property — the universal interests of society are ignored in favour of the particularity of the individual. As a result, in a society of abundance, like the U.S.A. the essential social services of the state are relatively starved and neglected. This contradiction, which as Mandel suggests is "now admitted even by liberals" (1978:587) was foreseen long ago by Hegel. It is the result precisely of a society which produces a great mass of poor on the one hand, and a nation of bourgeois individuals (capitalists and workers) on the other. The bourgeois individual, notes Hegel,

knows himself as a property owner, not only because he possesses it, but also because it is his right — so he assumes; he knows himself to be recognized by his particularity. Unlike the peasant, he does not enjoy his glass of beer or wine in a rough fashion, as a way of elevating himself out of his dullness ... but because [he wants] to show by his suit and the finery of his wife and children that he is as good as the other man and that he has really made it. In this he enjoys himself, his value and his righteousness; for this did he toil and this has he achieved.

He enjoys not the pleasures of enjoyment but the joy of his self-esteem. (Quoted in Avineri, 1972:109)

Avineri declares that "Hegel's paradigm of the burgher spirit cannot, of course, relate to the worker." (1972:109) But as I have argued, for both Hegel and Marx, this spirit does apply to the free worker, and it is a crucial mistake in any political analysis to overlook this fact.

The absolute tendency of bourgeois society is to create abundance, but it is an abundance shared unequally, which eventually breaks down into luxury and cynicism at one pole and poverty at the other. "When social conditions", notes Hegel, "tend to multiply and subdivide needs, means, and enjoyments indefinitely — a process which, like natural and refined needs, has no qualitative limits — this is luxury." (1976: 128) Yet even the external capitalist state must guarantee to each of its members, not only the safety of person and property, but also the right to work and a decent living. (Hegel, 1976:146) Accordingly, civil society begins to turn its attention, however reluctantly, to the most glaring problem within capitalism, that of poverty. Every individual in bourgeois society is independent, declares Hegel, "but he also plays his part in the system of civil society, and while every man has the right to demand subsistence from it, it must at the same time protect him from himself. It is not simply starvation which is at issue; the further end in view is to prevent the formation of a pauperized rabble." (1976:277) But civil society is hamstrung in its approach to poverty, first because capital itself produces and reproduces poverty among those without "skill, health, capital, and so forth", and second, because it is exposed to "the danger of upheavals

arising from clashing interests and to" the tension caused by the "working of a necessity of which" the members of civil society "themselves know nothing". (Hegel, 1976:148)

The necessity Hegel refers to is the problem of over-production which arises within a system which profits from the use-value of human labour-power, but which fails to provide the worker with the exchange-value required to purchase all the products of his or her labour. "... The evil", states Hegel, "consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves also producers ..." (1976:150) This contradiction constantly produces a mass of surplus workers unable to find work or to provide for the means of subsistence. "Only", writes Marx, "in the mode of production based on capital does pauperism appear as the result of labour itself, of the development of the productive powers of labour." The free worker is "a virtual pauper" since "the concept of the free labourer" (1973:604) means that the worker relates to the means of production only accidentally, only through the mediation of the capitalist, of what Hegel calls, "the overlord to nothing". (1976:51) In periods of crisis, therefore, this relation is expressed as unemployment.

Capital by its nature, says Marx, "... posits a barrier to labour and value creation, in contradiction to its tendency to expand them boundlessly. And in as much as it posits a barrier specific to itself, and on the other side equally drives over and beyond every barrier, it is the living contradiction". (1973:421) The result of over-production — the barrier to capital — is the "destruction of capital" (Marx, 1973:446), the wastage on a grand scale of raw materials,

commodities, and human labour-power which continues until capital is once again ready to resume a new period of economic growth, accumulation and increased employment. In periods of economic crisis, observes Hegel, "it ... becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble." (1976:150) Hegel's observation is repeated by Marx in the Communist Manifesto: "In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself back into a state of momentary barbarism ... and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce." (1969, I:114)

Although, as I have argued in Chapter 6, the Communist Manifesto is everywhere influenced by Hegel's discussion of civil society in the Philosophy of Right, Marx did not penetrate the secret of the distinction between use-value and exchange-value until ten years later, when, guided by Hegel's writings, he plunged into the study of classical political economy. "By the way," Marx writes in a letter to Engels in January, 1858, "things are developing nicely. For instance I have thrown overboard the whole doctrine of profit as it existed up to now. In the method of treatment the fact that by mere accident I glanced through Hegel's Logic has been of great service to me." (1965:100) In 1857-58 Marx was labouring on the Grundrisse, a work which shows traces not only of the Logic, but of all three volumes of the Encyclopaedia as well as the Philosophy of Right.

In the Grundrisse, Marx shows that classical political economy

could not grasp the significance of economic crises and over-production precisely because it did not distinguish between use-value and exchange-value. The bourgeois economists had adopted "the standpoint of simple exchange" between capitalist and worker (1973:424), a standpoint Hegel associates with the empty understanding which confuses ownership through use with the abstract ownership of capital. Since simple exchange involves no contradiction, classical economics imagined that over-production is impossible. "The nonsense about the impossibility of over-production", writes Marx,

has been expressed ... by James Mill, in the formula that supply=its own demand, that supply and demand therefore balance, which means in other words the same thing as that value is determined by labour time, and hence that exchange adds nothing to it, and which forgets only that exchange does have to take place and that this depends in the final instance on the use value ... Too much and too little concerns not the exchange value, but the use value. More of the supplied product exists than is "needed"; this is what it boils down to. Hence that overproduction comes from use value and therefore from exchange itself. (1973:423-424)

Hegel's analysis of over-production in bourgeois society is regarded by many commentators as the happy accident of a philosophical genius, who could not really be bothered with the mundane details of economics. Because most writers on Hegel are unaware that the Logic itself deals, as I have shown in earlier chapters, with the labour process and bourgeois production, they tend to underrate the importance of economics in Hegel's system as a whole. In fact, however, the labour process is a component of ideality, itself the key concept in Hegel's thought. "The mechanics of" Hegel's theory of economic crisis, declares Plant, "are rather obscure ..." (1977:112) "... Hegel", notes Flamenatz demurely, "was not an economist ... He makes these

suggestions" about poverty and economic crises "merely in passing, and without attributing much importance to them. Were they suggested to him by what he himself observed, or did he pick them up from someone else? I do not know. They are crumbs from his table which become loaves in the social theory of Marx." (1976:247, 249-250) Far from being a dilettante in economics, as Plamenatz seems to believe he was, Hegel accomplished the "unique synthesis of Ricardo and Simondi" (Rosdolsky, 1977:459; my emphasis), which Rosdolsky and virtually every scholar on the subject attribute exclusively to Marx. "The social theory of Marx" is nothing but an encounter with Hegel. "... How ubiquitous Hegel is in Marx's work right up to the end ...", exclaims Praver. (1976:310)

For Hegel, the contradiction between exchange-value and use-value lies at the very heart of capitalist production. Consequently, civil society is incapable of overcoming poverty and crises of over-production, even with the aid of the external bourgeois state. Hegel observes that any attempt to assist the poor, or to provide them with employment simply intensifies the contradiction between use-value and exchange-value under capitalism. Besides violating "the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect of its individual members", assistance to the poor would also simply re-create poverty, because this assistance would stimulate the economy and lead eventually to further crises of over-production. Direct job-creation by the state (a remedy favoured by the U.S. and especially the Canadian governments today) would also be of no use for the same reasons. The poor, says Hegel, "might be given assistance indirectly through being given work, i.e. the opportunity to work. In

this event the volume of production would be increased, but the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves also producers ..."

(1976:150) However inadequate, however, these measures are at least more humane than the solutions offered by the governments of Hegel's time:

In Britain, particularly in Scotland, the most direct measure against poverty and especially against the loss of shame and self-respect — the subjective basis of society — as well as against laziness and extravagance, etc., the begetters of the rabble, has turned out to be to leave the poor to their fate and instruct them to beg in the streets. (1976:150)

Even the briefest acquaintance with modern social conditions in Scotland, and all the more in Glasgow, would convince an observer that things have not changed very much in 150 years.

The economic problems grappled with by Hegel and later by Marx, were to be ignored by conventional economics until a century after Hegel's death. It required "the Keynesian Revolution", the establishment of the welfare state, and so on, before bourgeois society began to take seriously the problem of poverty and the lack of "effective demand". This concern, reflected for example in the ill-fated U.S. "war on poverty", is anticipated by Hegel. "Poverty", he points out, leaves individuals

more or less deprived of all the advantages of society, of the opportunity of acquiring skill or education of any kind, as well as the administration of justice, the public health services, and even the consolations of religion, and so forth. The public authority takes the place of the family where the poor are concerned in respect not only of their immediate wants but also of laziness of disposition, malignity, and the other vices which arise out of their plight and sense of wrong. (1976:149)

A healthy and flourishing capitalist economy not only creates poverty, it also dehumanizes and alienates the worker within the process of production. "One side of the picture", Hegel suggests, is the ever-expanding production of needs, commodities and profit. "The other side is the subdivision and restriction of jobs. This results in the dependence and distress of the class tied to work of that sort, and these again entail inability to feel and enjoy the broader freedoms and especially the intellectual benefits of civil society." (1976:150) If the division of labour under capitalism creates a free and versatile worker, capable of many tasks, and infinitely adaptable to all forms of labour, it also produces and reproduces a fractured, maimed, dehumanized and alienated section of the working class. "Factory work", states Marx, "exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost; at the same time it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity." The worker is turned into a slave of the machine "which dominates and soaks up living labour-power ... The special skill of each individual machine operator, who has now been deprived of all significance, vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity" before "the machinery, which ... constitutes the power of the 'master'". (1976:548-549) The labour conditions described by Marx have been brought to a fever pitch in modern times by the application of scientific management and Taylorism in both the advanced capitalist countries and the socialist economies. (Braverman, 1974) And the impact of mass production on the worker remains the same as it was over 100 years ago:

Every sense organ is injured by the artificially high temperatures, by the dust-laden atmosphere, by the deafening noise, not to mention the danger to



life and limb among machines which are so closely crowded together, a danger which, with the regularity of the seasons, produces its list of those killed and wounded in the industrial battle. (Marx, 1976:552)

The "increasing mechanization of labour" (Hegel, 1976:153) under capitalism swells the profits of the owners on one hand, and creates a mass of structural unemployed on the other. (Hegel, 1976:153; Marx, 1976:567-568) These workers join what Marx calls, "the sphere of pauperism ... the hospital of the active labour-army and the dead weight of the industrial reserve army" of the unemployed. (1976:797) Both Marx and Hegel stress that these degraded poor are in no way a revolutionary force; deprived of their livelihood and self-respect, they are more likely to turn to crime, gambling, and reactionary politics than they are to embrace progressive ideas and movements. (Marx, 1969, I:118) "Poverty in itself does not make men into a rabble," Hegel explains,

a rabble is created only when there is joined to poverty a disposition of mind, an inner indignation against the rich, against society, against the government, etc. A further consequence of this attitude is that through their dependence on chance men become frivolous and idle, like the Neapolitan lazzaroni for example. In this way there is born in the rabble the evil of lacking self-respect enough to secure subsistence by its own labour and yet at the same time of claiming to receive subsistence as a right. (1976:277)

Poverty is not the result of the evils of human nature or the inherent laziness of the poor, etc. "Once society is established," Hegel declares, "poverty immediately takes the form of a wrong done to one class by another." (1976:277-278) Poverty is a form of class war.

Hegel's incisive analysis of what he calls, "the inner dialectic of civil society" leads him to formulate the theory of imperialism,

which plays little or no role in Marx's work, and which was not fully developed until the turn of the twentieth century. According to Hegel, the twin pressures of over-production and poverty "drives ... civil society ... to push beyond its limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it has over-produced, or else generally backward in industry, etc." (1976:151) After Hegel, J. A. Hobson and Lenin were the first to observe the connection between systematic colonization and the over-production endemic to a highly monopolized capitalist economy. Imperialism for them, as for Hegel, means more than the mere export of manufactured goods; it means securing captive markets for the production of advanced capitalist economies, the monopolization of raw materials vital to industry, and also an assured field for the investment of surplus capital. "Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition held undivided sway," notes Lenin, "was the export of goods. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of capital." (1970, I:715)

When Marx wrote his major economic works, imperialism and colonization were generally considered to be antithetical to the development of capitalism. "'The colonies'", Disraeli declared in 1852, "'are millstones round our necks.'" (Quoted in Lenin, 1970: 728) Hegel, however, witnessed the first aggressively expansionist development of capitalism, which occurred before the "flourishing period of free competition in Great Britain, i.e. between 1840 and 1860". (Lenin, I:728) Hegel distinguishes "systematic colonization" from the "sporadic" form of colonization which is "particularly characteristic of Germany. The emigrants withdraw to Russia or

America and remain there with no home ties, and so prove useless to their native lands. The second and entirely different type of colonization", he continues, "is the systematic; the state undertakes it, is aware of the proper method of carrying it out and regulates it accordingly." (1976:278) Under systematic colonization, surplus people, goods and capital are pressed by the State on the colonies opened up by trade and merchant adventure, and made accessible by the sea links which created "commercial connexions between different countries":

This far-flung connecting link affords the means for colonizing activity — sporadic or systematic — to which the mature civil society is driven and by which it supplies to a part of its population a return to life on the family basis in a new land and so also supplies itself with a new demand and field for its industry. (1976:151; my emphasis)

According to Lenin, imperialism is the "highest stage of capitalism", it is "capitalism in transition, or, more precisely ... moribund capitalism ... parasitic and decaying capitalism", etc. (1970, I:766, 764-765) But Hegel does not consider that completion of the phase of active colonization will exhaust the capacity of bourgeois society. "Colonial independence", he suggests, "proves to be of the greatest advantage to the mother country, just as the emancipation of the slaves turns out to the greatest advantage of the owners." (1976:278) Of course, now that colonialism has faded from the world scene, Western Marxism is busily at work showing how, indubitably, the disappearance of "neo-colonialism" will signal the death of capitalism, etc. But modern capitalism will also survive the demise of neo-colonialism; the rise of independent oil cartels among the Arab states, for example, have tripped up advanced capitalism but

they will not subdue it.

The development of trade and imperialism in civil society, Hegel argues, is connected with the strengthening of the external state and the emergence of the corporation. For Hegel, the capitalist state is compelled to take an increasingly large role in civil society, "and its control takes the form of an external system and organization for the protection and security of particular ends en masse, inasmuch as these interests subsist only in this universal." (1976:152) The contradictions of bourgeois society which produce poverty and the "conditions which greatly facilitate the concentration of disproportionate wealth in a few hands", (1976:150) as well as economic crises and over-production, force the external state to intervene in the economic realm. The interests of private choice and self-seeking militate against state intervention, but "the more blindly [civil society] sinks into self-seeking aims, the more it requires such control to bring it back into the universal". The state's presence is required to soften class conflicts and to shorten the period of extreme economic contraction and depression. (1976:147-148) Moreover, the activity of international business itself elicits further economic involvement by a state already expanded and developed through the administration of colonial affairs:

... Public care and direction are most of all necessary in the case of the larger branches of industry, because these are dependent on conditions abroad and on combinations of distant circumstances which cannot be grasped as a whole by the individuals tied to these industries for a living.  
(1976:147)

Neither Marx nor Hegel anticipate the massive war economy which has developed within contemporary capitalist and socialist states, and

which plays a dominant part in government economic intervention in the West. Nor did they foresee the giant cataclysms which shook bourgeois society in 1914-18 and 1939-45. But even so, they would be unlikely to accept the Western Marxist notion that the emergence of the powerful state is simply another sign of capitalism's "death agony":

"The greater the intervention of the State in the capitalist economic system," Mandel writes, "the clearer does it become that this system is afflicted with an incurable malady." The strengthening of the external capitalist state is certainly an aspect of the transition of bourgeois society to communism, but it is not a development foreign to the inner dialectic of the capitalist system. Further, the power of the state does not simply reflect, as Mandel claims, "capitalism's increasing lack of confidence in its ability to extend or consolidate its rule by automatic economic processes". (1978:486) Clearly, this is an element in the growth of the state, but a much more vital aspect of this growth is the desire felt by individuals from all classes to control and dominate the workings of a system which seems alien to and independent of the consciousness of its members.

For Marx, the intervention of the state in the economy, the development of economic statistics, and so on, are "efforts ... made to overcome ... alienation ..." They reflect at once the fact that capitalist production is "an objective relation which is independent of" individuals, and also the movement toward socialist relations of production. "Although on the given standpoint, alienation is not overcome by these means, nevertheless relations and connections are introduced thereby which include the possibility of suspending the old standpoint." (1973:161) It is this view of the function of the state which prompts Marx to write in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon

that,

... In countries with a developed formation of classes, with modern conditions of production and with an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas have been dissolved by the work of centuries, the republic signifies in general only the political form of revolution of bourgeois society ... (1969, I:405)

Marx never adopts the abstract notion of the state held by most Western Marxists. Thus if he continually emphasizes the importance of legislation for the condition of the working class, he also details the work of the factory inspectors, the "guardians" of the Factory Act (1976:349) who continued their "legal proceedings against the 'pro-slavery rebellion'" of the owners, even after the Home Secretary suspended the Act. (1976:401) Marx's account of the character of the factory inspectors is reminiscent of Hegel's description of the civil servant as "dispassionate, upright and polite" in the Philosophy of Right (1976:193) In the view of both Hegel and Marx, the civil service is not simply the tool of the ruling class, but rather it is an active "counterpoise" (Marx, 1976:91) to the despotism of capitalism. "We should be appalled at our own circumstances", notes Marx referring to the Germans and other Western Europeans,

if, as in England, our governments and parliaments periodically appointed commissions of inquiry into economic conditions; if these commissions were armed with the same plenary powers to get at the truth; if it were possible to find for this purpose men as competent, as free from partisanship and respect of persons as are England's factory inspectors, her medical reporters on health, her commissions of inquiry into the exploitation of women and children, into conditions of housing and nourishment, and so on. (1976:91)

For Marx as for Hegel, the state is essentially the instrument for the self-education of the social individual; the development of the

state is parallel with the development of the political consciousness of the individual worker. Accordingly, the organization of the state itself will determine the conditions leading to the overthrow of the domination of capital. "In England", declares Marx in the "Preface to the First Edition" of Capital,

the process of transformation is palpably evident. When it has reached a certain point, it must react on the Continent. There it will take a form more brutal or humane, according to the degree of the development of the working class itself. Apart from any higher motives, then, the most basic interests of the present ruling classes dictate to them that they clear away all the legally removable obstacles to the development of the working class. For this reason, among others, I have devoted a great deal of space in this volume to the history, the details, and the results of the English Factory legislation. (1976:92)

If the state is essentially an aspect of the development of the consciousness of the social individual, and a means to counteract the alienation imposed by an economic system which seems independent of his or her will, the same argument applies to the emergence of the multi-national corporation. For both Hegel and Marx, the development of the corporation is as significant for the construction of the rational or communist state as was "the introduction of agriculture and private property in another sphere". (Hegel, 1976:153) As Marx suggests, the corporation "is the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself ... and hence a self-dissolving contradiction, which prima facie represents a mere phase of transition to a new form of production". (1967, III: 437-438) In the corporation, management is divorced from the function of the capitalist who now appears "redundant" in relation to the process of production: "the mere manager who has no title whatever to

the capital, whether through borrowing it or otherwise, performs all the real functions pertaining to the functioning capitalist as such, only the functionary remains and the capitalist disappears as superfluous in the production process." (1967, III:387-388) Accordingly, even under the capitalist mode of production the relations of work are "made rational instead of natural. That is to say, it becomes freed from personal opinion and contingency, saved from endangering either the individual worker or others, recognized, guaranteed, and at the same time elevated to conscious effort for a common end". (Hegel, 1976:154)

With the development of the bourgeois mode of production, the domination of the worker by the arbitrary will of a single capitalist gives way to a system in which the worker has increasing authority and control over the conditions of work. Under capitalism, writes Marx,

it remains true, of course, that the relations of production themselves create a ... relation of supremacy and subordination (and this also has political expression). But the more capitalist production sticks fast in this formal relationship, the less the relationship will evolve, since for the most part it is based on small capitalists who differ only slightly from the workers in their education and their activities. (1976:1027)

The various schemes put forward by modern-day corporations, in cooperation with the labour unions, to reduce the alienation of the individual worker, such as flexible hours, job-enrichment, involvement in management, and so on, are necessary products of the development of capitalism itself. However inadequate and illusory they may be, they spring from the fact that the form of the relation of supremacy and subordination under advanced capitalism "becomes freer, because it is objective in nature, voluntary in appearance, purely economic".



(Marx, 1976:1028)

The corporation, Hegel argues, becomes a "second family" in bourgeois society, replacing the family as the foundation of the modern state. (1976:153, 154) It provides the means of technical education for the worker, attempts to protect the individual against the contingencies of the labour market, etc. The individual within the corporation derives a sense of personal worth, and a sense of stability — "evidence that he is a somebody. It is also recognized", Hegel continues, "that he belongs to a whole which is itself an organ of the entire society, and that he is actively concerned in promoting the comparatively disinterested end of this whole. Thus he commands the respect due to one in his social position." Within the corporation, the individual worker no longer has the aspect of "a day labourer or ... a man who is prepared to undertake casual employment on a single occasion." The individual finds a place "for the whole range, the universality, of his personal livelihood". (1976:153) Hegel, of course, is not referring to the actual reality of the corporation, but to its historical tendencies, tendencies reflected, however inadequately, in the modern corporation with its job protection schemes, retirement and health plans and so forth. These aspects, along with the universal scope of the modern corporation, distinguish it dramatically from the narrow character of the early capitalist firm which denied absolutely the rights of the worker and offered little in return.

For Avineri, as for most commentators, Hegel is different from Marx "since no radical call of action follows his harsh analysis of civil society". (1972:107) Hegel, says Avineri, advocates only "external

control" of economic activity in civil society and does not urge intervention of the state into civil society as does Marx. If Hegel had done so, his "distinction between civil society and the state would disappear, and the whole system of mediation and dialectical progress towards integration through differentiation would collapse". (Avineri, 1972:151) No less than Marx, however, Hegel is convinced that the modern corporation is the means through which capitalist society will pass into the rational state where common ownership of the means of production by the associated producers will prevail. It is through the external state and the corporation, declares Hegel, that "the sphere of civil society passes over into the state". The bourgeois state, in relation to the corporation, is just "an external organization involving a separation and merely relative identity of controller and controlled". But both these institutions "find their truth in the absolutely universal end and its absolute actuality", i.e., in the rational or communist state. (1976:154)

In the rational state, Hegel remarks, "the universal, which in the first instance is the right only" of private property, "has to be extended over the whole field of particularity", i.e., over the whole of civil society. The corporation in the rational state "changes into a known and thoughtful mode of life". (1976:275) Nevertheless, "Corporations must fall under the higher surveillance of the state, because otherwise they would ossify, build themselves in, and decline into a miserable system of castes." (1976:278) Both the external capitalist state and the modern corporation turn out to be the means whereby the individual in civil society is educated through class struggle to independent self-consciousness, to a "form of thought

whereby mind is objective and actual to itself as an organic totality in laws and institutions which are its will in terms of thought".

(1976:155) This is the same transformation theorized by Marx:

In stock companies the function is divorced from capital ownership, hence also labour is entirely divorced from ownership of the means of production and surplus-labour. This result of the ultimate development of capitalist production is a necessary transitional phase towards the reconversion of capital into the property of the producers, although no longer as the private property of the individual producers, but rather as the property of the associated producers, as outright social property. On the other hand, the stock company is a transition towards the conversion of all functions in the reproduction process which still remain linked with capitalist property, into mere functions of associated producers, into social functions.  
(1967, III:437)

As Hegel suggests in an already quoted passage, "the transition from [capitalism] to common ownership is very easy ..." (1976:51)

## CHAPTER 9

## DIALECTIC AND THE RATIONAL STATE

1. The Dialectic Method

If the Trinity is the principal mystery of Christianity, the dialectic is the chief mystery of modern Western Marxism. (Hook, 1976:60) Much of the confusion which surrounds the dialectic is due to Marx's observation that the dialectic as it appears in Hegel's writings "is standing on its head". (1976:103) Marx's depiction of the contrast between his and Hegel's use of the dialectic is worth quoting in full:

My dialectic method is, in its foundations, not only different from the Hegelian, but exactly opposite to it. For Hegel, the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent subject, under the name of "the Idea", is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the idea. With me, the reverse is true: the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought. (1976:102)

One of the conclusions of this study is that Marx is fundamentally wrong about the Hegelian philosophy. Marx accepts uncritically Feuerbach's critique of Hegel, and does not revise his own early and mistaken opinion about Hegel's idealism. Both Feuerbach and Marx fail to comprehend Hegel's distinction between the three levels of consciousness or ideology, where consciousness is considered as "the relation of thought to its object". (Hegel, 1954:184) Yet this distinction, as Hegel himself observes, is "of capital importance for understanding the nature and kinds of knowledge". (1975:29)

Feuerbach remains confined to the first level of objectivity — the crude materialist celebration of sense perception, which takes the

categories of thought to be merely a reflection of the external world. The second level is represented by Kant's philosophy which holds that sense perception is guided and informed by the a priori categories of mind. Marx accepts Hegel's thesis that the mind, understood as conscious human practice, is active rather than passive in relation to the outside world. But while he makes use of Hegel's notion of this third level of objectivity, he does not recognize its application by Hegel to epistemology and the study of nature and society. Hence, he views Hegel's "Idea" as simply a form of thought, instead of what it really is — an expression both of the concrete reality of society and the modes of thought which create and correspond to that reality.

The basic principle of Hegel's thought, and of the dialectic method, as well, is the unity between the subject and object of knowledge as achieved through ideality or revolutionizing practice.

Conscious human practice or ideality, says Hegel, "cancels the antithesis between the objective which would be and stay an objective only, and the subjective which in like manner would be and stay a subjective only". (1975:269) The nature of human ideality, notes Hegel, has been presented in his philosophy "often enough. Yet it could not be too often repeated, if the intention were really to put an end to the stale and purely malicious misconception of this identity" of subject and object as obtained through practice. (1975:258)

In the "Introduction" to the Grundrisse, where Marx works out the elements of dialectic method, he observes that "the economic categories ... express the forms of being, the characteristics of existence, and often only the individual sides of this specific society, this subject." (1973:106) But if the categories express the

relations of a society, this is only because they also create them — through the mediation of concrete human practice. Ideas and knowledge — ideology — therefore, do not merely reflect, but are inseparable from, the objects and manifestations of human thinking activity, or ideality. This dialectical relationship is applied by Marx to the notion of capital itself. "The development of fixed capital", he writes,

indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a direct force of production, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it. To what degree the powers of social production have been produced, not only in the form of knowledge, but also as immediate organs of social practice, of the real life process. (1973:706)

Ernest Mandel argues that the "economic categories" studied by Marx "are just forms of material existence, of material reality as perceived and simplified by the human mind". (1976:22) Mandel, however, refers only to the "subjective" side of the categories and forgets their "objective" side; he, along with most Marxist and bourgeois writers, ignores the unity of objective and subjective achieved through human practice, which is the most important aspect of the dialectic method. The economic category of labour, for example, which abstracts from the content of any particular type of work "is not merely", states Marx, "the mental product of a concrete totality of labours". Rather, it refers to "the indifference to specific labours" characteristic of "a form of society in which individuals can transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of choice for them, hence of indifference". The United States — "the most modern form of existence of bourgeois society" — is thus

also the society where "for the first time, the point of departure of modern economics, namely the abstraction of the category 'labour', 'labour as such', labour pure and simple, becomes true in practice."  
(1973:104-105)

The dialectic method as employed by both Hegel and Marx does not, of course, deny the objective reality of the external world. "The sun, the moon, rivers, and the natural objects of all kinds by which we are surrounded," states Hegel,

are. For consciousness they have the authority not only of mere being but also of possessing a particular nature which it accepts and to which it adjusts itself in dealing with them, using them, or in being otherwise concerned with them.  
(1976:106)

Nevertheless, the categories of science, through which men and women interpret, explain and utilize the objects of external nature and discover their laws, are the products of human ideality and determine the relation of individuals to nature. Scientific categories are devoted not to the external manifestation of natural phenomena, but to their inner connection which can be grasped only through the power of thought. If the categories merely reflected natural objects, asks Marx, "what need would there be of science?" (1965:191) The dialectic method employed by Hegel's philosophy of nature differs from natural science merely in that this method "brings before our mind the adequate forms of the notion in the physical world". (Hegel, 1975:40)

While the categories of thought express and create through revolutionizing practice the social world of individuals, this is not because men and women consciously employ these pure categories in their everyday activities. The forms of thought studied by dialectic method are ideal determinations raised by science out of their merely

implicit existence and manifestation in society. The pure economic category of labour, for example, does not determine the conscious practice of men and women in advanced capitalist society. It simply expresses what people do, not what they think. Before the categories of method in their pure form can be studied, they must exist in implicit or unconscious form in society. "... The stage of philosophical knowledge", Hegel observes, "is the richest in material and organization, and therefore, as it came before us in the shape of a result, it presupposed the existence of the concrete formations of consciousness, such as individual and social morality, art and religion." (1975:46) The development of the categories of method — the "objective thoughts" of society, or what Marx calls, "the power of knowledge objectified" (1973:706) — "must so to speak, go on behind consciousness, since those facts are the essential nucleus which is raised into consciousness". (Hegel, 1975:46) The men and women who emigrated to a new land in North America brought with them the bourgeois notion of making money, no matter how; they threw aside feudal conceptions of the identity of a person with his or her craft or trade, and plunged into a social world where labour is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. The theoretical expression of their practice is the simple economic category, labour.

In his essay, "Lenin before Hegel", Louis Althusser draws attention to Lenin's aphorism that "it is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital ... without having thoroughly understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!" (Althusser, 1971:108) But Althusser perceptively reverses this aphorism: "A century and a half later no



one has understood Hegel because it is impossible to understand Hegel without having thoroughly read and understood 'Capital'!" (1971:109)

This leads to the second major conclusion of this study: Marx's mature work cannot be understood other than as a dialogue with Hegel. By contrast, Marx's early writings constitute a humanist critique of society (and Hegelian philosophy) based on the crude materialism of Feuerbach. In his later writings, Marx develops and concretizes many of Hegel's observations on bourgeois society, and utilizes his knowledge of Hegel's dialectic in the formulation of historical materialism.

Marx's insights into Hegel make it possible to comprehend those aspects of Hegel which Marx himself overlooks and misinterprets. These aspects include, as I have shown, Hegel's notion of ideality, which is identical with and much more developed than Marx's concept of revolutionizing practice, as well as Hegel's critique and analysis of religion, natural science and bourgeois thought. Further, since Hegel had already worked out the essential distinction between use-value and exchange-value, this enables him to develop a profound critique of bourgeois private property, capitalist economic crises and imperialism, which anticipates and, in some cases, goes beyond Marx. Also, Hegel develops a theory of the state, social class, and the modern corporation which remains only implicit in Marx's writings, and which, as I will demonstrate below, provides the theoretical outlines of the new form of civilization which both thinkers see emerging from the capitalist mode of production.

In his essay "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", Lenin argues that "the genius of Marx consists precisely in

his having furnished answers to questions already presented by the foremost minds of mankind." Marx, therefore, is "the legitimate successor to the best that man has produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism". (1970, I:66) Lenin's view is widely accepted, but it is mistaken. Before Marx, Hegel had already fused German idealism with British political economy and the ideals of the French Revolution. Hegel's influence was therefore crucial in Marx's decision to study and criticize the classics of political economy (Marx, 1970:20) and the conclusions Marx drew from this study are identical with those of Hegel.

Marx himself is well aware of his enormous debt to Hegel: "You will understand my dear fellow," he writes to Engels in 1866, "that in a work like mine", i.e., Capital, "there must be many shortcomings of detail. But the composition of the whole, the way it all hangs together, is a triumph of German scholarship to which an individual German may confess since the merit belongs not to him but to the whole nation." (Quoted in Praver, 1976:369) Before Marx, of course, no one had contributed more to "German scholarship" than Hegel. In any case, Marx's letter to Engels repeats an observation Hegel makes about his own work: "I could not of course imagine that the method ... I have followed ... is not capable of much improvement, of much elaboration in detail; but at the same time I know that it is the only true method." (1954:191)

Lenin's estimate of the Marxist theoretical heritage has led to the assumption among Western Marxist writers that everything before Marx is "bourgeois", including especially the work of Hegel, and

therefore of only peripheral interest for the development of Marxist theory. But Marx accomplished "no more than a fraction of the project which, in early adulthood, he determined to set himself". (Giddens, 1977:207) He never developed Hegel's seminal insights into psychology, religion, ideology, logic, aesthetics, the state, class and so forth. These insights, which result from Hegel's own familiarity with the classics of philosophy and modern social thought remain unexplored by Western Marxism at a time when it is virtually strangled by its own lack of theoretical resources. Paraphrasing Marx, it is possible to write that modern Western Marxism "is altogether a literature of epigones, reproduction, greater elaboration of form, wider application of material, exaggeration, popularization, synopsis, elaboration of details; lack of decisive leaps in phases of development, incorporation of the inventory on one side, new growth at individual points on the other". (1973:883) And the most striking aspect of the theoretical endeavour of Western Marxism is its complete misapprehension of what it professes most stridently to separate it from "bourgeois social science" — the dialectic method.

Ignorance of the dialectic method, of course, is not confined to Western Marxism, which manages at least to grasp some of its fundamentals. For example, Walter Kaufmann, who provides a lucid introduction to Hegel, writes that "I am not so much rejecting the dialectic as I say: there is none. Look for it by all means ... but you will not find any plain method that you could adopt if you wanted to." (1978: 160) Kaufmann's difficulty in finding the dialectic method is understandable since the point of this method is to "present to the mind the picture of a methodically ordered whole, although the soul of the

structure, the method itself (which lives in dialectic), would not be apparent in it". (Hegel, 1954:194)

Among Western Marxists, Karl Korsch presents a thorough discussion of the dialectic method and observes that the dialectic concerns "the question of the relationship between the totality of historical being and all historically prevalent forms of consciousness". (1970:135) Lukács (1971) and Gramsci (1971) also approach the dialectic from this angle, although both thinkers assimilate the dialectic into a discussion of the class consciousness of the proletariat. "For", declares Lukács, "the Marxist method, the dialectical materialist knowledge of reality, can arise only from the point of view of a class, from the point of view of the struggle of the proletariat." (Lukács, 1971:21) This (Leninist) account of the dialectic tends to degenerate into an elitist conception of history, according to which the developing consciousness of the workers is guided by an omnipotent Party of middle class intellectuals who provide the "reasons" for the "faith" of the workers. (Gramsci, 1971:339)

In this form, the Marxist dialectic has become "a doctrine exploited by the alienated intelligentsia of the underdeveloped countries to win support for, and justify, their modernizing dictatorships ..." (Hunt, 1975:342) But it also appeals to the radical middle class intelligentsia of the advanced capitalist countries who are impatient with what they perceive as a co-opted, bourgeoisified and consumerist working class. By a strange dialectical twist, the elitist view implicit in Western Marxism leads to a conception in which the individual intellectual finds him or herself determined by the action of the masses. Thus Althusser enjoins the revolutionary

intellectual "to think for himself and about ... what is in preparation among the masses, for it is they and not the philosophers who make history". (1971:120) This advice, of course, prepares the foundation for a despotism which flatters "the masses" while strangling its opponents. (Hegel, 1976:293) Anyway, says Hegel, "... it is a dangerous and false prejudice, that the People alone have reason and insight, and know what justice is; for each popular faction may represent itself as the People ..." (1956:43) Marx's advice is strikingly different from that of Althusser: "'Follow your own course, and let the people say what they will.'" (Quoted in Praver, 1976:338)

As I have argued throughout this study, the method of both Hegel and Marx ultimately concerns the consciousness not of a class, but of the social individual or the free worker. Thus for Marx, the defect of capitalist production is precisely that "the growth of ... material wealth is brought about in contradiction to and at the expense of the individual human being." (1976:1037) The role of civil or bourgeois society in the education and development, through struggle, of the social individual provides the historical justification for, and brings about the dissolution of, the capitalist mode of production.

For both Hegel and Marx, the dialectic method can only be applied to a given concrete reality; its object "is always what is given, in the head as well as in reality". (Marx, 1973:106) Neither thinker is, in Marx's words, "writing recipes ... for the cookshops of the future". (1976:99) The "objective thoughts" — or social facts — studied by dialectical science are "the truth ... which is ... the absolute object of philosophy ..." (Hegel, 1975:45) And truth "means that concept and external reality correspond". (Hegel, 1976:231) But at the

same time, dialectic method is not limited by what Hegel calls, the "finite" categories of the understanding. These categories are finite because "they are only subjective and the antithesis of an objective clings to them". In other words, they cannot comprehend the dynamic unity of subject and object obtained through ideality or revolutionizing practice. Moreover, the categories of the understanding "are always of restricted content, and so persist in antithesis to one another and still more to the Absolute". (1975:45)

The "Absolute" is simply Hegel's term for the rational state in which reason and reality will absolutely correspond. The understanding, however, is fettered by the alienation and irrationality of capitalist society and cannot come to terms with this society's transient character. Thus the understanding fails "to point out how [its] categories and their whole sphere", i.e., the society to which they correspond, "pass into a higher". (Hegel, 1975:22; my emphasis)

One of the findings of this study is that what Hegel means by the "understanding" is precisely what Marx indicates with the term, "bourgeois". This form of thought, Marx declares, "views the capitalist order as the absolute and ultimate form of social production, instead of a historically transient stage of development ..." (1976:96) The categories employed by Western Marxism are no less finite than those of their bourgeois antagonists; and the outlook of Western Marxist writers, therefore, is as alienated as that of its bourgeois opposite. "... It is from conforming to finite categories in thought and action", writes Hegel, "that all deception originates." (1975:41)

There are three aspects or moments of dialectic method. The

first is recognition of the dialectic as it appears in the subject matter itself — the dynamic movement of the "self-originating and self-actualizing" organic whole under study "which accomplishes its manifestation in its own element, not in an alien material". (Hegel, 1969:5, 16) The second aspect of dialectic method is method proper, which includes the appropriation of the facts and laws of other sciences. (Hegel, 1975:18) The third moment of dialectic is exposition — the logical ordering and presentation of the movement of the object discovered through method. Of course, the dialectic method actually embraces all three moments into its "unity ... of distinct determinations". (1969:163) The three aspects of the dialectic method are outlined by Hegel in the Phenomenology:

The subject matter treated by scientific inquiry is not exhausted by any aim, but only by the way things are worked out in detail; nor is the result the actual whole, but only the result together with its becoming. The aim, taken by itself, is a lifeless generality; the tendency is a mere drift which lacks actuality; and the naked result is the corpse which has left the tendency behind. (1966:370-372)

The meaning of this passage is amplified by Marx in Capital:

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 and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we had before us an a priori construction. (1976:102)

In the following discussion I will outline the first two moments of dialectic — recognition and method proper. The third aspect, exposition, will be dealt with in the next and concluding section of this study.

The first moment of dialectic method — recognition — is the basic presupposition of method which Hegel calls, "the consciousness of the form taken by the inner spontaneous movement of the content", or subject matter of science. (1954:190) Marx refers to this presupposition when he writes in Capital that "My standpoint [views] ... the development of society ... as a process of natural history ...". According to this presupposition, then, society is "an organism capable of change, and constantly engaged in the process of change". (1976:92-93) The dialectic method, therefore, presupposes that its object is an organism driven by the dynamic of contradiction. "The movement of capitalist society", says Marx, "is full of contradictions." (1976:103)

The dialectic within the object of study constitutes the "general laws with which [the] life and mutations" of the object "are governed". (Hegel, 1954:187) This might be called "bio-dialectic"; and it is the bio-dialectic of bourgeois society which is studied by Marx in Capital. "... The ultimate aim of this work", declares Marx, is "to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society." (1976: 92) The presupposition of dialectic method can only be confirmed by the results achieved through it: "The very point of view, which originally is taken on its own evidence only, must in the course of science be converted into a result — the ultimate result in which philosophy returns to itself and reaches the point with which it began." (Hegel, 1975:23)

The dialectic method as employed by Hegel and Marx presupposes that society is inherently rational, or governed by laws. In this sense, society resembles nature, for society is not constituted by



"the formations and accidents evident to the superficial observer", but — like nature — is formed and governed by laws which may be discovered by science. (Hegel, 1976:4) There are, however, two vital differences between the laws of society and those of nature. The first difference is that the laws of society can be discovered only through thought and theory; the sensuous methodology of natural science can play no part in the discovery of social laws. As Marx puts it, "... in the analysis of economic forms neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of assistance. The power of abstraction must replace both." (1976:90)

The second distinction between the laws of nature and those of society is that the latter originate from the conscious activity of men and women and may also be changed by their activity. (Hegel, 1976: 224) Moreover, while the laws of nature are rigid and remain unaffected by our knowledge of them, the transformation of social laws can be made possible, or, in any case, easier, by knowledge of these laws. "Even when a society", Marx observes, "has begun to track down the natural laws of its movement ... it can neither leap over the natural phases of its development nor remove them by decree. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs." (1976:92)

Discovery of the laws of society inevitably involves contradiction, antagonism and struggle within society. And it is precisely the conscious element in society which accounts for the sharpness of contradiction there as compared to nature. "In nature", Hegel observes,

the highest truth is that there is a law; in the law of the land, the thing is not valid simply because it exists; on the contrary, everyone demands that it shall comply with his private criterion. Here then an antagonism is possible

between what ought to be and what is, between the absolutely right which stands unaltered and the arbitrary determination of what is to be recognized as right. A schism and a conflict of this sort is to be found only in the territory of mind. (1976:224)

The principle of law — whether of nature or society — is that law involves a necessary interconnection between diverse phenomena: the law of gravity, for example, requires that all objects must fall to the ground at a given rate of acceleration; the law of value in bourgeois society means that all commodities have exchange-value and use-value; criminal law states that all crimes involve punishment. (Hegel, 1969:163) But legislative and criminal law differs from that of nature and society in that the former is deliberately framed by individuals while natural and social laws unfold outside the conscious intent of men and women. In a rational or communist society, however, the distinction between laws framed by individuals and social laws will disappear, and all laws relating to society will be under the conscious control of its members. "... In its mature phase", writes Hegel, the consciousness of the social individual "is the Law of the Phenomenon". (1975:189)

There are two related, but incorrect, conceptions about what I have called the second moment of dialectic method — method proper. The first is that dialectic simply concerns the study of society as a progressive series of stages, one leading naturally to another. The second is that dialectic is essentially negative and critical. Both these notions express only one-sided aspects of dialectic method. For Hegel, the belief that dialectic concerns the study of society "as an issuing of the more perfect from the less perfect ... does prejudice to the method of philosophy". (1975:221) Dialectic method

investigates the immanent or self-originating development of the social organism, i.e., of what Marx calls, "the organic social body within which individuals reproduce themselves as individuals, but as social individuals". (1973:832) And if an organism may be seen as a series of progressive transformations which ultimately reveal its mature form, it can also be viewed as the explicit determination of what already implicitly existed in embryo or germ. In other words, the form of the new social organism is already contained in the old one. This is what Hegel refers to as the "double movement" or "doubling process" of the dialectic. (1975:295; 1892:22) The "superficial thoughts of more imperfect and more perfect", states Hegel, "simply indicate the distinction" between each stage or form of consciousness and society from the next; they have nothing to do with its inner movement. (1975:221)

The standpoint of Western Marxism towards communist society, which views it simply as the next stage of society after capitalism, is, like Kant's notion of the "good", simply "something which merely ought to be, and which at the same time is not real — a mere article of faith, possessing a subjective certainty, but without truth. This contradiction", Hegel adds, "may seem to be disguised by adjourning the realization of the Idea to a future, to a time when the Idea will also be." Time, however, is merely a sensuous conception, and does not remove the obligation of the theorist to prove what is held out to be the truth. (1975:91) The only proof of the development of the new society lies in the present, in the concrete, living actuality which science has for its object. "... The only way to secure any growth and progress in knowledge is to hold results fast in their

truth." (1975:133) Consequently, the problem of method is to find and disclose the rational elements within the present which presage the future. "Rationality", states Hegel,

enters upon external existence simultaneously with its actualization, it emerges with an infinite wealth of forms, shapes, and appearances. Around its heart it throws a motley covering with which consciousness is at home to begin with, a covering which the concept has first to penetrate before it can find the inward pulse and feel it still beating in the outward appearances. (1976:10-11)

The same idea is expressed by Marx in the Grundrisse: Capitalism, he writes,

the most extreme form of alienation ... is a necessary point of transition — and therefore already contains in itself, in a still only inverted form, turned on its head, the dissolution of all limited presuppositions of production, and moreover creates and produces the unconditional presuppositions of production, and therewith the full material conditions for the total, universal development of the productive forces of the individual. (1973:515)

The pivotal idea which guides the dialectic method of both Hegel and Marx is Kant's notion "that man alone is the final end and aim" of the natural and social order. (Kant, 1893:251; my emphasis) The development of society, therefore, concerns the process in which the human individual who "is implicitly rational ... must also become explicitly so by struggle to create himself but also by bringing himself up within". (Hegel, 1976:229) It is this struggle which forms the object and content of dialectic method, rather than a mere survey of the progressive stages of society. What distinguishes bourgeois society from earlier social forms is that its principle of private property — especially the free ownership of one's labour-power — is the motive force behind the education and increased self-consciousness

or rationality of the individuals within it. This struggle implies the growing control over social forces even within the bourgeois mode of production, and is likely to turn aside all predictions of capitalism's imminent collapse. Capital itself, to use Marx's phrase, is a "permanent revolution". (Quoted in Miliband, 1978:158) "... Every degree of the development of the social forces of production, of intercourse, of knowledge, etc. appears to it only as a barrier which it strives to overpower." (Marx, 1973:541)

The reason for the transitional nature of capitalism is its contradictory character which "appears in such a way that the working individual alienates himself ... relates to the conditions brought out of him by his own labour as those not of his own, but of an alien wealth and of his own poverty". (Marx, 1973:541) But this alienation is abolished within capitalism itself; in fact, the abolition of alienation is the presupposition of the rational or communist state. "The recognition" by the individual, says Marx in a previously quoted passage, "of the products" of labour "as its own, and the judgement that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper — forcibly imposed — is an enormous ... awareness ... itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital and ... the knell to its doom." (1973:463) The same notion is expressed by Hegel: "Every thing that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of the time," he writes,

are the struggles for Mind [the consciousness of the social individual] to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, and finally to unite itself to itself; it is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able thus to find itself and return to itself. Only in this way does Mind attain its freedom, for that is free which is not connected with or dependent on another. (1892:23)

Individual self-awareness or rationality brings about what Hegel calls the "truth of necessity ... Freedom". Under a mature form of capitalism, which is the point of transition to the rational state,

It then appears that the members linked to one another, are not really foreign to each other, but only elements of one whole, each of them, in its connection with the other, being, as it were, at home, and combining with itself. In this way necessity is transfigured into freedom — not in the freedom that consists in abstract negation, but freedom concrete and positive. (1975:220)

This is the same concrete and positive freedom which is advocated by Marx:

Freedom ... can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their conscious control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. (1967, III:820)

Thinkers in the Western Marxist tradition are correct in their belief that the dialectic method is negative and critical toward existing society. "... The action of thought", states Hegel, "has ... a negative effect on its basis ..." (1975:81) Dialectical science, says Marx in a previously cited passage,

includes in its positive understanding of what exists a simultaneous recognition of its negation, its inevitable destruction; it regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion, and therefore grasps its transient aspect as well; ... it does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary. (1976:103)

Both Hegel and Marx are engaged in demonstrating that the capitalist mode of production is arbitrary rather than rational in its system. And this arbitrariness, which results precisely in the alienation of the worker from his or her property and will, contains the contradictions of wealth and poverty, overproduction, imperialism and dehumanization which

propel capitalist society toward the rational or communist state. "It is the bad side", writes Marx, "that produces movement which makes history, by providing a struggle." (PP:116) Or, as Hegel puts it, "... Everything which is not reasonable must on that account cease to be actual." (1975:201)

For both Hegel and Marx, however, the negative and critical aspect of the dialectic is only a part, and not even the most important part, of scientific method. "Our attitude", declares Hegel, "... must ... contain an affirmative side and a negative." However, "We get to know the affirmative side later on both in life and in science; thus we find it easier to refute than to justify." (1892:38) Marx also emphasizes that dialectic contains "the positive understanding of what exists". (1976:103) But dialectic is not simply the alternation of a positive and negative attitude toward consciousness and society, what Marx calls, referring to Proudhon, the "point of view ... composed of On The One Hand and On The Other Hand". (1965:157) The dialectic method is ultimately a positive or affirmative approach to the study of society. "The negativity of finite things", states Hegel, "... is their own dialectic, and in order to ascertain it we must pay attention to their positive content." (1975:270)

The purpose of dialectic is to study the process of becoming, or the development of the, at first only implicit, rationality of the social individual. Capital, for example, is nothing but the objectified essence of the developing power of the social individual: "... real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals .... The full development of the individual ... reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power." (Marx,

1973:709, 711) Even the study of the economic aspects of bourgeois society, therefore, presupposes that it is also the study of the organic development of the social individual: "... The final result of the process of production always appears as the society itself, i.e. the human being itself in its social relations." (1973:712)

The process of becoming studied by dialectic method involves the absorption, as well as the transcendence, of all earlier stages of a developing and conscious organism by its most mature stage. "Each stage", says Hegel, "... is an image of the absolute," i.e., of the rational society or the Idea, "but at first in a limited mode, and thus it is forced onwards to the whole, the evolution of which is what we termed Method." (1975:293) Accordingly, the highest and most mature phase of the social organism — the communist or rational state — will contain within itself all the positive or rational aspects of earlier social forms, including capitalist society. To grasp and comprehend the transition to the rational state, as well as the outline of this society as it glimmers beneath the haze of appearance of the old one requires, therefore, probing the positive or rational features of the bourgeois mode of production.

Recognition of the positive aspect of the dialectic method is what forms the "epistemological break" which, as Althusser suggests, separates the work of the young, and the mature, Marx. (Althusser, 1969:34-35) Before 1845, Marx was greatly influenced by Feuerbach's criticism of the Hegelian "negation of the negation" or "true affirmation" which, Feuerbach claims, "restored ... theology ... through philosophy". Hegel's writings, declares Feuerbach, conceal their reactionary content under a revolutionary guise: "At first everything



is overthrown, but then everything is put in its former place ..."

(1966:33-34) The young Marx applauds Feuerbach's "serious, critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic," especially Feuerbach's opposition to "the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive ..." (1964:172) Ironically, Althusser — the erstwhile opponent of the young Marx — on this issue shows once again the intimate connection between his version of Marxism and the views of Feuerbach and the young Marx: "Stalin was right, for once," Althusser opines, "to suppress 'the negation of the negation' from the laws of the dialectic ..." (1971:91)

According to the young Marx, capitalist society will destroy itself and the new communist society, "the self-supporting positive", will emerge from the ruins. (1964:172, 187) The same apocalyptic view, which contrasts strongly with Marx's later ideas on the development of the social individual under capitalism, also appears in the Communist Manifesto:

The modern labourer ... instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. (1969, I:119)

This outlook, with its undertones of despair and pessimism about the present, has become the ruling orthodoxy in Western Marxism. The "negative philosophy" of Adorno, for example, declares, in its convoluted and twisted phraseology, that "the new form can never emerge

in a true state from an antagonistic society. As long as domination reproduces itself, the old quality reappears unrefined in the dissolving of the dissolvent: in a radical sense no leap is made at all." (1978:245) Similarly, Marcuse denounces Hegel's "harmonistic interpretation of history, according to which the crossing to a new historical form is at the same time a progress to a higher historical form ..." Hegel, says Marcuse, "denies the critical implications of the dialectic" and indulges "a preposterous interpretation" of society "because all the victims of oppression and injustice are against it, as are all the vain sufferings and sacrifices of history." (1973:246) Adorno and Marcuse, of course, are extreme representatives of the pessimistic strain within Western Marxism; but all shades of Marxism from Althusser (French C.P.) to Mandel (Trotskyist) and myriad others continually emphasize the forthcoming doom of capitalism and fail to note (or deeply regret) the progressive aspects of modern Western democracies. For these thinkers, a search for the positive aspects of capitalism represents the ultimate heresy.

The application of negative dialectic, as done by the young Marx and the exponents of Western Marxism, represents what Hegel calls, "a forcible insistence on a single aspect, and a real effort to obscure and remove all consciousness of the other attribute which is involved". Contradiction, or opposed characteristics, may be found in any object, and the discovery of contradiction indicates no great mental faculty on the part of the investigator. But when the understanding consciousness stumbles upon contradiction "the usual inference is, Hence this object is nothing". (Hegel, 1975:133) Since capitalism contains a mass of contradictions, the understanding mind is led to the conclusion

that it must inevitably collapse in a terrible cataclysm of hellfire and damnation. To support this conclusion facts are gathered, and debates break out among the believers about when and how the collapse will occur. The collapse theory, of course, is subjected to withering criticism by Gramsci in the Prison Notebooks, where he argues that in a crisis the bourgeoisie rather than the working class is more likely to gain the upper hand (1971:211-212), but it retains its grip in more or less sophisticated form throughout Western Marxism. It is based on alienation, on a dependence upon the same external social laws it is certain bourgeois society cannot control. The laws which will transform bourgeois society into the rational state, however, are internal — they reside in the developing self-consciousness of the social individual.

The abandonment of the positive aspect of the dialectic method explains why Western Marxism has been unable to develop the classic insights of Marx in the Grundrisse (1973) and in the originally unpublished "Part Seven" of Capital, I (1976) where he points to the overwhelming potential of the bourgeois mode of production. The transformation of Marxism from a dynamic and revolutionary form of thought to a fast-frozen, static, and lifeless system of categories like "base and superstructure", "class struggle", and "the proletariat", is the consequence of removing the very element which gives classical Marxism its life — i.e., the positive or rational aspect of dialectic. In the Lesser Logic, Hegel observes that "The logic of mere Understanding is involved in Speculative logic, and can at will be elicited from it, by the simple process of omitting the dialectical and 'reasonable' element." This is precisely what Western Marxism has

done with the work of Marx, and the result is what Hegel predicts:  
 "it becomes what the common logic is, a descriptive collection of sundry  
 thought-forms and rules which, finite though they are, are taken to be  
 something infinite." (1975:120)

For the "common logic" within Western Marxism, the dialectic  
 method assumes some type of reciprocity between the economic base and  
 the ideological superstructure of society. Beyond a great deal of  
 complex word-play and engineering metaphors this is essentially the  
 position of Althusser (e.e. 1969:161-218), as well as the position  
 of most thinkers within the Western Marxist tradition. It is also the  
 standpoint of many interpreters of Marx. Giddens, for example,  
 suggests that the "dialectical view" assumes "reciprocal interaction  
 of ... ideas with the social organization of 'earthly man' ... the  
 active interplay between subject and object ... whereby the individual  
 acts upon the world at the same time as the world acts upon him".  
 (1977:210) Given this assumption, the problem becomes to determine the  
 degree to which the ideological superstructure (i.e., law, politics,  
 religion, and so on) is influenced by the economic base and vice versa.  
 Althusser, for example, describes bourgeois society as a "structure in  
 dominance", by which he means that it is determined "in the last  
 instance" by the economic base, although, as he puts it, "the lonely  
 hour of the 'last instance' never comes". (1969:113) The economic  
 base is considered to be "real" — i.e., a sensuous reality — while the  
 superstructure is a more or less fantastic reflection of the concrete  
 economic relations of society. This theory constitutes one of the great  
dogmas of Western Marxism; its assured place in the Marxist system  
rivals that of the Virgin Birth in Christianity.

Hegel observes that dialectic method "tries especially to show how the questions men have proposed ... on the nature of Knowledge, Faith and the like — questions which they imagine have no connection with abstract thoughts — are really reducible to the simple categories which first get cleared up in Logic". (1975:46) The questions involved in the Marxist interpretation of the dialectic are no exception. The Western Marxist version of the dialectic is simply a regressive hybrid of the categories of reciprocity or functionalism and causality. These categories, in turn, are the staple diet of the understanding or bourgeois consciousness.

Hegel provides a useful analysis of the category of reciprocity which reveals why Western Marxism has experienced so much difficulty in determining to what degree the economic base is actually primary. The difficulty arises precisely because, in the relation of reciprocity, the elements said to interact tend to disappear and dissolve into one another, so that instead of two interacting elements there turns out to be only one. "Reciprocal action just means that each characteristic we impose," — in this case, base and superstructure, "is also to be suspended and inverted into its opposite, and that in this way the essential nullity of the 'moments' is explicitly stated. An effect is introduced into the primariness"; i.e. the superstructure is said to have an effect on the base, "in other words, the primariness is abolished: the action of a cause becomes reaction, and so on". (1975: 218) The solution suggested for this dilemma by Engels, Althusser, and others, namely, that the economy is determinant in "the last instance", does one of two things. It either refers the relation between base and superstructure to the sensuous conception of time: i.e., the economy

is the first (or the second-last element) in the relation of reciprocity, in which case nothing has been solved at all. Or it leads to the abandonment of the relation of reciprocity to the even less satisfactory category of causality: i.e., "if the economy, then the superstructure."

The Marxist dogma of the dialectic is founded on the notion that there is an interaction between the conscious subject and its object. Thus, the laws or religion of a society which reflect the conscious make-up of the individuals within it, are supposed to be the result of the action of the economic basis of that society, on the minds of the individuals. But the notion that consciousness depends upon and interacts with its object is simply false. Human consciousness is above all active; thinking, considered as ideality or revolutionizing practice, is not dependent on its object. "With as much truth..." writes Hegel, "we may be said to owe eating to the means of nourishment, so long as we can have no eating without them. If we take this view, eating is certainly represented as ungrateful: it devours that to which it owes itself. Thinking upon this view of its action is equally ungrateful." (1975:17) As Marx puts it in the Theses on Feuerbach: "Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice." (1969, I:15)

The same conscious human practice which creates the "ideological superstructure", also creates the "economic base". The reciprocal interaction of the two, which undoubtedly exists, is merely the result of the fact that they have an identical source. "The true category", writes Hegel, "is the unity of all these different forms so that it is one Mind which manifests itself in, and impresses itself upon these

different elements." (1892:50) Hence, the bourgeois approximation to rationality (which turns out to be irrationality) is felt everywhere in capitalist society, from the organization of industry to the structure of the legal system. It is founded on a peculiar interpretation of human freedom (Hegel calls it, "an insanity of personality") where the individual is free to alienate the products of his or her own free labour — which in fact are the property of the individual — and make them over to the "overlord to nothing" (Hegel, 1976:50), to the capitalist. This relation has made possible the fantastic growth, the richness and complexity of bourgeois society, but the limit of the rationality of the capitalist property relation is also the limit of the capitalist mode of production itself.

For the Marxist dogma of the dialectic, the role of the individual fades into insignificance when compared with the mighty clash and bustle of wrestling bases and superstructures, the rumble of onward moving modes of production, the roaring of the "motor" of history — the class struggle, and so on. This view, of course, leads to the total rejection of the "great man/woman" theory of history (Eg. Althusser, 1976:99) "It is true that man, generically, makes his own history," declares Sydney Hook, "It is not true that any individual man makes his own history." (1976:39) And a Canadian writer maintains that "in a Marxist analysis we are interested neither in the cult of personality nor in the great man theory of history," but rather "in ... social classes and ... other politically significant categories". (Olsen, 1977: 199) For a "Marxist analysis", of course, the individual is not a "politically significant category".

The Western Marxist view of the individual, according to which he

or she is merely the abstract expression of the more concrete term, class, is simply the reverse side of the bourgeois notion, mercilessly criticized by Hegel, that the individual may be reduced to psychological characteristics. Accordingly, there are bourgeois "psychohistories" which claim, for example, that Napoleon marched to Egypt because he suffered from an "inner emptiness", and so on. (Hegel, 1975:200; 1956:32; 1976:84) The Marxist and the bourgeois mind exhibit here once again their essential unity, their alienation expressed as externality from the concrete achievements of human ideality or revolutionizing practice. For what both the Marxist and the bourgeois emphasize is the crude limits, the particularity and nullity of individual human consciousness; they cannot grasp the dialectical unity of theory and practice as expressed in the concrete thinking activity of the social individual.

Hegel's notion of the "world-historical individual" and his much misunderstood term, "the cunning of reason" are essential elements of dialectic method and cannot be understood apart from it. For Hegel, world-historical individuals are revolutionaries: "they derived their purposes and their vocation", he writes,

from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which, impinging on the outer world as on a shell, bursts it into pieces, because it is another kernel than that which belonged to the shell in question. They are men, therefore, who appear to draw the impulse of their life from themselves; and whose deeds have produced a condition of things and a complex of historical relations which appear to be only their interest, and their work.

World-historical individuals, then, are persons who, though unconscious "of the general Idea they were unfolding", nevertheless attained to "an insight into the requirements of the time — what was ripe for



development". These individuals, these revolutionaries, simply expressed what was in the minds of all, "but in a state of unconsciousness which the great men in question aroused". In other words, "They are great men, because they willed and accomplished something great; not a mere fancy, a mere intention, but that which met the case and fell in with the needs of the age." (Hegel, 1956:30-31)

As I suggested in earlier chapters, Hegel's notion of the "cunning of reason" (1956:33) is usually taken to mean that individuals are simply agents of a higher force called Reason or Spirit which irresistibly drives them on to accomplish history's goal. The ends they attain, therefore, are not theirs, but Reason's. For Hegel, however, reason is a property of everyone's consciousness; its manifestation is simply the product of human ideality. "In human knowledge and volition, as its material element, Reason attains positive existence." (1956:33) The goal of history for Hegel, as well as for Marx, is a society in which social laws are also the laws of individual rationality: "This essential being is the union of the subjective with the rational Will: it is the moral Whole, the State, which is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom; but on the condition of his recognizing, believing in, and willing that which is common to the whole." (Hegel, 1956:38; my emphasis) The external state of bourgeois society, however, "is an imperfect Present"; the ideal organic unity between the social individual and the rational state "belongs to the department of speculation ... But in the process of the World's History itself — as still incomplete — the abstract final aim of history is not yet made the distinct object of desire and interest." (Hegel, 1956:61, 25)

From the standpoint of dialectical science, the actions of individuals in history have been aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of history, but in a limited form, in the form practicable given the development of human rationality at the time. Accordingly, while a world-historical individual is able to grasp and achieve the requirements of human rationality (the Idea) of his or her own period, the ultimate goal of individual human rationality — communist society — may be beyond his or her comprehension. The degree to which this goal is directly present in the consciousness of the individual depends, of course, on the epoch in which the individual lives.

Hegel, however, also contends that class interests as well as psychological ones play a crucial role in the activity of world-historical individuals as well as in modern politics. Rational principles are only one side of political effort: the other side is that of self-interest masquerading as altruism — "passions and interests essentially subjective, but under the mask of such higher sanctions. The pretensions thus contended for as legitimate in the name of ... Reason, pass accordingly, for absolute aims ..." (1956:35; my emphasis)

No less than Hegel, Marx is conscious of the role of great individuals in history, pointing out that "acceleration and delay" in historical progress "are very much dependent upon ... 'accidents', including the 'accident' of the character of the people who first head the movement". (1965:264) Marx argues, for example, that the French Revolution was not only the product of the struggle of the great mass of people, but also of the deeds of its heroes. "Camille, Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the

parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time ... the task of unchaining and setting up modern bourgeois society ..." (1969, I:399) Nor is the problem of the role of the individual in history simply a problem of heroes and revolution.

"... In the history of the United States," observes Marx in 1862,

... and that of mankind Lincoln will have a place immediately behind Washington ... Lincoln is not the product of a popular revolution. The ordinary play of universal suffrage, unconscious of the great destinies it had to decide, brought to the top a plebeian who had worked his way up from navy to Illinois senator; a man without intellectual sparkle, without outstanding greatness of character, without extraordinary importance — an average man of good will. The new world never won a greater victory than when it proved that in the context of its political and social organization it needs only average men of goodwill to perform deeds it would take heroes to perform in the old world.  
(Quoted in Praver, 1976:269)

Equipped with its omniscient categories of base and superstructure, of course, Western Marxism is able to see through Marx's simplistic admiration for Lincoln as well as his view of the potential of "reformist" politics in capitalist society. ("We do not deny", Marx declares in 1872, "that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland ... where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means." (Quoted in Jones, 1973:35)) Where everything is explained by "naked class interests" and so on, thought itself becomes a needless accessory for the "theorist". "Marx", explains G. Stedman Jones, "... never produced a coherent theory of the political superstructures of capitalist social formations ..." This, continues Jones — penetrating to the heart of the matter — reflects "a theoretical limit to the — unfinished — work of both Marx and Engels at the close of the nineteenth century. The absence, on the theoretical

plane, of any mechanism to connect the determination in the last instance by the economy and the relative autonomy of superstructures, was reproduced on the political plane in an inability to produce a systematic theory of revolutionary politics." (1973:35) The judgement of G. Stedman Jones and other Western Marxists on the political strategy adopted by Marx and Engels simply reflects "the absence, on the theoretical plane", of any knowledge of dialectic method.

The concrete reality of individual nations is usually ignored by Western Marxism in favour of the abstractions of base and superstructure which it blindly applies to each and every society. For dialectic method, however, the actuality of a nation or culture is crucial to the study of the ultimate object of method, the development of the social individual. "The relation of the individual to" his or her nation, writes Hegel,

is that he appropriates to himself this substantial existence; that it becomes his character and capability, enabling him to have a definite place in the world — to be something. For he finds the being of the people to which he belongs an already established, firm world — objectively present to him — with which he must incorporate himself.  
(1956:74)

The ideality of the individual is fused with a particular spirit, a particular view of the world which permeates all the aspects of his or her culture.

It is within the limitations of this idiosyncrasy that the spirit of the nation, concretely manifested, expresses every aspect of its consciousness and will — the whole cycle of its realization, and even its science, art, and mechanical skills, all bear its stamp. These special peculiarities find their key in that common peculiarity — the particular principle that characterizes a people ... (Hegel, 1956:64)

Like Hegel, Marx also emphasizes the organic unity of the social individual with society. Capital, for instance, is not only a study of the bourgeois mode of production in the abstract; it also concerns the life and spirit of that classic bourgeois society — England. "What I have to examine in this work", writes Marx in the "Preface to the First Edition of Capital",

is the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and the forms of intercourse corresponding to it. Until now, their locus classicus has been England. This is the reason why England is used as the main illustration of the theoretical developments I make. (1976:90)

Similarly, Marx connects the rapid development of the United States with the enterprising character of the individuals who settled there. (1968:90-91) These individuals infused the spirit of the United States with what Marx, in another context, calls, "one of the delusions carefully nurtured by Political Economy":

The truth is, that in this bourgeois society every workman, if he is an extremely clever and shrewd fellow, and gifted with bourgeois instincts and favoured by exceptional fortune, can possibly be converted into an exploiteur du travail d'autrui ["Exploiter of others' labour"]. But, where there was no travail to be exploité there would be no capitalist nor capitalist production. (1976:1079)

Whatever the defects of this dream or delusion it also contains its own core of truth: "In the usual formulation" of political economy, writes Marx, "... an industrial people reaches the peak of its production at the moment when it arrives at its historical peak generally. In fact, the industrial peak of a people when its main concern is not yet gain, but rather to gain. Thus the Yankees over the English." (1973:87) In this passage, Marx echoes a discussion by Hegel, where Hegel also refers to the British nation:

A Nation is moral — virtuous — vigorous — while it is engaged in realizing its grand projects, and defends its work against external violence during the process of giving to its purposes an objective existence. The contradiction between its potential, subjective being — its inner aim and life — and its actual being is removed; it has attained full reality, has itself objectively present to it. But this having been attained, the activity displayed by the Spirit of the people in question is no longer needed; it has its desire. The Nation can still accomplish much in war and peace at home and abroad; but the living substantial soul itself may be said to have ceased its activity. The essential, supreme interest has consequently vanished from its life, for interest is present only where there is opposition.  
(1956:74)

In order to grasp the spirit of a nation or a people, dialectic method studies the supreme intellectual productions of society — the science and philosophy created within it. Philosophy and science are the comprehension in thought of society and therefore represent "the progression of the total actuality involved". (Hegel, 1892:33) The object of Marx's theoretical effort, therefore, is not only capitalism, but capitalism as it is expressed in the categories of bourgeois political economy. A particular philosophy or scientific system represents not merely the ideas and reality of its creator, but also the entire richness of the social universe of which the thinker is a part. "Everything hangs on this," states Hegel, "these forms" of science and philosophy "are nothing else than the original distinctions in the Idea [society] itself which is what it is only in them." (1892: 34-35) Feuerbach's and Kant's philosophies, for example, merely express in pure form the determinate categories and relations of bourgeois thought and reality.

Although science and philosophy are the products of society, they are above society in form, since they place society "in the relation

of object". The merely formal difference between theoretical productions and society, however, becomes an actual difference because it is through thought that "Mind makes manifest a distinction between knowledge and that which is: this knowledge is thus what produces a new form of development." (Hegel, 1892:55; my emphasis) The dialectical science of Hegel and Marx, for example, is a product of bourgeois society; but it also anticipates and expresses the development of the free and independent social individual who will find his or her concrete existence in the rational or communist state.

## 2. Dialectical Exposition and the Rational State

Dialectical exposition — the presentation of the results of dialectic method — is not historical in character, although the dialectic is commonly (and wrongly) assumed to refer mainly to history. Rather than the time-order of events related to the object under study, dialectical exposition is concerned with the object's development as a living organism which, as it were, unfolds itself from itself. "In order to develop the laws of political economy ..." says Marx, "it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production." (1973:460) To present society as an "organic whole" (Marx, 1973:100) means to represent it in a manner "corresponding to its concept" (Marx, 1973:885) — or as Hegel puts it, in a manner corresponding to "the immanent self-differentiation of the concept". (1976:36) The concept, in turn, like the processes within a living body, develops in all its parts, not historically or in a certain time-order, but

simultaneously. "The simultaneity of the process of capital in different phases of the process", writes Marx, "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 shedding in one form and renewal in the other is distributed, takes place simultaneously." (1973:661)

Dialectic method may, of course, be applied to history, but the exposition of historical development is different from dialectical exposition in its pure form. Hegel's Lesser Logic, for example, presents the development of the categories of thought in purely necessary, i.e., rational and non-historical terms. This development, however, occurred in the history of philosophy according to the time-order of succession rather than to the chronological order. The dialectical exposition of development in history "shows the different stages and moments in development in time, in manner of occurrence, in particular places, in particular people or political circumstances, the complications arising thus, and, in short, it shows us the empirical form". (Hegel, 1892:29-30)

Dialectical exposition must start from the most abstract form of the object under study; but also from its most universal and necessary aspect. "The Idea", writes Hegel, referring to both consciousness and society,

must further determine itself within itself continually, since in the beginning it is no more than an abstract concept. But this original abstract concept is never abandoned. It merely becomes richer in itself and the final determination is therefore the richest. In this process its earlier, merely implicit, determinations attain



their free self-subsistence but in such a way that the concept remains the soul which holds everything together and attains its own proper differentiation only through an immanent process. (1976:233)

Since dialectical exposition begins with the simplest and most abstract categories, the order of appearance of the categories in exposition may be similar to their order of appearance in history. (Hegel, 1892:30; Marx, 1973:102) But in relation to the application of dialectic method this similarity is purely fortuitous.

The Absolute Idea in Hegel's speculative logic—which as I have argued, is simply the logical or theoretical expression of the relation of the social individual with the rational state—is the final category of logic. But it also, of course, includes being — the first category of logic. The Absolute Idea, or the rational state, is simply the richest and most developed form of (social) being. Accordingly, speculative logic concerns "the knowledge that the idea is the one systematic whole". (1975:296) Similarly, the ultimate category in the Philosophy of Right — the rational state — includes the first category discussed in this work, i.e., "the absolutely free will" of the social individual. (1976:37) Marx begins Capital with the commodity — the most abstract and the most universal category within capitalist society. "What I start from," states Marx, "is the simplest form of the product of labour in present day society, and that is the 'commodity'". (Quoted in Mandel, 1978:18) The final chapters of Capital are concerned with the social relations developed around the commodity, i.e., private property and its abolition both within the capitalist mode of production by the monopoly of the capitalist class, and by the socialist revolution.

Dialectical exposition presents the object of method in its highest or ideal form; in the same way, the moments or aspects of the object are displayed in their most extreme or purest configurations. (Hegel, 1976:35; 1969:8) The manner of presentation of the object of study makes it possible to find in it both the means to comprehend less developed social forms as well as the intimations or foreshadowings of the shape of the future. "... Our method", says Marx,

indicates the points where ... bourgeois economy as a merely historical form of the production process points beyond itself to earlier historical modes of production ... These indications ..., together with a correct grasp of the present, then also offer the key to the understanding of the past ... This correct view likewise leads at the same time to the points at which the suspension of the present form of production relations gives signs of its becoming — foreshadowings of the future. (1973:460-461)

If the order of the categories in Hegel's Philosophy of Right has nothing to do with their historical succession "in the actual world" (Hegel, 1969:130), this order is of supreme importance for an understanding of Hegel's theory of the state. For, as Hegel puts it, "A philosophical division is far from an external one ..." (1976:36) The concrete formations in the Philosophy of Right which lead up to the theory of the state are the elements which, for Hegel, prove the necessity of the rational or communist state. Both the family and bourgeois or civil society — the social categories which precede the exposition of the state — are "stages or factors" which "as actualities ... are yet at the same time viewed as forms only, collapsing and transient". (1975:208) Accordingly, Hegel's study of right examines the dissolution of the family in civil society along with the factors which lead to the "splitting up" and integration of

civil society into the rational state. (Hegel, 1969:130) The family and civil society are only the "finite phase" of the rational state, a phase which is necessary "only in order" for the consciousness of the social individual "to rise above its ideality and become explicit as infinite actual mind". (1976:162)

"We should desire", states Hegel, "to have in the state nothing except what is an expression of rationality. The state is the world which mind has made for itself; its march therefore, is on the lines that are fixed and absolute ... The state [is] a secular deity." (1976:285) As I have argued, the state Hegel refers to is what Marx terms, communist society, i.e., "an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, expending their many different forms of labour-power in full self-awareness as one single social labour force". In this society, social relations "generally present themselves to [the individual] in a transparent and rational form", and social production is "under [the] conscious and planned control" of individuals. (1976:171, 173) But the rational society Hegel envisions has nothing to do with the Marxist abstraction of the "withering away of the state". (Lenin, 1970, II:297) The notion that the state in communist society must eventually disappear is based on the bourgeois conception of the external state, according to which the state is supposed to be antithetical and antagonistic to the interests of the isolated individual. For both Hegel and Marx, however, the state is the chief instrument for the self-education and the protection of the freedoms of the social individual. In communist society, therefore, the state does not wither away; rather, the antagonistic sphere of civil society is merged into and rationalized

by the integrated communist state.

Nor is the rational state a classless society. Classes as opposed and antagonistic groups, with unequal privileges and wealth, do, of course, disappear. But classes as articulated groups of individuals performing varied and diverse modes of social labour will remain; in fact, within the rational state a person's social class is the mediating institution between the individual and the state. (Hegel, 1976:200) Of course, membership in any social class — which in the rational state will be either the class of civil servants or the business (working) classes — is completely open to the individual. Wealth and birth will play no part in the distinctions of class within the rational state. (1976:201, 290) Eventually, however, as the need for labour of any kind disappears with the mechanization and rationalization of industry, the distinctions between classes themselves will dissolve.

The universal class, or the civil servants, performs the role and function of government; the business class is concerned with the system of needs — the sphere of industry and production. The power of the universal class is checked and mediated by that of the freely associated individuals in the business class, as well as by the executive arm of government represented by the head of state. Leading posts within the corporations controlled by the business class are allotted to individuals on the basis of free elections within the corporation and ratified by the executive of government. (1976:189)

The estates or parliament of the rational state are formed by representatives of the corporations and the civil service; these representatives in turn are elected by the individuals within the

corporations and the various bodies within the civil service. In this way, the electorate of the rational state avoids the atomization and alienation intrinsic to the external capitalist state. (1976:200) Since the deputies from the corporations are elected by the business or working class itself, they "eo ipso adopt the point of view of society, and their actual election is therefore either something superfluous or else reduced to a trivial play of opinion and caprice ... The interest itself is actually present in its representative, while he himself is there to represent the objective element of his own being". (1976:202) Hegel's outline of the government of the rational state, of course, resembles the system of Soviets and workers' factory councils actually proposed during the first years of the Russian Revolution.

Hegel's theory of the state is chiefly concerned with the state as it will exist in its most concrete, i.e., rational form. But the theory results from the analysis of the rational or affirmative aspects of already existing states. (1976:279) Accordingly, Hegel is concerned to illuminate the reasons for the particular forms taken by the states of his time, including, for example, why the class of landed property owners exercised great influence over the early nineteenth century state. But Hegel is convinced, however, that this influence will disappear, along with the form of this class itself. (1976:132) Since positions of authority in the rational state should be filled according to objective and rational criteria, rather than on the basis of wealth or birth, the institution of primogeniture associated with the aristocracy "is nothing but a chain on the freedom of private rights, and either political meaning is given to it" —

which, as Hegel makes clear, is out of the question in the rational state — "or else it will in due course disappear". (1976:293)

This sketch of Hegel's theory of the rational state is necessarily brief and can only suggest guidelines for a more comprehensive account. Nevertheless one particular aspect of the theory should be clarified. Dialectic method deals "with that which is" (1956:87) and during Hegel's period, as he observes, "in almost all European countries the individual head of state is the monarch ..." (1976:296) Hegel is impatient with theorists who see nothing rational in the institution of constitutional monarchy, and who believe that a democratic republic is the only reasonable form of government. For Hegel, the question as to whether a democracy or a constitutional monarchy is most to be preferred "is quite idle", precisely because "such forms must be discussed historically or not at all". (1976:177)

For Marcuse, along with most other commentators, Hegel's account of the rational state constitutes "the glorification of the Prussian monarchy" and the betrayal of "his highest philosophical ideas. His political doctrine surrenders society to nature, freedom to necessity, reason to caprice .... Freedom becomes identical with the inexorable necessity of nature, and reason terminates in an accident of birth". (1973:218, 217) But according to Hegel, a monarchy will have no place in the rational state. When Hegel observes that the monarch "is raised to the dignity of the monarchy in an immediate, natural fashion, i.e. through his birth in the course of nature," he is actually referring to the finitude and transitory character of the monarchy. In the constitutional monarchy, Hegel suggests, "birth is the oracle — something independent of any arbitrary volition." (1956:428) But

oracles of any kind are only required "when men [have] not yet plumbed the depths of self-consciousness or risen out of their undifferentiated unity of substance to their independence ..." (1976:184)

The monarchy is a flawed concept precisely because it lacks the character of rationality; it is "a single and natural existent without the mediation of a particular content (like a purpose in the case of action)". (1976:184) The monarchy is only necessary as a counterpoise to the caprice and irrationality which characterizes the external state of bourgeois society; it will disappear in the rational state. The monarch, notes Hegel, "is ... ungrounded objective existence (existence being the category which is at home in nature) ..." (1976:185) But if this existence "is at home in nature", i.e., in the state of nature represented by the antagonisms and discord of bourgeois society, it will not be "at home" in the rational state. Existence is a poor category since it refers to "finite things" which "are changeable and transient, i.e. ... existence is associated with them for a season, but that association is neither eternal nor inseparable". (1975:259)

Marx's mature work, as I have argued in this study, is devoted not only to the critical analysis of capitalism, but also to the investigation of the presuppositions of the rational or communist state. He explores the conditions for the transcendence of bourgeois society which are formed within the capitalist mode of production itself. But Marx never went beyond the economic study of bourgeois society. In particular, he did not produce a comprehensive theory of the state; nor did he develop an aesthetics, or a critical examination of the history of thought. There is no confrontation with the

categories of logic in Marx; and the reader will look in vain for a Marxist psychology or philosophy of nature, or a system of law. Hegel, however, did produce a great deal of comprehensive work in all these subjects. Moreover, Hegel's efforts are the result of the application of dialectic method — an application which led him to the same conclusions as Marx's about bourgeois consciousness and society.

One reason, of course, for the great superiority of scope and range in the thought of Hegel over that of Marx is that Marx had no established income or position, and spent much of his life in unsettled conditions and strenuous political activity. Hegel had much more time, and the financial independence provided by state teaching and university posts, to devote his attention entirely to theory. But there is another, and perhaps more crucial, difference in their personal biographies. Hegel's age was the age of the French Revolution and the incredible march of Napoleon's "army of liberation" over the whole of Europe. Marx's age was the age of Louis Bonaparte. Hegel's contemporaries formed the elite of classical German idealism, literature and music: Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, Goethe, Beethoven, etc., were among his coevals, and some of them were his personal friends. (Kaufmann, 1978:Passim) Except for Heine, Marx had only Engels, Feuerbach and the other members of the Young Hegelians. However accomplished these thinkers were, they stood nowhere near the likes of Kant or even Schelling. Most of them are known today only through their association with Marx.\* In England, of course, Marx was

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\* I owe these observations to a conversation with Professor Donald MacRae.



surrounded by the shallowest empiricism.

Marx was intensely aware of his isolation; an isolation made all the more bitter because he alone among the thinkers of his generation had a profound knowledge and grasp of the Hegelian philosophy. This grasp, as I have shown, was faulty; but without Marx's insights into Hegel's work, the mystery surrounding Hegel's dialectic would, no doubt, be impenetrable. In the Philosophical Notebooks, (1963: 178-179) Lenin long ago pointed to the necessity for Marxism to recover the heritage it has lost through its ignorance of Hegel. But the writings and theory of Western Marxism remain locked in a groove dominated by a frozen and mechanical interpretation of Marx, coupled with a philosophical outlook which owes much more to the crude materialism of Feuerbach and the young Marx than it does to either Hegel or the mature Marx. Ignorance of Hegel would be excusable if he were merely the exponent of a standpoint transcended by Marx. But even Marx did not imagine Hegel to be a "dead dog"; the treatment of Hegel as such by Marx's epigones must be among the great wonders of intellectual history.

Marx did not transcend Hegel's philosophy. He merely developed and amplified insights already available in Hegel's discussion of civil society in the Philosophy of Right. (1976) That Marx did this in a form and manner much more accessible to the intellectual climate of developed capitalism than Hegel's more philosophical approach is self-evident.

This study has attempted to show that the division commonly made between Hegel and Marx is non-existent. The parallels between their theories are much more compelling than their differences. I have also

tried to demonstrate that the Western Marxist view of both Hegel and the dialectic method has little to recommend it. This view constitutes nothing less than an aspect of the alienated consciousness Western Marxism shares with its bourgeois counterpart. But if the arguments I have made in this study have any validity, there may be a large field of theoretical work and endeavour available to students of Marx. A new synthesis of Marx with Hegel might provide significant insights into diverse areas of theory and practice — insights which could transform Western Marxism and nourish the struggle for individual freedom and the rational state. The dialectic of Hegel and Marx, after all, is the only alternative to the sterile thought forms and alienated reality of capitalist society.

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