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A METHODOLOGY OF READING SOCIAL THEORY: A CASE STUDY OF MARX, ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

City University of New York PH.D. 1982

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A METHODOLOGY OF READING SOCIAL THEORY:

A CASE STUDY OF MARX, ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

by

ROBERT A. SPIEGELMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1982

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1982

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Arts and Sciences in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

19 FEBRUARY 1982 — date
George Fischer — Professor George Fischer, Chairman of Examining Committee

19 February 1982 — date
Bogdan Denitch — Professor Bogdan Denitch, Executive Officer

Marshall Berman — Professor Marshall Berman

M. G. Brown — Professor Michael B. Brown

Rolf B. Meyersohn — Professor Rolf B. Meyersohn

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

A METHODOLOGY OF READING SOCIAL THEORY:

A CASE STUDY OF MARX, ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

by

Robert A. Spiegelman

Advisor: Professor George Fischer

The oil crisis, the population explosion, the arms race, the work of Max Weber, Paul Lazarsfeld, Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, Claude Levi-Strauss, the Club of Rome, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and romantic love songs--they all have a common thread, a thorough-going presumption of scarcity. This thesis suggests that much of social theory, discourse and practice is based on a self-fulfilling prophesy that scarcity is inevitable, on the conclusion that the world is best apprehended by its invariant limits. Yet, such thinkers as Marx suggest another orientation--that social theory could apprehend the world in terms of the possibility of open-ended, qualitative, abundant development. This thesis argues that a social thought given to abundance is not only possible but urgent. Its aim is to restore the significance of post-scarcity development as a problematic for social analysis.

The thesis offers access to such post-scarcity discourse through a method of "emancipatory animated reading." This developmental strategy for reading is displayed in an account of Nobel-laureate Ilya Prigogine

and his reinterpretation of entropy, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, for us the quintessential expression of scarcity in natural science. Our category for articulating an ongoing mode of qualitative development, one that transcends seemingly fixed boundaries is the "object-in-birth," derived from Prigogine's version of entropy--here, "negentropy"--and extended to sociological analysis. We suggest, citing recent theorizing, that negentropy is a ground on which social and nautral sciences might converge towards a more comprehensive, multi-dimensional version of social and historical development than what currently prevails.

In Part Two, we read Marx's methodological writings. Abundance in Marx is not a Utopian state of being to be achieved in a distant future. Rather, Marx made an abundant, present activity out of his critical methodology. We explore especially Marx's strategic reading of Hegelian Idealism and Political Economy. He reads to recover abundant possibilities suppressed in both. We view key categories in Marx's theorizing--production and mode of production--in a fresh way. They are neither humanistic nor economistic; they are historically-specific, but not reducible to the limits of any single historical epoch. These categories incorporate human needs and social relationships as so many possible dimensions of post-scarcity development. Finally, we suggest that a hitherto neglected Marxian category, mode of cooperation, invites further exploration as the locus and ground for such abundant human development.

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MARX'S METHODOLOGY OF READING

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PROLOGUE

TOWARDS A POST-SCARCITY DISCOURSE

PROLOGUE

TOWARDS A POST-SCARCITY DISCOURSE

Given the historical hegemony of the view that material scarcity is an unsurpassable invariant of the human condition, the theoretical formulation and practical constitution of a post-scarcity object becomes a strategic matter. A strategy is the interested practice of a method that would realize an intention in the world. Moreover, for our purposes, a strategy presupposes the co-existence of rival intentions that are more or less consciously formulated as strategies. To posit "post-scarcity" as one's theoretical object requires the organization of a strategic intervention into rival modes of theorizing and discourse that stabilize material scarcity as an existential given. Thus far, our theorizing mounts one such strategic intervention into modes of theorizing that constitute and maintain material scarcity as an unsurpassable object, a pre-given outer boundary to social and natural development and their theoretical articulation. This strategy performs a proto-abundant activity which

both intends and analyzes the historical possibility of abundant, post-scarcity social development.

This thesis, a form-content that is this abundant activity, has combined an animated reading of texts with an historically-specific interest in the problematic of surpassing material scarcity through negentropic development. This reading-theorizing activity embodies an emancipatory intention, namely, a theoretical and practical transcendence of the multiple prevailing social and historical institutionalizations of material scarcity. As a strategic activity, this reading of texts continues to posit and address the problematic of scarcity and abundance within the domain of sociological discourse.

Again, this problematic, like the reading of texts it produces and by which it is in turn developed and refined, is historically situated within the time-space nexus of advanced capitalism, the currently hegemonic mode of producing global order-disorder. Our mode of strategic reading is made possible by its being situated in this current historical setting. It also embodies an emancipatory intention that would transform the very principles of social development whereby that "situation" is itself produced and producing. To this extent it also, in part, is a constitutive element of its socio-historical context.

Advanced capitalism is, in our view, the historically most advanced, most highly organized and developed mode of producing and eroding order, information, complexity, energy, wealth, and matter that has hitherto existed. Nonetheless, it is the most developed extension of one historically-specific kind of producing, namely the producing and accumulating of capital. In our reading, while this

all-pervasive,--extensive and intensive--producing of capital constitutes this until now most highly developed mode of producing, it nonetheless remains bounded for now by socio-historical conditions that maintain material scarcity. Indeed, until recently, it has produced and displayed material scarcity in its hitherto most developed form, namely the so-called "affluent society." Thus, any intention towards producing a new, alternative mode of producing--one that would surpass the limits of a seemingly invariant, eternally-given, material scarcity--would necessarily entail the qualitative transformation of the scarcity-bound, fundamental relationships that characterize and reproduce this prevailing mode of producing social organization. Such an intention would be emancipatory, then, with respect to the extant mode of social organization and the scarcity-bound relationships that constrain its further qualitative development.

The currency and urgency of this problematic arise in our particular setting with the increasingly hegemonic consensus that asserts the finality of scarcity as self-evident. This argument is often made to rationalize programs of social and economic austerity. That is, it is widely argued, that advanced industrial society has already reached or is on the verge of reaching the outer limits of production and of finite, indispensable resources. Mere survival itself dictates that we must scale down our needs, and the level of production and consumption which provision them. Social planning must abide by and institutionalize a universal austerity--one encompassing all life-spheres (Weber's term), from cultural and personal values through economic budgeting. One aim of this thesis, correspondingly,

is to address the urgency of post-scarcity as a problematic and possibility within the realm of sociological discourse. To address this urgency is to challenge, within this theoretical and discursive domain, the hegemony enjoyed by the view that scarce resources must forever dictate parameters for any social development and historical change.

To argue otherwise is not to initiate or speak something radically or discontinuously new within the sociological domain. To formulate the problematic of surpassing scarcity through negentropic development in the realm of social throught is, in part, a restorative gesture, an act of remembering and conserving the history of the domain itself. It is an act of recalling for current sociological discourse the historical concern with scarcity and abundance that animated much of the social analysis of its classical forebears, especially Marx and Weber.

We will set aside, for now, a needed complementary demonstration of Weber's concerns with this problematic. Our immediate focus here will be on laying the methodological groundwork for a strategic, animated reading of the theorizing of Karl Marx--an animated reading that would replenish the realm of prevailing sociological discourse by remembering the forgotten and suppressed problematic of scarcity and abundance as a necessary/contemporary concern.

From the standpoint of this problematic, the most relevant social theorist chosen for our reading is Marx. There are several reasons for this choice. One is because he self-consciously and potently argues that social development beyond final boundaries defined in terms of material scarcity is historically possible. Marx's texts

offer the most formidable, convincing demonstration of the historical possibility of redefining and transforming social and natural boundaries hitherto claiming to limit overall human development. Thus, Marx is chosen because he reads texts from the standpoint of a concern with the same historical problematic I share--the possibility of overcoming material scarcity.

Further, Marx is chosen for methodological purposes--because he reads others' texts in an animated way. Marx reads others--political-economists, utopian socialists, Hegelian philosophers, positivists and utilitarian thinkers, his contemporaries and classical writers--in the same way that foregoing texts already have been read in this thesis. Through an emancipatory, animated reading, Marx turns what are the static, ahistorical, and non-developmental dimensions of the writings of those theorists who had accommodated their conception of social development--more-or-less self-consciously--to the limits and principles of capital accumulation, into a vision of negentropic change, a vision which holds out to society the historical possibility of its continuous, multidimensional, qualitative development. Finally, as this thesis lays the groundwork for an animated reading of Marx's texts, I read Marx in the way that Marx reads others.

Our aim here is to explore Marx's strategic intervention into the theorizing that produces material scarcity as the sole, unsurpassable object of its theorizing. We now examine the strategy by which he constitutes the historical possibility of a post-scarcity object for theorizing and political practice. The historical practice of a method appropriate to such an object constitutes a new kind of

theorizing, one corresponding to Marx's emancipatory interest in making a new kind of history through self-consciously producing an abundant social formation. Furthermore, Marx's mode of theorizing is self-reflexive. It understands itself as embodying a conscious intention that would thoroughly transform prevailing theoretical discourse, social relationships, and political practice. Marx's mode of theorizing understands itself to be an intentional political activity, as a self-conscious strategic intervention into hitherto and currently prevailing power relationships:

> Now philosophy has become worldly, and the most incontrovertible evidence of this is that the philosophical consciousness has been drawn, not only externally but also internally, into the stress of battle. But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present--I am speaking of a ruthless criticism of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.[1]

As self-reflexive activity, then, Marx's method understands itself to be a strategic practice, the political accomplishment of an historical difference. This difference is people producing a post-scarcity mode of production, an abundant social formation. This historical possibility is, in our view, the principal object of Marx's theorizing--the consciously intended accomplishment of his political strategy. Further, this strategy is at once theoretical and practical, neither merely contemplative nor merely spontaneous, athoretical, un-self-conscious behavior. This bimodal strategy self-consciously avoids reproducing any of the myriad dichotomies that have pervaded Western thought and discourse. Moreover, it resists its own being

dichotomized in any dimension. Thus, in its embodiment as a text, it resists its being read in terms of any set of dualistic categories.

Marx's analytic strategy, thus, is neither merely ideal and contemplative, nor is it merely instrumental, an occasion for any action whatsoever that calls itself radical. Marx's strategy is an internally-related, mutually-embedded kind of theorizing-and-practical/political-project. It is practiced as a dynamic tension between both moments--neither separating nor collapsing them--and produces their reciprocal, ongoing change and mutual qualitative development. It is a strategy which is transformative in intention, emancipatory in interest. Marx's term for it is praxis.

This thesis shows how we read the texts that actively embody Marx's praxis. These texts are often Marx's animated readings of other--often positivistic--texts. Furthermore, the focal object of Marx's strategic reading is analyzing-and-realizing the possibility of abundant social development. In our view, Marx's mode of strategic reading is archetypal--a would-be abundant activity--an activity that would transcend the scarcity-ridden historical context within which it is initially situated. Thus, Marx's theorizing is exemplary of one kind of post-scarcity activity.

This activity is the analytic object of this thesis, an activity about which this thesis is trying to theorize, and which this thesis would exemplify as well. Thus, the thesis is trying to do precisely what it is theorizing about. The very object of its analysis--Marx's reading--exemplifies the kind of abundant activity which the thesis itself would display. The thesis intends to engage in the activity which it aims to understand. It does so self-consciously

as a self-reflexive activity. Its self-reflexivity means that it would scrutinize and understand itself in the same way as it would understand its object.

Like Marx's reading, this thesis understands itself as a proto-abundant activity. It ongoingly develops its objects beyond their present historical boundaries. The historical transcendence of scarcity-bound social relationships is one of its objectives. One major abiding concern herein is to understand and foster its own self-development. This is not merely to achieve a contemplative self-awareness. Its self-referential quality does not deny in any way the rootedness and intentionality of its activity in the contemporary world. The thesis is itself a strategic, practical, self-critical, proto-abundant, historical activity that would promote the qualitative development of current social relationships beyond the present historical constraints of material scarcity.

The thesis is necessarily historically-situated in overlapping discursive, theoretical and institutional domains which have been long dominated, bounded and consolidated by structures, categories, dynamics, logics and meanings rooted in material scarcity. Thus, linguistic and discursive conventions and categories that have hitherto prevailed in this historical context are necessarily at work here and now. These conventions can be treated in radically alternative ways. The prevailing way has been to understand them as so many mirrors that merely reflect without transforming a given reality. Correspondingly the languages of both mainstream theorizing and everyday discourse are treated as neutral, passive, unobtrusive media for the mere conveyance of always-already-existing, determinate facts and meanings.

An alternative reading of language and discursive conventions treats them as so many socially-produced, active forces which, in turn, have always already entered into the very constitution, maintenance and transformation of social reality. Rather than merely reflect an inert image of reality, allegedly just as it is, languages both are constituted by and actively constitute prevailing social relationships. Giddens offers a Wittgensteinian formulation of the overall social constitution of prevailing modes of discourse by characterizing the process in terms of learning paradigmatic "language games." These, in turn, are cultural expressions of a "form of life." For Giddens, the form of life is internalized partly by social actors learning to find their way about within discursive paradigms. The learning of any language game, moreover, is never merely automatic or smooth. Modes of discourse are always learned in terms of what distinguishes them from what they are not--that is, from alternative or rival modes of discourse. To quote Giddens:

> . . . the successive development of paradigms within science, and of the actor's learning to 'find his way about' within a paradigm. . . . The process of learning a paradigm or language-game as the expression of a form of life is also a process of learning what that paradigm is not: that is to say, learning to mediate it with other, rejected, alternatives, by contrast to which the claims of the paradigm in question are clarified.[2]

Moreover the conflictual nature of this process of learning language games is further underscored as follows:

> This process is itself often embroiled in the struggles over interpretation which result from the internal fragmentation of frames of meaning, and from the fragility of the boundaries that separate what is 'internal' to the frame from what is 'external' to it, i.e., belongs to discrete or rival meaning frames.[3]

Giddens bemoans the tendency on the part of Kuhn and others to characterize this rivalry by exaggerating the internal consistency of these paradigms, treating them as if they were closed systems, completely impervious to each other. In his view, this exaggerated relativism of standpoints leads theory and research into theoretically sterile problematics which, at bottom, are generated by the false assumption of the quasi-absolute separateness of these alternative discursive and theoretical modes. To quote Giddens:

> This leads to a characteristic difficulty in dealing with meaning-variance between paradigms. . . . How is it possible to get from one meaning-frame into another, if they are separate and self-enclosed universes? The problem is an insuperable one as it stands. But this is because it is wrongly posed in he first place. Frames of meaning appear as discrete, thus: ( ) ( ) ( ).[4]

The alternative strategic starting point, offered by Giddens and in turn shared by this thesis, is that theoretical discourse is always already internally mediated by competing, contrasting, rival modes of discourse, including logics, categories, and meaning-configurations. To focus as we do on the continual, pervasive, reciprocal mediation by rival paradigms is to engage in a fundamentally different enterprise from the prevailing metatheorizing, criticized by Giddens for its reification of the differences amongst those rival paradigms and thereby constituting their nearly absolute ontological and epistemological separation. Giddens' alternative metatheorizing proceeds in a strategically different way:

> In lieu of this, we must substitute, as a <u>starting-point</u>, that <u>all paradigms</u> (read 'language-games,' etc.) <u>are mediated by others</u>.[5]

But to speak of "rival meaning frames" and their reciprocal, internal

mediation is to speak of power. Language and discourse are both pervaded by and active instrumentalities of prevailing power struggles within the historically-specific contexts by which they are constituted and partially constitute in their turn.

Thus, to cite one recent post-structuralist formulation of language as a medium for power:

> . . . if, as the post-structuralists claim, reality itself is language-based, then the study of language necessarily takes on a political character. The insistence that language is constitutive of reality rather than merely reflective of it suggests that contemporary critical theory has come to occupy a position very similar to, if not the same as, that of the Greek rhetoricians for whom mastering of language meant mastery of the state. The questions that propose themselves within this critical framework therefore concern, broadly, the relations of discourse and power. What makes one set of perceptual strategies or literary conventions win out over another? If the world is the product of interpretation, then who or what determines which interpretive system will prevail? . . . The similarity between contemporary critical theory and the criticism of antiquity . . . lies rather in the common perception of language as a form of power.[6]

Linguistic and discursive conventions which represent a world marked by closure, and stabilized, determinate meanings, actively constitute and maintain a strategic account of reality which poses seemingly necessary limits to other rival possibilities for theorizing, everyday speech-acts, and planning and its implementation. Language is not insulated from power, but is itself a political practice. Language is lived as an active process of accomplishing rival accounts of reality which ultimately stabilize, undermine or supplant prevailing power relationships.

One recent account formulates the socio-historical condition of languages as follows:

> Any text, then, embodies interpretations of its subject, and evaluations based on the relationship between source and addressee. These interpretive meanings are not created uniquely for the occasion; the systematic use of these linguistic structures is connected with the text's place in the socio-economic system, and hence they exist in advance of the production of the text and our reception of it. To generalize further, there are social meanings in a natural language which are precisely distinguished in its lexical and syntactic structure and which are articulated when we write or speak. There is no discourse which does not embody such meanings. Our 'organized selections' from among these meanings are responses to our practical theories of the nature of the communicative events in which we participate; we have been socialized into holding these theories and our judgments are largely automatic. It is important to stress the automatic nature of this process. Much of the commentary in this book suggests the processes 'X manipulates Y through language' and 'X pulls the wool over Y's eyes through language'. But these processes tend to be unconscious for most members of the speech community, for much of the time. If they were not, they would not work.[7]

A further specification of the power-laden character of language practices can be found in Dworkin's recent examination of naming phenomena as a means for domination in male-female relationships. To quote from her Pornography: Men Possessing Women:

> . . . men have the power of naming, a great and sublime power. This power of naming enables men to define experience, to articulate boundaries and values, to designate each thing its realm and qualities, to determine what can and cannot be expressed, to control perception itself. . . . Male supremacy is fused into the language, so that every sentence both heralds and affirms it. Thought, experienced primarily as language, is permeated by the linguistic and perceptual values developed expressly to subordinate women. Men have defined the parameters of every subject. All feminist arguments, however radical in intent or consequence, are with or against assertions or premises implicit in the male system, which is made credible or authentic by the power of men to name. No transcendence of the male system is possible as long as men have the power of

> naming. Their names resonate wherever there is human life. As Prometheus stole fire from the gods, so feminists will have to steal the power of naming from men, hopefully to better effect.[8]

Again, the political nature of language is avowed by advocates of the wholesale replacement of the language of the indigenous tribes of American Indians--who include it as one tactic in an overall strategy of whites achieving total domination over them. To quote an American Congressman in full support of the outright violent seizure of Indian lands (speaking against the false sentimentality of liberal "gentlemen" who would do the same but with a guilty conscience):

> But the race of Indians will perish! Yes sir! The Indians of this continent, like all other men, savage or civilized, must perish. . . What is history but the obituary of nations? . . . Whose fate do we lament? The present generation of Indians? They will perish like the present generation of white men. . .
>
> When gentlemen talk of preserving the Indians, what is it that they mean to preserve? Is it their mode of life? No. You intend to convert them from hunters to agriculturalists or herdsmen. Is it their barbarous laws and customs? No. You promise to furnish them with a code, and prevail upon them to adopt habits like your own. Their language? No. You intend to supersede their imperfect jargon by teaching them your own rich, copious, energetic tongue. Their religion? No. You intend to convert them from their miserable and horrible superstitions to the mild and cheering doctrines of Christianity.
>
> What is it then that constitutes Indian individuality--the identity of that race which gentlemen are so anxious to preserve? Is it the more copper color of the skin, which marks them--according to your prejudices at least--an inferior--a conquered and degraded race?[9]

The Congressman concludes in a consummately murderous turn of phrase:

> But alas! The Indians melt away before the white man, like snow before the sun! Would you keep the snow and lose the sun?[10]

Further, the self-serving deployment of linguistic devices as instruments for condoning, rationalizing, and even inducing domination is illustrated by the following two uses of extended metaphors. First, we quote the Indian-hating historian, Francis Parkman:

> The Indian is hewn out of rock. You can rarely change the form without destruction of the substance. Races of inferior energy have possessed a power of expansion and assimilation to which he is a stranger; and it is this fixed and rigid quality which has proved his ruin. He will not learn the arts of civilization, and he and forest must perish together.[11]

And secondly, let us note the metaphorical rationalization for uprooting Indians and driving them from their homelands:

> The trees of the forest, and particularly the most useless trees, are most difficult of transplanting; but fruit-trees, which are more particularly designated by the Great Spirit for the nourishment and comfort to man, require not only to be transplanted, but to be nourished, cultivated, and even pruned, in order to bring forth good fruit.[12]

Another example illustrates how language can function as a constitutive force in the detrimental disintegration of traditional, subsistence economies and their web of social relationships, through their incorporation into international processes of capitalist development under the dominion of multinational corporate interests. This is shown in the functioning of the term "Bisnis" in Papua New Guinea in actively consolidating the hegemony of capitalist ideology, values, and motivations in place of traditional mores grounded in the subsistence economy. To quote from Grossman's description of Papua village life in the recent study, "The Cultural Ecology of Economic Development" (1981):

> The household is the basic unit of production. . . . The villagers are also involved in a variety of cash-earning enterprises, or bisnis . . . such as coffee production, cattle raising, selling and exchanging pigs, and marketing produce. Occasionally people also work as wage-laborers in a nearby expatriate-owned coffee plantation.
>
> Cash-earning enterprises are not only sources of income. They are also symbols of bisnis, presently a culturally valued endeavor. Bisnis has entered into the criteria defining a man of respect and prestige, one held in esteem by his fellow villagers. To earn respect a man must not only help his kin, be generous, work hard, and provide adequately for his family. He must also be a man of bisnis who is engaged in various cash-earning endeavors. What is significant for the man of bisnis is not so much the amount of money he makes, though this may be important, but that he is involved in bisnis. Such activity in and of itself is considered good. This is regarded as a self-evident truth. It is evidence of one's character. Not to be involved in any form of cash-earning enterprise invites the label of rabisman, a person of no worth or consequence, lacking in prestige. Just as individuals must be involved in income earning, so too must kinship groups. At both the individual and group levels, competition in bisnis is an important avenue for the attainment of prestige.[13]

The disintegrative ravages of such linguistic-cultural-economic processes are further documented by the following evaluative comments by Barabunan villagers concerning the impact of cash-earning activities now dominating a social life once enmeshed in subsistence-based cultural forms:

> Before we planted gardens at all times of the year. Now bisnis has arrived, and we think only of bisnis.
>
> Before, we thought only of gardens and building strong garden fences. Now, this time, everyone plays cards, forgets about the fences, which rot, drinks beer all time, and is lazy; people do not care for gardens either. They are bored with gardening. If they are hungry, it is their own fault.[14]

Clearly, judging from the foregoing sampling, language practices are actively constitutive aspects of larger historical processes of

economic, political and cultural dominion. To maintain the fundamental value-neutrality of discourse, or to separate linguistic forms from power-laden linguistic practices, is to practice a politics that appears apolitical as it conceals prevailing power relationships.

Finally, in our immediate historical setting, this de-neutering of speech is most strikingly demonstrated in the strategic appropriation of discourse by what Melman calls "the permanant war economy" as a weapon in and legitimation for the unrelenting nuclear arms race. This politicization of language, appearing as its de-politicization, is seen by keen analysts like E.P. Thompson as an integral dimension of superpower rivalry in its course toward nuclear Armageddon. To quote from his recent Jeremiad, "A Letter to America":

> Language of Death . . . I have been attempting to disclose this reciprocal logic of process, which is driven forward by the armorers of both superpowers. And what I have been contending is this: First, I have shown that the premises of nuclear deterrence are irrational.
>
> Second, I have been concerned throughout with the use of language.
>
> What makes the extinction of civilized life in Europe probable is not a greater propensity for evil than in previous history but a more formidable destructive technology, a deformed political process (East and West) and also a deformed culture.
>
> The deformation of culture commences within language itself. It makes possible a disjunction between rationality and moral sensibility of individual persons and the effective political and military process. A certain kind of "realist" and "technical" vocabulary effects a closure which seals out the imagination, and prevents the reason from following the most manifest sequence of cause and consequence. It habituates the mind to nuclear holocaust by reducing everything to a flat level of normality. By habituating us to certain expectations, it not only encourages resignation--it also beckons on the event.[15]

The theoretical competition in which we are necessarily engaged here is a specification in the realms of social theory of the wider, historically-situated, contemporary conflict amongst rival political strategies for organizing and directing the course of social development. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's formulation of scientific theorizing in terms of--albeit not merely reducible to--a conflict between strategic political practices, is illustrative of our own viewpoint:

> It is the scientific field which, as the locus of a political struggle for scientific domination, assigns each researcher, as a function of his position within it, his indissociably political and scientific problems and his methods--scientific strategies which, being expressly or objectively defined by reference to the system of political and scientific positions constituting the scientific field, are at the same time political strategies. Every scientific "choice"--the choice of the area of research, the choice of methods, the choice of the place of publication . . . is in one respect--the least avowed, and naturally the least avowable--a political investment strategy, directed, objectively at least, toward maximization of strictly scientific profit, i.e., of potential recognition by the agent's competitor-peers.[16]

In this thesis, we will explore meanings and categories that articulate possibilities for social development in relation to scarcity and abundance. These categories and meanings occupy an historical "terrain" of theory and discourse upon which rival strategies for constituting reality vie for hegemony in virtually every domain--theoretical and everyday, natural and social scientific, and so forth. Their reciprocal mediation (as Giddens would call it) is always protracted political contest. We agree with Bourdieu's formulation of the dynamics of this contested theoretical terrain as a simultaneous political-epistemological conflict:

> An analysis which tried to isolate a purely "political" dimension in struggles for domination of the scientific field would be as radically wrong as the (more frequent) opposite course of only attending to the "pure," purely intellectual, determinations involved in scientific controversies. For example, the present-day struggle between different specialists for research grants and facilities can never be reduced to a simple struggle for strictly "political" power. . . . Conversely, epistemological conflicts are always, inseparably, political conflicts: so that a survey on power in the scientific field could perfectly well consist of apparently epistemological questions alone.[17]

To treat theoretical and epistemological discourse as in part irrevocably political is to strategically violate the more usual, hegemonic practices that formulate them apolitically as immunized against constitutive interests, values, and worldly concerns. From the standpoint we maintain, the apolitical version of epistemology is the currently most successful meta-theoretical account of theory. It is, thereby, tied to a political practice which would separate cognition and theoretical reality-constituting activities from power. Any working definition or convention that stipulates what does and does not constitute politics is <u>ipso facto</u> a political activity.[18] Correspondingly, the multiple relationships between historically-situated modes and strategies of cognition and discourse, and prevailing or possible configurations of power, must also be politically analyzed. This analysis, however, is beyond our current capacity and focus.

At this point we turn to explore the notion of hegemony--the apparently successful dominion of a particular standpoint--in discursive and theoretical domains. It is crucial to note, however, that hegemonic structures, patterns and conventions are neither

automatically reproduced nor permanent. Rather, hegemony is an historical relationship of relative domination which must be ongoingly accomplished and actively consolidated by prevailing linguistic and discursive practices against actual or potentially rival practices. Thus, a specific hegemony can be viewed as actually or potentially contested. For example, one recent treatment of a contested hegemony in the realm of theory is the philosopher Thomas Nagel's account in Mortal Questions of positivist hegemony. Nagel describes the quest for positivist hegemony below, first, in epistemological terms; and, then, more explicitly in terms of strategic conflict:

> The pursuit if objectivity therefore involves a transcendence of the self, in two ways: a transcendence of particularity and a transcendence of one's type. It must be distinguished from a different kind of transcendence by which one enters imaginatively into other subjective points of view, and tries to see how things appear from other specific viewpoints. Objective transcendence aims at a representation of what is external to each point of view: what is there or what is of value in itself, rather than for anyone. Though it employs whatever point of view is available as the representational vehicle--humans typically use visual diagrams and notation in thinking about physics--the aim is to represent how things are, not for any one or any type of being. And the enterprise assumes that what is represented is detachable from the mode of representation, so that the same laws of physics could be represented by creatures sharing none of our sensory modalities.[19]

Next, Nagel characterizes positivism's intention of achieving a comprehensive theoretical hegemony and notes that its achieving absolute sway is hardly guaranteed. Correspondingly, he cites the resistance of so-called subjective factors to objectivism's consolidation of the theoretical-discursive terrain.

> While there are problems about how to achieve this kind of transcendence, it is certainly one of the important ways of advancing our understanding. We cannot help wanting to extend it farther and farther, and to bring more and more

> of life and the world within its range. But the consistent pursuit of greater objectivity runs into trouble, and gives rise to the philosophical problems I have described, when it is turned back on the self, as it must be to pursue its comprehensive ambitions.
>
> The trouble occurs when the objective view encounters something, revealed subjectively, that it cannot accommodate. Its claims to comprehensiveness will then be threatened. The indigestible lump may be either a fact or a value.[20]

In Nagel's version of conflicts amongst theoretical strategies, this delimitation of the objectivist appetite by various indigestibles challenges its mastery over theoretical and discursive domains. Consequently, the failure of positivism to reduce all discourse and theorizing to its own terms results in and is expressed by its strategic deployment in conflict with rival modes of theorizing.

The strategic quality of this conflict between the objective and the subjective is emphasized in the following account of objectivism's strategic options vis a vis the recalcitrance of subjectivism:

> In either case it appears that something must give way, for two natural and necessary ways of thinking lead to a collision and cannot without adjustment be accommodated in a single view of how things are. But even allowing for adjustments, the options seem to be limited and unpalatable. If one wishes to insist that everything real must be brought under an objective description, there seems to be three courses available with respect to any recalcitrant subjective aspect: reduction, elimination, and annexation.
>
> First reduction: one may try to save the appearances as much as possible, by accommodating them under an objective interpretation. . . .
>
> Secondly, elimination: if no reduction seems plausible one may dismiss the deliverance of a subjective viewpoint as an illusion, perhaps offering an explanation of how it arises. . . .

> Thirdly, annexation: if one fails to reduce the subjective to familiar objective terms, and is unwilling to deny its reality outright, one may invent a new element of objective reality especially for the purpose of including this recalcitrant element.[21]

This thesis joins in the contest against "the voracity of the objective appetite" as a recalcitrant. Its recalcitrance, however, cannot be reduced to an equally one-sided subjectivism. As will be noted later on, neither objectivist nor subjectivist one-sidedness can constitute an abundant, post-scarcity standpoint. Indeed, their very antithesis, taken as a unitary composite, produces dualism, the very antithesis of abundance. Both separately and conjoined, objectivism and subjectivism constitute a self-divided, self-negating form of scarcity.

The abiding and ongoing historical rivalry amongst competing theoretical, ideological and/or institutional alternatives is characteristic of what Marxist social historian Raymond Williams calls a "lived hegemony." In the following citation, Williams underscores the dynamic, unstable quality of the processes by which a lived hegemony is accomplished and maintained:

> A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure. It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits. In practice, that is, hegemony can never be singular. Its internal structures are highly complex, as can readily be seen in any concrete analysis. Moreover (and this is crucial, reminding us of the necessary thrust of the concept), it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. We have then to add to the concept of

> hegemony the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony which are real and persistent elements of practice.[22]

Couched in these terms, then, the strategic practice of this thesis constitutes a specific counter-hegemonic practice within a "lived hegemony."

Again, a lived hegemony is a form of life whose ongoing, active, historically-specific accomplishment is mediated by, suppressant of, and even generates alternative, counter-hegemonic practices (including modes of discourse). Correspondingly, our theorizing constitutes a strategic intervention into a tradition of theoretical discourse which continually has posited and demonstrated the alleged necessity, naturalness and invariance of material scarcity--as if it were a permanent fixture of our existential condition. Our theorizing asserts the alternative possibility of further, ongoing qualitative development within and against an historical situation that increasingly both rationalizes and understands itself as absolutely delimited against such fundamental change.

These counter-hegemonic, proto-abundant, post-scarcity aspirations, interests, and intentions are articulated both within the context and against the prevailing modes of hegemonic discourse. Any attempted abundant speaking of abundance is necessarily historically-situated within scarcity and thus, at first, must speak <u>through</u> (even if counter to) the linguistic forms of a hegemonic historical scarcity. At the same time, discourse is not reducible to these scarcity-bound forms, meanings and categories. Neither are the

forms, meanings, and categories themselves eternally immune to ther own qualitative, historical transformation. Indeed, such a qualitative transformation is itself a development made possible through the ongoing strategic struggle that would contain specific emergent forms of post-scarcity development in part by pre-empting the means--categories and meanings--of their very articulation.

To continue in this vein, the activity of this thesis is situated in an historically-specific time-space context within which the culturally hegemonic assumption of insurpassable scarcity has been thus far successfully consolidated. This consolidation is ongoingly accomplished in part by meanings that would continually preclude aspects of post-scarcity development from speech, thought, and other intentional activities such as planning, motivation, etc. It attempts to speak of abundance and abundantly in a real socio-historical context. In that context the prevailing linguistic structures, discursive conventions, metaphors, idioms, cliches, adages, ideologies, theories, et al., are themselves pervaded by and, in turn, are active agencies in the consolidation and institutionalization of material scarcity in so many intertwined world-views and forms of social organization.

To speak about abundance, and to intend to do so abundantly, is then, to speak necessarily in the face of a comprehensive set of linguistic, discursive and other institutional constraints that would preclude or abort it. At a minimum, their inability to express emergent abundant possibilities accomplishes their widespread suppression in discourse, thought and political practice. Whether consciously intended or not, these constraints accomplish its relative

silencing, the absence of post-scarcity potentials from theorizing and everyday discourse and, correspondingly, its providing legitimate bases and goals for social choice. Post-scarcity development thereby falls short of serious standing as an historical possibility for theorizing and planning. It thereby fails to attain, as Max Weber might phrase it, "analytic significance."

Language both constitutes and is constituted by social reality and its prevailing sets of power relationships. Language is the medium through which the present situation is thought about and talked about. Never devoid of content, it is always a material force in shaping the very situation about which it speaks, through its very activity of speaking. It defines, describes, and partly constitutes what exists, what is of value or not, what is desirable, and perhaps most important of all, what is and is not possible. It is thereby one element in producing, reproducing and transforming the parameters of its own socio-historical setting. As Goran Therborn has pointed out in a recent work, language functions in relation to human activity in providing a total matrix of affirmations, sanctions, prescriptions and prohibitions that tap and harness energies that are bound up in politically (or for that matter any) significant behaviors.[23] Language thereby provides necessary--albeit not sufficient--grounds for the very possibility of framing and enacting intentions in the world. As Therborn makes clear, one politico-ideological activity of language consists in its constituting both: how the situation that <u>is</u>, the historical present, is thought about and talked about; and, whether the situation that is <u>not yet</u>, the historically absent, could possibly be

better than the present one.

Here we confine ourselves to a merely empirical citation of some of the myriad linguistic expressions by which material scarcity is rendered as a seemingly eternal, invariant dimension of existence. For example, everyday discourse is pervaded by a widespread set of adages and cliches which promote or rationalize basic resignation to a world allegedly impervious to fundamental change and bereft of novel possibilities. These include the following: "There is nothing new under the sun," "It's just human nature," "Human nature never changes," "You can't fight city hall," "You can't get blood from a stone," "The only thing that is certain is death and taxes," and so forth. These phrases invoke an intractable sense of closure, repetition, and insuperable limit. These thereby promote--through their quasi-automatic invocation--a mood of resignation that partly stabilizes a given political status quo by paralysing motivations and energies that otherwise might be harnessed qualitatively to transform it. Scarcity in the sense of a human condition which cannot satisfy the extant--let alone potential--plethora of human needs, wants, and desires is implicit in a set of adages that invoke and rationalize relentless individual competition against other people as a necessary survival imperative. For example: "It's a dog-eat-dog world," "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" (allegedly Coach Vince Lombardi), "Nice guys finish last" (Manager Leo Durocher) and, from the world of advertising slogans, "You only go around once in life, so grab for all the gusto you can get."

Another set of common sense homilies, while less strident in tone, nonetheless promotes a basic accommodation to things as they are

through a mood of "knowing," world-wise stoicism. That mood masks its despair over the possibility of fundamental change with the posture of tempered, reasonable expectation--"already having been there"--*vis a vis* a world where fulfillment of needs is the exception, and their frustration the rule. These range from the seemingly innocuous "everything in moderation" and "nothing in excess"; to the more knowing, "beggars can't be choosers"; to the most chilling "waste not, want not."

Even the apparently optimistic "every cloud has a silver lining," or the seemingly shopworn "Don't count your chickens before they hatch," presuppose the greater regularity of disappointment instead, and promotes a "keep your chin up" outlook that seeks compensation for probable suffering before it risks satisfaction. Having already settled for less when more or different might yet be accomplished, this compensatory bromide reduces expectation, aborts desire, and undermines that urgency that is required by committed efforts that persist in making a genuine, qualitative difference in the world as it is immediately given. Perhaps a truer sense of its assumption as to what is possible is rendered by its converse, "Every silver lining has its cloud."

A sense of scarcity as an invariant principle that relentlessy eases people with the mere glimpse, or partial experience of fulfillment, is implicit in "You can't have your cake and eat it too," as well as in the bitter lament, "Here today, gone tomorrow." One strategy for securing even a relative, tentative satisfaction in such a world is romance, the quest for the perfect mate, the security (*sic*) of unrequited love and longing, the drive for possessing the other as if

accommodation and individual compensation in a world where loving, tenderness, and abiding friendship are discontinuous and relatively scarce experiences. Relentlessly celebrating love and union, its commercial monopoly over musical communication in the mass media attests to their relative non-availability on a regular basis. Treating the possibilities for ongoing community as minimal, the prospects for regular sharing and solidarity as scarce, popular culture--especially songs pervasively distributed by the mass media--propound romance as the decisive form--motivation and goal--of interpersonal experience.

A mere sampling of titles and phrases that have pervaded everyday awareness in the present context barely attests to the predominance of private romance as the theme par excellence in the public sphere of musical discourse. We find best-selling songs with titles and catchy refrains such as: "You are my everything," "My world is empty without you babe," "My one and only you," "The Two of Us," "I only have eyes for you," and so forth. Any experience of even partial fulfillment in a heartless world becoms the compelling basis for pursuing and defining that insular, fortress-like relationship, the romantic couple. One well-known popular epiphany sings the praises of the romantic, two-against-the-world relationship:

> Here we are, you and I
> Maybe millions of people go by
> But I only have eyes for you, dear . . .
> I don't know if we're in a garden
> Or on a crowded avenue
> But I only have eyes for you.[24]

Indeed the ubiquity of this specific theme is but the obverse of the more general, daily experience of pervasive loneliness amidst other

people that pervades contemporary social life in the present historical context. That the predominance of romantic themes over alternatives in the sphere of mass communication is barely an occasion for comment (let alone surprise) is testimony to both the widespread unfulfilled need for love and the pervasive fatalism with which its general scarcity is accepted. However, the domination of emotional discourse by categories of romantic love and private possession, furthered--indeed nurtured--by romantic pop songs, is far from unexceptional in its consequences.

Such public discourse embodies a strategy for need-fulfillment, for possessing and securing love (the other person as love object), which at once assumes love's general scarcity and then winds up insuring it by privatizing and possessing it in the form of the self-isolating couple. In short, romantic coupling, sustained and promoted by popular songs--as one amongst many other mass cultural forms--acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy. As a strategy for private eed-fulfillment, it reproduces precisely that generalized scarcity of loving relationships whose ostensible aim it is to surpass. Viewing most other social relationships as secondary, tertiary, expendable, instrumental or meaningless, individualized romantic coupling reproduces the very general loneliness and separation--that historical absence of community--which it first bemoans and then cites as its own

justification. Beginning with the assumption of the scarcity of social means for emotional fulfillment, romantic coupling insures it.

The songs that embody and proffer it as a strategy for emotional fulfillment also offer it as consolation for a bad reality. The abiding and potential prospects for mutual fulfillment through shared, cooperative, collective projects--and with them the historical restoration of a general community of interests and feeling--take, at best, second place. Compared to "you," my eyes are blind to the possibilities offered by the other 999,999 of those million who pass by. Clearly, then, romantic love is not without its political consequences: its two-person focus actively impoverishes or aborts social possibilities for concerted, organized, widespread and broad-scaled efforts at producing qualitative transformations of the extant socio-political status quo. Thus, it is one strategic mode of accommodation to the social world just as it is. Judging from prevailing popular song content, the stuff of friendships--a far more generally accessible, communitarian, and non-exclusive mode of social relationships--are of secondary (if any) importance. Indeed, it is scarcity, not relative availability, which underlies and stipulates what has value and meaning in the present historical setting. The hegemony of romantic discourse in/as emotional life is one active agency in producing and maintaining that emotional scarcity which it at once decries and accepts. It is an active mode of resignation, a decidedly political activity that buttresses prevailing institutional power alignments.

The reproduction of the social world as a whole in discourse and thought as a fixed object--finished, obdurate, and closed to

further qualitative development--is partly constituted by a set of expressions ranging from the philosophical adage, "The whole is equal to the sum of its parts," to the shopworn, "Curiosity killed the cat." In both cases, the world is represented as a static, bounded whole: first, as the mere, additive product of pre-existing separate parts; and second, as an appearance whose underlying, generative causes are proscribed from scrutiny. In both cases, qualitative development is denied to the social world: first, because the whole is reduced to the pre-existent dimensions constituted by the parts and denied any self-developing, qualitative differences that might be generated through synthesizing or constituting them; and second, because potential agents of its possible change are threatened against any exploratory impulses and intentions that might emerge. The consolidation of an image of the social world as impervious to further qualitative change renders unhistorical what might otherwise be grasped as qualitatively developing through time. Under present historical conditions, then, immediately-prevailing historical institutionalizations of scarcity are eternalized and made to appear invariant.

As a lived hegemony, however, the present realm of everyday discourse also features meanings and linguistic practices which run counter to those enumerated above. It is true, of course, that in comparison to those signifying scarcity, we find far fewer phrases that signify a world pregnant with emergent development. This attests to the lived hegemony of static, non-developmental, scarcity-bound modes of self-understanding in an historical situation that has already been and might yet be qualitatively different from its present state. And

yet, notwithstanding this relative domination of discourse and meanings by pervasive modes of scarcity, we can cite the following alternative grouping. These do not signify an abundant condition per se, as if an abundant state of affairs were either already existing or were decisively at hand. Nevertheless, they do suggest at least some possibility that differences from prevailing conditions and appearances might yet emerge, or are already emergent within the present situation. Some of these, for example, take the form of a basic tension between surface appearances and underlying reality as in: "There's more in this than meets the eye," "You can't judge a book by its cover," and "It's just the tip of the iceberg." Emergent or abiding, but previously undetected possibilities, lurking beneath the apparent surface calm are implicit in "Still waters run deep."

References to change and possibility as fundamental to social life nevertheless remain infrequent at best. The sense of the universe's being constituted to continuously undergo transformations was proffered by Heraclitus' ancient adage "You can't step into the same river twice." By contrast, we are hard-pressed to cite equivalent formulations of a world-in-continuous-development within current everyday discourse--beyond the more random, episodic sense of individuals "going through changes." Again, the sense of a whole's being qualitatively different from and transcendent of a mere addition of pre-existent parts is of course stated by "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." However, while not reducible to a mere summation of parts, there is nothing in this formulation which signifies that the distinguishing characteristic of the whole is its ongoing involvement in qualitative changes. And finally, within the

domain of popular songs, there has been barely minimal reference to basic change as an ongoing, integral dimension of daily social and interpersonal life. Besides Dylan's nineteen-sixties anthem, "The Times They are a Changin'"[25] and his terse reminder that nothing merely maintains itself unchanging--"He not busy being born is busy dying"[26]--references to change have been virtually monopolized by the vicissitudes of romantic relationships and the corresponding meteorological metaphors that are so often used to describe them.

Albeit on rare occasion, a popular lyric that stands at odds with the prevailing scarcity-bred compulsion to privately possess another person or be lost, emerges--even in the realm of popular love songs:

> Love is a rose
> but you better not pick it
> Only grows
> when it's on the vine
> Handful of thorns
> And you'll know you've missed it
> Lose your love
> When you say the word "mine."[27]

Still, the absence of positive imagery for alternative social relationships to those rooted in private possession must not go unnoticed.

In sum, having cited a few examples of counter-hegemonic, everyday linguistic practices in the prevailing historical context, we must acknowledge that significations for ongoing development and qualitative change--let alone abundant possibilities--are relatively absent from everyday discourse and popular song. This relative absence of developmental, let alone post-scarcity themes and meanings in some everyday forms of discourse, can be regarded ahistorically as a kind of

intrinsic or structural property of nature, consciousness, or language itself. Alternatively, this relative silence can be read actively as an ongoing political accomplishment--the effective, non-permanent, pre-emption or repression of possible kinds of discourse that wouldthreaten prevailing power relationships and their multiple forms of legitimation. Again, the relative absence of various terms and categories from the immediate public discourse attests to the current hegemony of a set of power interests in defining the priorities and limits of socio-economic planning.

For example, we readily note the virtual silence that insulates such once more-idly deployed categories of economic possibility like "redistribution" of wealth and "conversion" of arms expenditures to peaceful uses, from public discourse. Their virtual exile from current public political discourse attests to the prevailing hegemony of the wealthiest in determining overall tax policy, and that of the priorities of the so-called military industrial complex over the budget process. These terms, moreover, by no means necessarily entail the qualitative transformation of scarcity-bound power relationships in new, post-scarcity directions. Rather, they are primarily redistributive notions which, while presaging even radical transformations of prevailing power alignments nonetheless fall short of--even raising as a conscious possibility--the historical transcendence of material scarcity.

Post-scarcity, abundant possibilities are not restricted to redistributive conceptions of socio-economic development within current historical parameters of material scarcity. Instead, we shall note in Part Two below, abundance is primarily a category of production,

not of distribution. Moreover, a post-scarcity, non-reductionist, multidimensional understanding of production must entail both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of producing in relationship to human needs. The prevailing scarcity-constituting discourse, however, reduces "abundance" either to the pejorative forms of Utopian fantasy, or to a kind of production narrowly defined as the unilinear, strictly quantitative increase in the available supply of consumer goods. Again, wider significances implied by abundant development are virtually silenced through being strategically limited in public discourse to an economistic conception of production. This impoverished notion of abundance both reproduces the historically prevailing form of commodity production and defends its attendant hierarchy of power relationships against political/ideological challenge.

In sum, prevailing power alignments--regarding class, sex, race, age, the nation state, et al.--are partly reproduced and defended by active, hegemonic strategies that prevent, marginalize, or appropriate categories and meanings necessary for the very thinkability or discussability of competing alternatives. As we have argued above, these strategies for maintaining hegemony are deployed both within the framework of material scarcity, and against theoretical and political rivals that would transcend its boundaries. In these ways and others, that which exists is desirable, and the definition of what is possible are constituted within a framework still bound by historically specific conditions of material scarcity, and against theoretical and political rivals that would transcend its boundaries. The relative absence of discursive means of post-scarcity discourse partly constitutes the lived hegemony of interests whose domination over processes of

social development is anchored and reproduced by their current monopolization over the production and allocation of material and cultural resources, technology, and the means of public discourse--mass communications. The resultant official monologue about scarcity, the current suppression of post-scarcity discourse from potential public dialogue are, then, strategic practices that virtually enforce material scarcity at a time when multiple kinds of post-scarcity possibilities have become conceivable and possible.

NOTES TO PROLOGUE

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10. Ibid., p. 33n.

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12. Ibid., p. 36.

13. Larry Grossman, "The Cultural Ecology of Economic Development," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 71:2 (June 1981).

14. Ibid., p. 232.

15. E.P. Thompson, "A Letter to America," in Protest and Survive, eds. E.P. Thompson and Dan Smith (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), pp. 41-42.

16. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Specifity of the Scientific Field," in French Sociology: Rupture and Renewal Since 1968 ed. Charles C. Lemert (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 262.

17. Ibid., p. 260.

18. Alan Wolfe, The Limits of Legitimacy: Political Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 289. To quote:

> The question must be asked, then, how a society comes to apply one particular definition of politics and not another. No given conception of the "political" should be seen as ideologically neutral, to be accepted as it appears on the surface with no questions asked. The process through which any society decides which acts, ideas, institutions, practices, and persons are to be called political and which are to be relegated to the non-political is itself a political act. What is needed is a politics of politics; before the political dynamics of late capitalist society can be grasped, politics itself must be politically analyzed.

19. Thomas Nagel, Mortal Questions (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 209.

20. Ibid., p. 210.

21. Ibid., pp. 210-11.

22. Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 112, 113.

23. Goran Therborn, The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 93-100.

24. Harry Warren and Al Dubin, "I Only Have Eyes for You." (Warner Brothers Music, 1934).

25. Bob Dylan, "The Times They are a'Changin'", Bob Dylan Song Book (New York: Warner Publications, 1974), pp. 118-119.

26. Bob Dylan, "It's Alright, Ma, I'm Only Bleedin'." Bob Dylan Song Book, p. 101.

27. Neil Young, "Love is a Rose," Linda Ronstadt Greatest Hits: Songbook (New York: Warner Publications, Inc., 1978), p. 41.

PART ONE

A METHODOLOGY OF READING

CHAPTER ONE

EMANCIPATORY ANIMATED READING:
READING AS A DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIP

In this moment we are reading again. This dissertation is both an activity of reading and provides an occasion for your, for a reader's, reading. It is thereby a fertility, an invitation for further development. Alternatively, the dissertation might be considered a finished object; and, again, it might be considered to have just begun, just above where the writing started on the page. That is, it might be construed as a self-contained or bounded object-in-itself.

This dissertation is a reading that self-consciously locates itself amidst a broader and deeper discourse that has already long been taking place, to which the dissertation adds and, in turn, in whose further development it intends to participate. The intention of such a reading is social change.

If the act of reading has this quality, then you read not as one reads a text that is held over here or out there, as a self-bounded object upon which an operation, reading, is being performed. Instead, reading is our present engagement made possible by the social production of this writing in the midst of an ongoing discourse.

A reading, then, is an historically-situated, dynamic relationship amongst discursants occasioned by any of a panoply of gathering points for discourse--conversation, groups, performances, meetings, examinations, monographs, dissertations. These gathering points are like so many historical densities, dynamic sites of confluence and conflict amongst multiple social and historical relationships--including relationships among authors and critics, writers and readers. These relationships are discursively embodied and expressed in historically specific languages that partly constitute and have been socially developed within the matrix of the historical setting.

Barthes' characterization states this in regard to relationships among critics and authors:

> For on the one hand, the language each critic chooses to speak does not come down to him from Heaven; it is one of the various languages his age affords him, it is objectively the end product of a certain historical ripening of knowledge, ideas, intellectual passions--it is a necessity; and on the other hand, this necessary language is chosen by each critic as a consequence of a certain existential organization, as the execise of an intellectual function which belongs to him in his own right, an exercise in which he puts all his "profundity," i.e., his choices, his pleasures, his resistances, his obsessions.[1]

Barthes characterizes this discursively embodied critic-author relationship as both historically-specific and dialogic:

> Thus begins, at the heart of the critical work, the dialogue of two histories and two subjectivities, the author's and the critic's. . . . it is a construction of the intelligibility of our own time.[2]

Giddens sharpens the conflictual qualities of the discursive relationships that constitute gathering points by noting that learning and deploying languages is participation in a rivalry amongst competing meanings and interpretations. To quote:

> The process of learning a paradigm or language-game as the expression of a form of life is also a process of learning what that paradigm is not: that is to say, learning to mediate with other, rejected, alternatives, by contrast to which the claims of the paradigm in question are clarified. This process is itself often embroiled in the struggles over interpretation which result from the internal fragmentation of frames of meaning, and from the fragility of the boundaries that separate what is 'internal' to the frame from what is 'external' to it, i.e., belongs to discrete or rival meaning frames.[3]

On his part, Giddens characterizes this relationship amongst rival discursive paradigms as one of reciprocal mediation:

> Frames of meaning appear as discrete, thus: ( ) ( ) ( ). In lieu of this, we must substitute, as a <u>starting-point</u>, that <u>all paradigms</u> (read 'language games,' etc.) <u>are mediated by others</u>.[4]

Here, in contrast, we have honed Barthes' dialogic and Giddens' mediational relationships amongst discursants and discourses still more sharply. That is, we apprehend and grasp them as so many intentions in conflict. Correspondingly a reading, as a pivotal discursive activity, is both intentional and performed in and as strategic rivalry with respect to other such intentions, strategies, subjectivities and histories.

Our purpose first is to situate our method and, of necessity,

to give it exposition in relationship to rival modes of proceeding. Our method is not reducible to the formal precision or quasi-mechanical applicability of a formula, it is a strategy, a strategy which takes place in a complex social context. Since social contexts are constantly changing and since that change occurs in the modes of competition among interests, needs and intentions, all methods here are contextualized both historically and as rivalries.

We locate our method--emancipatory animated reading--in a mood field. It is characterized by a mood, a characteristic mode of activity, an intention. That intention, is, as we shall show, abundance.

By abundance we mean not something static or an end-state, but an open-ended activity that makes for ongoing, qualitative development of everything in its path including thereby both the activity and its path.

The rival--scarcity--is of particular importance because it is and has been the dominant mode, the dominant intention in philosophical and social theorizing and in discursive activity. Its mood has enjoyed virtually hegemonic status in our culture in a variety of characteristic forms.

Our method is not pre-fabricated--not completed, totally formed, and without surprise at the very outset. Indeed, we explore and develop our method self-consciously as a rival to that mode of scarcity. Our method is not merely dialogic, not merely to mediate and, in turn, be mediated. It is reading as <u>praxis</u>; it is reading with the purpose of change, treating itself historically and self-consciously, and--through that intention--acknowledging its

mediation, its dialogue, its strategic rivalry.

Scarcity, we will argue, has been the characteristic social mood and mode of knowing, theorizing, thinking and intercourse. Dickens displays its mood and intention during the high tide of the so-called Industrial Revolution in Hard Times:

> Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle of which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir! . . . In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words 'boys and girls,' for 'sir,' Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.
>
> Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.[5]

Another mood embodying a rival intention is presented by Nietszche's Thus Spake Zarathustra.

> When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains. Here he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not tire of it. But at last a change came over his heart, and one morning he rose with the dawn, stepped before the sun, and spoke to it thus:
>
> ..."Behold I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it.
>
> "I would give way and distribute, until the wise among men find joy once again in their folly, and the poor in their riches."[6]

We see then, how a staccato Gradgrind rivets the initially fertile, minds of his charges with so many nails in a coffin, life become leaden without novelty or prospect. By contrast, a ripening Zarathustra overflows and nurtures overflowing:

> In your self-seeking, ye creating ones, there is the foresight and foreseeing of the pregnant: What no one's eye hath yet seen, namely, the fruit--this sheltereth and saveth and nourisheth your entire love.
>
> Where your entire love is, namely with your child, there is also your entire virtue![7]

For Zarathustra, then, life is relentlessly prospective. Whereas Gradgrind enshrines stasis, Zarathustra practices development. Whereas the mood and intention of the Dickensian pedagogue's activity is scarcity, that of Nietszche's wise man is abundance. Taken together, their discourse constitutes more than dialogue, at least reciprocal mediation, indeed, a strategic rivalry.

By its mood, intention, and strategic activity, emancipatory animated reading--our method of reading--participates in this rivalry and, in our specific historical setting, develops it further. In this chapter, we will characterize, explore and further develop our method, particularly with respect to positivist modes of reading, its strategic--and hitherto prevailing--theoretical rival. Indeed, seeing all methods for reading as so many moments of strategic rivalry, our method too develops as a critique of its positivist rival. As we shall argue here, positivist modes of reading embody, display, and, thereby, enact scarcity. We will show that, in so doing, the strategically repress or even abort the fullest range of historical possibilities for textual, theoretical and, as we shall argue, social development. Conversely, we present our strategy for reading here as a strategy

which intends, fosters and displays abundant development as an emergent possibility. Indeed, this formulation and deployment of a strategy for abundance constitutes a self-conscious intervention into the theorizing tht enacts and consolidates scarcity. As we will argue, it further recommends the recovery and development of abundance as a legitimate and urgent problematic for social inquiry as both a theoretical and practical activity.

Deploying and displaying our strategy for reading, this, our work, unfolds in two sections. Part One is an emacipatory animated reading of theoretical discourse in the natural and social sciences with two intentions. First, it demonstrates the strategic repression of emergent, post-scarcity possibilities for development by hitherto prevailing positivist modes of reading and theorizing. Second, it constitutes a self-conscious, strategic intervention into empirical--and empiricist--theorizing in the physical and social sciences alike. This intervention intends to de-stabilize as well as transcend the hegemonic exclusion of the possibility of post-scarcity modes of development.

Here our reading focuses upon a recurrent debate in the natural sciences, the debate over the multiple significances--ultimately for social development--of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. We examine rival readinags of the Second Law, positivist and non-positivist (or animated) alike, from the standpoint of whether post-scarcity, abundant activity is considered possible, or whether it be expunged from discourse. At issue here is the prospect of a scarcity-bound universe ending through entropic self-depletion, or one developing abundantly through ongoing qualitative transformation,

What we call negative entropy--in our word, negentropy. Our reading of this debate over molecular behavior, moreover, enables us to read its terms, meaning, indeed, its very problematic into the domain of a social thought which has forgotten it as once having been a problematic of its own. At stake is the outcome of social and political struggles wherein the power to determine and enact what is possible--or not--for human development is the holy grail--that is the political contest over whether or not social policy and historical development must be riven to material scarcity as an invariant condition of the very possibility of social and natural existence.

In the spirit of this quest, we turn to an emancipatory animated reading of texts in the natural and social sciences and humanities that display their convergence on a common ground--the issue of "grounds," in essence, consideration of how what is possible is made possible.

As we read it, this convergent discourse on grounds posits negentropic development--albeit formalistically and lacking in historical content--as simultaneously form and content, pith and surface as,indeed, the very process and substance of historical change. In this way, our reading displays the incipient emergence within contemporary theorizing of a version of development which makes possible and, indeed is, ongoing qualitative transformation. It is a version of development which presages the possibility of surpassing a hitherto irremediable scarcity.

We see it as urgent for our own time to produce categories that are appropriate for an historically-specific discourse which articulates and fosters abundant development as an emergent historical

possibility.

Further, in order to read texts with respect to the problematic of scarcity and abundance, it is crucial to produce an account of post-scarcity objects for theorizing. In Chapter Five we formulate "objects-in-birth" as our pivotal alternative account of objects ii order to make possible the theoretical articulation of a version of qualitative transformation. Politically, this allows us to articulate the historical possibility of qualitatively reconstituting--indeed, of producing anew--the very principles of social development hitherto taken for granted as necessary, natural or inevitable. The producing of accounts of objects as objects-in-birth is a strategic political practice of de-stabilizing prevailing object-maintaining strategies, and thereby intevening into modes of discourse, theory and pratice that would immunize observers as well as objects observed against qualitative historical transformation. The formulation of this version of objects, then, is one step towards formulting an epistemology of abundance. It is a moment in a strategic political-epistemological practice that would transcend historically institutionalized forms of scarcity in favor of post-scarcity modes of social development.

Marx in and for his own time, articulated and displayed the possibility of post-scarcity development which still haunts and beckons toour own. Consequently, we devote Part Two to a demonstration of Marx's developmental mode of activity and, thereby, to remember the problematic of scarcity and abundance in and for our time. Part One intends to establish our problematic both to argue for and assert its urgency, legitimacy, and analytic significance. And, intends to

establish our strategy for reading as a method appropriate to its post-scarcity object and intention. Part Two is an emancipatory animated reading occasioned by selected writings of Karl Marx, exemplary as an emancipatory animated reader. Its strategic intention is to re-member the problematic of scarcity and abundance for present theory and other practices, through its practice of a method of reading works produced by an emancipatory strategist. Our reading will display the strategic richness of Marx's act of reading. Marx's method of critique and its categories--especially mode of production, mode of co-operation, rich totality and needs--will be seen as categories procluded and deployed with the strategic intention of transformation and further, qualitative development--Marx reading with mood and intention towards abundance.

And Marx's act of emancipatory animated reading will be displayed in generative rivalry with its historical opponents, Hegelian idealism and Political Economy, and with those on the margins of each, the left Hegelians and left Ricardians. The strategic intentions of this rivalry and struggle will be seen as the recovery of categories that strategically articulate and enact the possibility of abundance, rather than reiterate and consolidate scarcity.

Our reading Marx in Part Two concludes in a display of Marx's methodological return, his constitution of the category "rich totality" as a result of his critique of rival theorizing. For Marx, this "moment of return" is not a final result, but the beginning of a new mode of theorizing and practice. In showing this, a moment of return in Marx's strategic theorizing, our intention is not to conclude by claiming a definitive authoritative version of Marx. It is not to say

once and for all what Marx "really meant." To do this would be to produce, after all was said to the contrary, a scarcity, a positivistic reading of Marx, an author's Marx designed monologically for the reader's consumption. Instead, through our method of emancipatory animated reading, we listen to lacunae in Marx's texts, specifically notable incompletions--in our term, silences--that invite further qualitative development. Consequently, our reading takes to Da Capo in which we initiate a new beginning, a reader's departure through our emancipatory animated reading of one silence that resonates within "rich totality," Marx's moment of return. There, we read to initiate a new beginning as an activity of abundant development.

A developmental method such as ours produces in its moment the copious potential for other readings. This dissertation addesses the problematic of abundance in a historical moment in which the prospect for abundance in an historical moment in which the prospet for abundance is critically poised against its oppositive, annihilation. At present, this too is a potential development, a terminal scarcity. There are other problematics specific to and critical to this historical moment. Once such problematic--the indicated silence in Marx's "rich totality," specifically in "mode of cooperation"--is that of the individual and his or her satisfaction in the context of the human group. This problematic, like abundance, embodies a historically-specific trajectory towards fundamental social change. Correspondingly, Da Capo is an essay, a sketch, towards how our method mioght in its on-going developmental activity accress the reading of that silence to produce newly constituted, abundant meanings of freedom, satisfaction, pleasure and fellow feeling so necessary for our

moment in history, poised as we are between further possibilities and the potential extinction of possibility.

We begin by examining rival strategies for reading. The positivist argument posits the legitimacy and unproblematic status of the text we read as a given. What is there for reading is a textual object; its givenness is simply a brute fact, simply undeniable. The mere "givenness" of an object is simply so, a necessary condition of its very possibility, reality, and intelligibility. The textual object too is simply given as self-subsistent fact, offering itself to readers who can grasp it. For what it is, just as it is. Such a reading is presented as a true reflection or accurate account of the text. Its intention and credo is its undistorted mirroring and description, just as it is. The assumption of the simple givenness of objects, an object's merely "being there" is, on this account, its so-called objectivity. This equation of objectivity with givenness, however, has been radically put into question by a wide range of recent and contemporary philosophers and sociologists.

One particularly formidable and well-known sociological critique has been levelled by Jurgen Habermas in his Knowledge and Human Interests.[8] Habermas insists that the assertion of "givennness," the positing of an object as "simply there," is basically flawed, epistemologically untenable. The positivism that asserts the simple givenness of objects, that equates the objectivity of that object with its givenness, plainly misunderstands itself.

The misunderstanding is its dual failure--first, to grasp that its assertion of givenness is itself a claim to knowledge; and second, that it fails, correspondingly, to grasp that any claim to knowledge is made possible by a set of conditions. The positivist claim of "givenness" fails to grasp--let alone even attend to or thematize--the conditions of its own possibility. Indeed, to assert that a text is just a text, given independently of its reading and context just as it is, consitutes a failure to inquire into just what it is that makes such an assertion possible in the first place.

Habermas calls those conditions whereby knowledge claims are made possible by the category "interests."[9] He produces, thereby, a meta-theory of knowledge claims. Any claims to knowledge are always necessarily linked to and made possible by a specific, purposive interest. Accordingly, Habermas fashions a tripartite schema whereby he identifies three kinds of strategies for inquiry into objects. Each is linked respectively with the specific, purposive interest that makes such a knowledge-claim or strategy for inquiry possible in the first place.

Our aim here is not to evaluate or criticize this meta-theory of knowledge. It is, rather, to use as it stands Habermas' tripartite schema of knowledge-constituting interests for better defining our own strategy for inquiry. That is the method of this work. Reading, as I use the term here, is a strategy for inquiring into relationships that we call texts. There are contending strategies for reading texts that parallel the contending strategies for inquiry into any objects. To identify these strategies and the interests which anchor them and make them possible will enable us to identify and demarcate the strategy and

intention that informs this work as a reading of texts. Thus, we utilize Habermas' schema for the heuristic purpose of self-definition and self-clarification. Habermas helps to characterize the strategy for reading that this work performs. What should be noted is that the text resonates differently with respect to those different strategic intentions.

Returning to Habermas, his tripartite division of strategies for inquiry starts with three kinds of science--empirical-analytic sciences, historical-hermeneutical sciences, and the critically-oriented sciences. For each process of inquiry, there is an animating cognitive interest. This purposive intention guides each respective mode of inquiry. The lines Habermas draws help define the method of our own work.

The empirical-analytic sciences consitute their knowledge-claims with repect to a technical cognitive interest.[10] This interest is defined as an interest in achieving predictability and control over objectifiable natural processes. In this chapter, the strategy for reading texts that corresponds to this technical interest is called a positivist reading, or at times, a concrete one. This strategy and its contrast with the reading performed by and as this work will be explored below.

The historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporate what Habermas calls a practical cognitive interest. That interest is concerned generally with interpretation--with the interpretive understanding of meanings and configurations of meanings that abide in texts.[11] More specifically, as Thomas McCarthy suggests, the practical cognitive interest recognizes that "the survival of societal individuals is

linked to the existence of a reliable intersubjectivity of understanding in ordinary language communication."[12] In this chapter, the corresponding strategy for reading texts will be called a hermeneutic kind of animated reading.

Finally, what Habermas calls the critical sciences are anchored in an emancipatory cognitive interest.[13] Two examples of what Habermas means are Marx's critique of ideology and Freud's psychoanalysis. Habermas's emancipatory interest guides those strategies for inquiry whose intention is to break with modes of domination and forced dependency that pervade daily social dynamics. This interest guides inquiry into modes of consciousness and communication that are pervaded by two types of failure. On the one hand, there are failures to attend to meanings and understandings that exert domination over people's lives because they appear to be natural and eternal when they are merely historical. And, secondly, there are failures to become conscious of meanings and understandings which have long been repressed, but whose recovery for conscious awareness could presage action to emancipate people from previous forms of domination. In this chapter, the strategy for reading which corresponds to such an emancipatory interest is called an emancipatory kind of animated reading.

The intention of an emancipatory animated reading, in contrast to the hermeneutic kind of animated reading, is to achieve a radical transformation that currently pervades daily life. Our forthcoming exploration of this strategic mode of reading will serve to further situate the animated reading this work employs. Significantly, our own method both builds upon and deviates from existing animated readings of

the emancipatory kind.

We will proceed, then, by inquiring into competing strategies of reading an explore their divergent treatments of texts. The order of presentation will follow Habermas' tripartite scheme: first, the positivist reading, corresponding to the technical interest; then the hermeneutic kind of animated reading, anchored in a practical interest; and lastly the emancipatory kind of animated reading, grounded in the so-called emancipatory interdst and its transformative intentions. This schema of presentation will serve to situate and formally clarify the mode of animated reading of texts performed here.

This thesis does not use a traditional, linear, chronological, and literal reading of texts as its method. It deliberately moves away from the positivist reading tradition in sociology. The positivist readers regard the text as if it exists "out there," independently of the author's intention, the reader's values and interpretations, the activity of reading, and its historical setting. They believe it is possible to read and describe the text just as it is, existing as an independent, self-contained object. The text can allegedly be read just as it is; it has an inherent, essential reality that would be violated by any interpretation superimposed by a reader.

The text is seen as an inviolable object. Thus, positivist reading confines its version of a "text" to those intrinsic boundaries it apparently sets for itself. As a self-subsistent object, "the text" is posited as unchanging and eternal. It is ahistorical; in itself it undergoes no internal modification or qualitative development of meaning or structure through time.

A positivist reading grasps the text within the framework of a

set of dualisms. For instance, positivists posit that it is possible merely to describe what is in the text without necessarily explaining it. They believe in the possibility of relaying a purely descriptive account of what is there. That is, what's there is there as a sum totality, closed and finished. In principle, positivists deny that any reading on the part of the reader is inseparable from its being an act that necessarily transforms the totality of intra-textual relationships as well as--and in reelationship to--so-called, extra-textual ones. Instead, whenever an act of reading is regarded as a process of selectivity, the reader is one who then merely adds or substracts elements from the sum total of textual contents which are always-already there as a finite, completed universe.

A positivist or concrete reading treats the text as fundamentally separable from the reader's interests and values. The extraction of meanings and data, the descriptions of events, the discovery of knowledge all may occur in a neutral, merely technical sense. That process notwithstanding, the text is left inviolate by the positivists' reading. They act as if an ideal reader can give a faithful reproduction of a text, just as it is. A "true" reading, then, would simply register or reiterate what's there; it yields--in principle--a literal account of the text just as it is.

By defining reading in the dualistic terms--a subject that reads and a fundamentally different object that is read--the positivistic (or concrete) reading severs the values, interests and interpretations of the reader from the text. This mode of reading posits them as subjective--external or extrinsic--to the reified self-contained object which is considered the text. Correspondingly,

the textual object is seen as having its own inner logic, inner data, inner meaning. It has its own self-defined outer limits which correct readings from subjectivistic interventions. Thus, the subject and object are irrevocably distinct. Here, that type of reading serves as an exemplar of subject-object dualism. In principle, the knowledge and description of the text-object are irremediably separated from interests, values and interpretation of the subject-reader.

The text is treated literally: it is treated as it is offered, as it--allegedly--merely "appears" to the eye. The surface conventions are respected. Any gaps or silences are merely omissions. Evasions and absences are unproblematic. Unannounced or covert purposes and unstated intentions are not "there," and stipulated as invisible, are thereby defended against subjective intrusions. Fundamentally, the object is deemed as privileged terrain, legitimately independent of subjective interventions in its rightful self-enclosure. Reading, when correct, is a mirroring of the reality of the text. A "proper" reading is its principled, self-restrained, "true" reflection. Genuine description is simply literal--reproduction, subsequent readings are the mere, infinitely repeatable repetition of what is simply there.

If, in principle, the reader is, only mirroring the text "out there," merely repeating <u>ad infinitum</u> what is already at hand, then the act of reading is simply not intelligible present historical, or transformative activity. The reader's relationship to the text is thus eternal--ahistorical and non-developmental. The text is treated canonically as if it were unchanging, written for the ages. Thus, the positive reading becomes limited, in its ideal form, to a passive reflection. Reading is not a transformative act which has the

historical potential to be a vehicle of real change, an activity that makes a real difference in the world.

To what we shall call the vulgar positivist reader, then, "what you see is what you see." Correspondingly, "what is to be seen" is "what there is to be seen." However, it is possible even within, broadly speaking, the positivist tradition, to not consider the text merely as a finished independent product. For these sophisticated positivists, the meaning of the text is neither merely there, inscribed in the object for eternity; nor is it merely superimposed by the reader. Rather, a text becomes a legitimate object for appropriation by positivistic science and its strategic modes of reading.

At this point, it is crucial to distinguish between two strategies for reading classic texts in the sociological tradition. Classic texts have been approached and appropriated with respect to two fundamentally different intentions. The first strategic appropriation of those texts is a "uses of the text" approach shared by such mainstream American sociologists as Merton, Collins, and Lazarsfeld.[14] The intention that informs this strategic approach to texts is to reformulate the contents of classic texts into empirically verifiable propositions. Whereas vulgar positivists treat the text itself as a self-contained universe, these sociologists treat texts as legitimately violable, albeit with objective, scientific intentions.

Here, texts can be read as part of the protracted accumulation of verifiable hypotheses which would yield, step by step, a body of tested empirical statements. These statements could then, once confirmed, anchor general, lawful, causal knowledge of the social world. Allegedly such knowledge would hold equivalent epistemological

status to the "legitimate" knowledge of the natural world, hitherto attained by the methods and superior hypothesis-testing procedures of the natural sciences. Classic sociological texts appropriable to this intention would serve, then, as so many resources for generating verifiable propositions. This version of social science aims, of course, at the long-range development of a "genuine" scientific theory based upon a body of empirically-tested knowledge claims.

The reading of texts from the standpoint of this positivism corresponds to the strategy of inquiry undertaken by what Habermas calls the empirical-analytical sciences. As a category of inquiry, the empirical-analytical sciences--like all the modes of inquiry--are posited in connection with a specific cognitive interest, the technical. Specifically, for Habermas, what guides the empirical-analytical sciences, the technical cognitive interest is a deep-seated, human-species interest in predicting and controlling objectified events and processes in the external, natural environment. Thus, the reading of classical texts undertaken from the standpoint of this technical interest will produce readings rooted in textual meanings that resonate and are salient to the intention to maximize predictability and control over so-called natural processes. As often noted, a principal intention of Mertron, Lazarsfeld, et al., is to produce knowledge of social processes modelled after the knowledge of natural processes attained by the empirical-analytic sciences.

In Habermas' schema, such genuine social scientific knowledge would is linked necessarily to the technical cognitive interest in predictability and control over objectified social processes. In Habermas' view, such knowledge would constitute "information that

expands our power of technical control."[15] Thus, textual meanings would resonate and become appropriated to the standpoint of that intention.

As Habermas characterizes this cognitive strategy, a reading of texts can be understood as a process of framing, a reading of texts or phenomena within the framework of a knowledge-constituting interest. Thus, he characterizes the appropriation of meanings and statements with respect to the technical cognitive interest as follows in Knowledge and Human Interests.

> In the empirical-analytic sciences the frame of reference that prejudges the meaning of possible statements establishes rules both for the construction of theories and for their critical testing. Theories comprise hypothetico-deductive connections of propositions, which permit the deduction of lawlike hypotheses with empirical content. The latter can be interpreted as statements about the covariance of observable events; given a set of initial conditions, they make predictions possible. Empirical-analytic knowledge is thus possible predictive knowledge. However, the meaning of such predictions, that is their technical exploitability, is established only by the rules according to which we apply theories to reality.[16]

Against this background, we first investigate a principal sociological method of reading stands within the overall positivist tradition. That method can be loosely characterized, to deploy Merton's term from Social Theory and Social Structure, as "using" the text.[17] This practice as we shall soon see is undertaken as part of the overall attempt to engage in "the Scientific practice of extending antecedent theory,"[18] or, to put it in Randall Collins' formulation "to build explanatory sociology."[19]

There is no question here, say, of a text is, as such, positivist versus one that is non-positivist. Indeed, to attribute inherent-positivist or even non-positivist-qualities to the text is

already to treat it positivistically. To do this, then, is to posit "text" positivistically as a self-subsistent object-in-itself inscribed with changeless inhering attributes. Amongst these attributes, of course, the "disinterested observer" would have "in-hering" attributes to an object, of course, is to posit their "givenness." When the act of positing is forgotten--or denied altogether--by the attribution of "objectivity" to the account, the object as described is rendered supreme in the very claim that, commonsensically,it is just there as it is. The apparently naive claim, however, is "merely" hegemonic in the culture. By treating an objective claim as a mere description rather than as a result produced by intentional or interest-laden activities, the knowledge-constitutive activities of the subject in the account is repressed or forgotten.

But even so-called "positivist texts" can be shown to display an active subjectivity "at work" and, perhaps most surprisingly, a subjectivity that is self-conscious--if not in the moment, then at least programmatically--of its parti-l knowledge-constitutive role. Thus, for example, we find the far from vulgar positivist Paul Lazersfeld characterizing his endeavor in The Language of Social Research in more than objectivis erms as "our linguistic feeling, "indeed as "a bent of mind":

> Methodology and the related activities of explication and critical analysis have developed as a bent of mind rather than as a system of organized principles and procedures.[20]

For legitimating the undertaking, his Methodologist's endeavor, Lazarsfeld invokes the honorific stature of the positivist philosopher of science, Carl Hempel. The citation from Hempel however, turns out

to be more of a display of a subject's intentional "reinterpretation" of language than a vulgar positivist invocation of the prevailing objectivities. To quote from it in Lazarsfeld's text:

> . . . explication aims at reducing the limitations, ambiguities, and inconsistencies of theri ordinary usage by propounding a reinterpretation intended to enhance the clarity and precision of their meanings as well as their ability to function in hypotheses and theories with explantory and predictive force.[21]

Again, we cite Hempel to further illustrate our point:

> An explication sentence does not simply exhibit the commonly accepted meaning of th expression under study but rather proposes a specified new and precise meaning for it.[22]

The intentional, subject-constitutive character of Hempel's program, is echoed by Lazarsfeld's characterization of it: In this case, the italics underscoring the intention-laden subjectivity at work are ours:

> When we <u>transfer</u> terms like "personality" of "law" of "cause" from everyday language into scientific usage, we must always make decisions for which we ourselves take the responsibilty. We <u>give up</u> certain connotations which these terms have in order to <u>make</u> the remainder more precise and more easily amenable to <u>verification and proof</u>. In this sense, as Hempel points out, an <u>explication</u> cannot be qualified simply as true or false; but it may be judged as more or less adequate according to the extent to which <u>it attains its objectives</u>. [Italics mine][23]

Our intention here, then, is not to condemn the positivist intention of the foregoing, so much as to acknowledge it and <u>display</u> it in their non-vulgar writings. Indeed, these are decidedly not positivist <u>texts</u>, texts bereft of subjectivity and intention. As we view it, then, the "problem" posed by the varieties of positivism for reading is not so much that they constitute an intentional, interest-laden, knowledge-constituting subjectivity; but, rather, that--whether intentionally or not--positivists <u>forget</u> it, in principle as well as

their active practice.

The overall strategic intention which Merton, Collins and Lazarsfield share is defined as the gradual, incremental, cumulative process of formulating and testing testable hypotheses so as to finally achieve a scientific framework of empirically tested high-level generalizations. From these, lower level specifications could be derived, rendered more or less predictable and, thereby, "explained." While Collins' focus is the propositional formalization of conflict theory, thereby making Weber a prime object of his appropriative interest, his version of the proper goal of an overall scientific sociology can be summarized as follows:

> The goal of a scientific sociology must be some such network of definite and testable statements . . . both in terms of causal propositions and in terms of the inner coherence of these propositions.[24]

Merton's immediate tactic is to develop the so-called "theories of the middle range." Yet he shares Collins' overall understanding of a goal for sociological theory. That shared understanding is defined and characterized by the following citation from Social Theory and Social Structure:

> . . . the term sociological theory refers to logically interconnected sets of propositions from which empirical uniformities can be derived.

These sets of propositions form part of

> . . . the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behavior, social organization and social change.[25]

Given the overall vision of an empirically-based, internally-coherent structure of tested and testable propositions as the foundation for a genuine, explanatory sociological science, the "uses" of the classic

texts will be tantamount to their appropriability by this vision. Thus, Collins would state their "uses" in the following way in The Discovery of Society:

> For it is our conviction that the central sociological tradition makes up one interrelated revelation of the nature of social reality; and sociology has gradually increased its explanatory power, even as it uncovers new facts and issues.[26]

The gradual unfolding of the interrelated revelation of social reality is not achieved in a blinding flash of intuition. Rather we gain ground through the step-by-step cumulative process, the result of ongoing propositionalization followed by hypothesis-testing.

Merton contrasts this "practice of extending antecedent theory" to scholasticism.[27] He states the nature of these proper "uses" of sociology's "not so distant classical predecessors:[28]

> But if they are to be effective rather than merely pious, if they are to use earlier formulations of theory rather than simply commemorate them, they must distinguish between the scholastic practice of commentary and exegesis and the scientific practice of extending antecedent theory.[29]

One version of Merton's "use" of the classics is far more programmatic. We find it in Paul Lazarsfeld's treatment of the classics as appropriable for and by the methodologist of empirical social research. Informed by the modern positivistic program of linguistic clarification and conceptual elucidation, Lazarsfeld defines the role of the methodologist as "bridging the gap" between the "humanistic tradition" of the classics and the newer, more "empirically oriented" forms of social research.[30] One way of "bridging the gap" and contributing to the overall formation of a genuinely empirical social science would be the methodologist's "clarification" of meanings

of terms and concepts deployed in statements by classical writers so as to make them more amenable to reformulation as testable hypotheses.

As Lazarsfeld describes this, "We give up certain connotations which these terms have in order to make the remainder more precise and more easily amenable to verification and proof."[31] Thus, for purposes of testability and verification, Lazarsfeld would appropriate those meanings and connotations that were reducible to propositional form and delete or ignore non-reducible resonances or analytic dimensions that did not permit such formulation. In addition, Lazarsfeld would find in the classics a profusion of "leads." These ideas could suggest and inform the research designs and projects for empirical social research. In a summary statement from The Language of Social Research Lazarsfeld exemplifies this "positivistic" appropriation of the classics:

> It is instructive to examine the work of a classical writer, say, one in the field of public opinion research, and to see how his statements might be translated into the language of modern research procedures. It will be found, on the one hand, that such writings contain a great richness of ideas which could be profitably infused into current empirical work, on the other hand, it will be found that such a writer tolerates great ambiguity of expression. By proper explication, we can bring out the more precise meanings which might be imputed to him; and we would be especially interested to see which of his statements permit verification. The task of such explication is not to criticize the work, but rather to bridge a gap, in this case betwen an older humanistic tradition and newer one which is more empirically oriented.[32]

Merton suggests that there is a genuine need for the sociologist qua sociologist to closely study the classics. This need stands in contrast to the lack of a comparable need for the natural scientist. A would-be empirical science needs to proceed cumulatively

by amassing verified data and hypotheses. In this task the social sciences lag far behind. As Merton states:

> The record shows that the physical and life sciences have generally been more successful than the social sciences in retrieving relevant cumulative knowledge of the past and incorporating it in subsequent formulations. This process of obliteration by incorporation is still rare in sociology. As a result, previously unretrieved information is still there to be usefully employed as new points of departure.[33]

This, then, would seem to echo Lazarsfeld's sense of using the classics as a resource for culling and formulating testable hypotheses for the ongoing advance of knowledge appropriable by empirical social research methods.

Merton's notion of "obliteration by incorporation" I am calling here "appropriation." That method is not, however, the only "use" of classical theory which Merton identifies. Merton discerns a set of present functions for classical theory, each of which "derives from the imperfect retrieval of past sociological theory that has not yet been fully absorbed in subsequent thought."[34] Merton cites these functions in the context of their serviceability for "extending antecedent theory" of positivist appropriation of the classics. There is nonetheless one such function which is highly suggestive, apart from this context, for it points to the contrasting approach to the classical theorists which I will deploy in this work.

In Merton's formulation, this function of the classics is to permit "a dialogue between the dead and the living."[35] The function provides sociologists with an occasion to "conduct 'dialogues' with classical formulations."[36] Whereas in the long run Merton's project is to achieve "incorporation by obliteration" of classical insight into empirical knowledge, it is possible, without sharing that theoretical

intention to nonetheless take the "lead" offered by his description of this dialogic relationship with classical texts. Then it becomes a vehicle for my own approach to this literature. To quote from Social Theory and Social Structure:

> One type of citation involves neither mere commentary on the classics nor the use of authority to establish credentials for current ideas. Instead this form of citation represents moments of affinity between our own ideas and those of our predecessors.[37]

This dialogic relationship between classical text and present interest, concern, and intention Merton elaborates in the subsequent statement:

> Differing only a nuance are citations to classical writings that come about when the reader, stocked with his own ideas, finds in the earlier book precisely what he already had in mind.[38]

Merton goes on to formulate this dialogic procedure:

> The idea, still hidden from other readers, is noted precisely because it is congenial to the reader who has developed it himself. It is often assumed that to cite an earlier source necessarily means that the idea or finding in that citation first came to mind upon the reading of it. Yet the evidence often indicates that the earlier passage is noted only because it agrees with what the reader has already developed on his own. What we find here is that unlikely sounding event: a dialogue between the dead and the living.[39]

While Merton's "uses of the text" strategy can involve dialogic moments with antecedent texts, the interplay of reader and text is still tactically subservient to the wider positivist intention of constituting "facts" and "causal knowledge." These, as noted, themselves stand independently and self-subsistently with respect to the outside (sociological) observer. Ultimately, the dichotomy between scientific observer and observed facts is to be preserved, the positivist tradition affirmed. Consequently, the Mertonian

appropriation of classical texts remains a tactical variation on the kind of strategic reading characteristic of the non-vulgar, albeit still positivist mode.

At this point, it is possible and useful to introduce the second strategic appropriation and approach to reading "classic" texts, namely the hermeneutic. The hallmark of this strategy is its transcendence of the dualisms that characterize the positivist reading, most especially, the dichotomy of reader (subject) and text (object). In the traditions of reading which would transcend positivist reading, the meaning of the text is not its reformulation independently by the purely subjective reader--nor is it a closed world or independent, self-bounded, object-in-itself, whose meanings are to be discovered by neutral techniques or strategies. The traditional assumption of a basic dichotomy between the reader and the object--the text--is discarded.

Reading a text is not considered an act of neutral observers viewing an object outside themselves. Instead, there is a reciprocity in reading. Reading is an interactive and active process. The reader approaches the text with an expectation, but that expectation is not prefabricated, pre-formulated or closed to further development or refinement. Reading is the interplay between a text and the reader who is more or less self-conscious about his or her intention or purpose for reading.

For its part, a text is not an inert passivity. It may be seen interactively as salient toward the reader's intention. Thus reading becomes an interplay between the reader's intention and how the text "meets" that viewpoint. We call this approach, taking a cue from

Roslyn Wallach Bologh, "animated reading."[40]

For the present work, animated reading is the form our methodology takes. Here and elsewhere, animated reading is an active process of production in which the reader is both producing and absorbing. This reading overcomes the traditional dichotomy. The text no longer stands as a finished independent product, and the reader no longer superimposes his or her interpretation on the text. Each part of the interplay is no longer independent of the other.

An animated reading is the active producing process produced. It is a dynamic, still-developing "meeting place" of the reader's intention and what the text brings to it. The "outcome" is a further development of the text, not a finalized, "authoritative" account of it. The push is to say something different as opposed to saying the same thing differently.

When the reader and the text interact, the interaction entails their mutual development. Both poles undergo qualitative development; this mode of reading is thereby a unitary process. The distinctions between reader and text and their relationship are not fundamental and absolute. They are embedded within one another and imply each other's development.

Reading becomes an internal relationship. Traditional concrete reading presupposes, by the mutually encapsulating dualism of reader and textual object, their external relationship. By contrast, a dialogic or animated reading presupposes the ongoing transcendency of dualism through the primacy of an internal, unitary, reciprocal inter-relationship of reader and text. The overcoming of dualism through the ongoing interplay of reader and text results in the

rejection of an authoritative, absolute, single "voice" abiding in the text and awaiting discovery. Instead it constitutes an ongoing open-ended development of elaboration and recovery of formerly unnoticed, hidden or suppressed textual meanings.

To pursue this hermeneutic intention involves the theoretical reconstruction of textual meanings and concerns which, in a reader's view, have been "lost", repressed, forgotten, or neglected. Thus, whereas Merton would read dialogically in order to recover "previously unretrieved information,"[41] the second approach to reading the classics would be to recover previously unretrieved meanings, to read dialogically with the intention of what Habermas terms "the understanding of meaning," the knowledge constituting interests of what Habermas terms "the historical-hermeneutical sciences."[42] Habermas describes this context for inquiry into textual meanings in the work, Knowledge and Human Interests. He does so by contrast to the just discussed "empirical-analytical sciences:"

> The historical hermeneutical sciences gain knowledge in a different methodological framework. Here the meaning of the validity of propositions is not constituted in the frame of reference of technical control. The levels of formalized language and objectified experience have not yet been divorced. For theories are not constructed deductively and experience is not organized with regard to the success of operations. Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation. The verification of lawlike hypotheses in the empirical analytic sciences has its counterpart here in the interpretation of texts. Thus the rules of hermeneutics determine the possible meaning of the validity of statements of the cultural sciences.[43]

In the view of a leading exemplar, Hans-Georg Gadamer, textual elaboration is the active acceptance of a "text's" invitation to the reader's interpretative dance.[44] What we call hermeneutic animated

reading, is ongoingly performed through a projection of the reader's problematic into the text. A reading is "borne out" by the text to the extent that the "textual-object" is more or less salient to the intention of the projections.

These are not merely ungrounded subjective projections, then, but are "monitored" by the text-object. They are sustainable always and only in relationship to the text. To state this in Gadamer's terms:

> A person who is trying to understand a text is always performing an act of projecting. He projects before himself a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the latter emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. The working out of this fore-project, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there.[45]

Thus, the production of an account, of meaning to be more precise, is an interactive process whose "product" is the ongoing emergence of meaning. This emerging arises from the interplay of the intentional projection of a problematic on to a text which is salient towards that projection and more or less sustains the inter-play. Or, as Gadamer puts it, results in "the experience of being pulled up short by the text."[46]

Entering such an ongoing process of projection-and-response, the ongoing "producing" of meanings entails risk or dread. We see the dread expressed in the call for "stable" meanings and "authoritative accounts." From this positive point of view, the animated reading proposed here constitutes a violation of the integrity of the object and reduces to subjectivism--untenable, anarchistic, perhaps solipsistic. Nonetheless, the charge of violating the object can be

answered through a re-formulation of the nature of the object. The reformulation puts stress on a developmental process. We see the text not as an object-in-itself, but as an object-in-birth. Indeed, it is as an object-in-birth that we read the text in all of the present work. To quote Gadamer in this respect:

> The constant process of new projection is the movement of understanding and interpretation. A person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings that are not borne out by the things themselves. The working-out of appropriate projects, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed 'by the things themselves,' is the constant task of understanding. The only 'objectivity' here is the confirmation of a fore-meaning in its being worked out. The only thing that characterizes the arbitrariness of inappropriate fore-meanings is that they come to nothing in the working-out. But understanding achieves its full potentiality only when the fore-meanings it uses are not arbitrary.[47]

For the tradition of positivist readings of texts, the assertion of the primacy of the independent object takes the form of a suppression of the role of the subject, the reader. This strategy is then rationalized as an edict against arbitrariness. The hermeneutic tradition as represented by Gadamer, on the other hand, are not bereft of a concern with avoiding the arbitrary. Instead, their mode of reading texts produces meaning without suppressing either the role of the text-object or that of the reading-subject in the constitution of meaning. Gadamer addresses the issue of arbitrariness in the following way:

> All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or of the text. But this openness always includes our placing the other meaning in a relation with the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in a relation to it. Now it is the case that meanings represent a fluid variety of possibilities . . . but it is still not the case that within this variety of what can be thought, i.e. of what a reader can find meaningful

> and hence expect to find, everything is possible, and if a person fails to hear what the other person is really saying, he will not be able to place correctly what he had misunderstood within the range of his own various expectations of meaning. Thus, there is a criterion here also.[48]

Hermeneutics breaks with the positivist model of the reader as a blank slate that mirrors or reflects the textual-object and passively registers the objective, unmediated impress of that book upon it and calls it "meaning." Moreover, it does this not by an a priori expurgation of the possibility of subjective bias from the act of understanding. Rather, the recognition that impels its mode of reading is that "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice"[49] That is, prejudice, in the sense of a set of experientially-grounded prejudgments about the world, the subject matter, et al., is always-already entailed in the act of reading.

Indeed, it is not to go too far to suggest that pre-judgment is a necessary condition for the intelligibility of an object, let alone of the possibility of performing a reading. Here, then a reader's set of fore-meanings and pre-judgment is an integral part of the situation and activity of a reading. To acknowledge this as a precondition of reading does not necessarily suppress of the necessary, or even constitutive role of the subject as the positivist canon would have it. Indeed, this is not a matter of defending will nilly, the sheer arbitrariness of interpretation. Rather a hermeneutic reading embodies a criterion of integrity which is accomplished in and as the process of reading itself. The criterion is stated by Gadamer:

> Thus, there is a criterion here also. The hermeneutical task becomes automatically a questioning of things and is always in part determined by this. This places hermeneutical work on a firm basis. If a person is

> trying to understand something, he will not be able to rely from the start on his own chance previous ideas, missing as logically and stubbornly as possible the actual meaning of the text until the latter becomes so persistently audible that it breaks through the imagined understanding of it. Rather, a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained mind must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's quality of newness. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither 'neutrality' in the matter of the object nor the extinction of one's self, but the conscious assimilation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings.[50]

The text, in this view, can be regarded as a renewable source of meaning which both enables and constrains the range of impact of one's own fore-meanings. The act of reading, then, is a double risk. First to the authoritative readings that have de-limited the possibilities for interpretive development that abide in the text. And, what is equally crucial, the saliency of the text to a given reading enables it to de-stabilize the reader's own prejudices, "to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings."[51] To read, then, in the animated mode of the hermeneutic tradition is to regard the textual object as an object-in-birth. Such a mode of reading enables the production of an abundance of meaning-formations.

One strategy for the boundary-maintenance of objects-in-themselves--whether these be texts, world-economies, or ecosystems--is the deployment of the charge of "vicious circularity" as the litmus test for non-intelligibility. The vicious circle is the articulation of a principle of Aristotelian logic, the principle of non-contradiction, which denies the reality, let alone intelligibility of any entity that is both itself and its opposite in respect to the same characteristic.

Thus, an object that presented itself as red and not-red is understood to be unintelligible and devoid of reality.

Thus, a logical development or, correspondingly, a developmental logic whereby an object was transformed in some way into a logical opposition to itself, a self-contradiction, would violate the canons of intelligibility and standards of reality. Again, if an object were to appear or present itself in a way that was not identical to its essential defining characteristics, it could no longer be considered the same object. In other words, the law of non-contradiction institutionalizes an account of objects whereby they must be self-identical in order to be considered real and intelligible. The objects to which it grants reality and intelligibility, then, are objects in themselves which are delimited and encapsulated by an essential definition which assumes their static, abiding "thereness." Obviously this precludes the possibility of an object's undergoing fundamental developmental transformation, for to do so would be to lose the status of being the selfsame object. Any object that was defined in terms of development as its essential identifying characteristic would be ruled out of court as unintelligible, non-rational, unreal. Thus, the law of non-contradiction precludes the object-in-birth from analytic significance.

A mode of inquiry that proceeds from an object-in-itself, a self-abiding identity, and returns via a circular path to itself in an altered form has thereby posited itself as non-itself and must be considered non-rational and unintelligible in that it has violated the law of non-contradiction. The excising of such a procedure from

analytic significance is expressed by the charge of "vicious circularity." The deployment of this charge by the empiricist tradition against circular forms of inquiry consolidates its sense of objects as static, of meanings as stable, and reality as self-repetition. Thus, the charge of "vicious circularity" is a constitutive dimension of a theoretical strategy whose intention is to stabilize objects, to suppress development as an integral aspect of their abiding reality. The privileged position attained by the charge of "vicious circularity" as an arbiter of intelligibility and rationality testifies to the hegemony of that strategy in a particular social and historical domain--namely, a status quo committed to maintaining itself through maintaining the stability of its account of objects as non-developmental. Any alternative mode accounting for objects in terms of the developmental principles that make them possible as self-transforming objects-in-birth is a prima facie violation of the law of non-contradiction. Indeed, the suppression of such an account of objects is the intention that propels the charge of "vicious circularity" against non-empiricist, phenomenological modes of inquiry.

Animated reading for the purpose of this work builds upon but deviates from Gadamer's conception. To invoke Habermas' schema, our work is anchored to an emancipatory interest. The ultimate purpose here is not merely a qualitative transformation of prevailing, received, or concealed meanings. The purpose goes further--to transform the very structure of social relationships that are currently hegemonic and which presuppose material scarcity. By contrast to our dominant form of life, an emancipatory intention leads me to posit

abundance here as a new problematic for the analysis of social life. This will be addressed in the following considerations.

The possibility that an object can be salient towards an intention; or, correspondingly, that an intention can be meaningfully impelled towards an object, presupposes their incompleteness. Neither intention nor object is fully "worked out," already finished. Thus, an animated reading develops the silences, limits, or gaps of always incomplete objects and intentions. All along, in this work, we will refer to this incompleteness as "silence." Again, let us use the reading of a text as our example. For an object (text) to resonate new meanings where silence appears, then, is to resonate towards and in the presence of an intention. The reader's intention to speak where silence abides in the text is all-important for this work's methodology. For this intention, be it hermeneutic or emancipatory, is to respond to silence as an invitation to the dance. That means the opposite of a permanent refusal to proceed beyond its outer limits.

In these terms, this whole work can be understood as an abundant reading. A scarce reading stops short in fear of depleting a finite sum of textual contents. Conversely, an abundant reading is one that does not fear depletion or entropy. It generates meanings in an uninterrrupted discourse. It is an animated reading in that it animates both text and reader alike in an ongoing, never-ending interplay.

This animated reading addresses both what immediately appears in the text and what is left unstated. What is repressed, withheld, and glossed over is "made" into speech. An animated reading renders more full what seems hollow. So, what is said may in fact conceal what

goes unsaid; and what is apparently unsaid may in fact resonate and speak. To refuse to respect the appearance and conventions of the seemingly complete text is to perform an act of recovery of speech--to bring the marginal to the center, to marginalize what is central, to repress what is spoken, to speak what is repressed, to hear the spoken silences and to hear the silences in the spoken.

Such is an animating of the text. Such is the activity of using the text as an occasion for discourse: to originate an ongoing dialogue of interrupted speech; to invite the text to speak what it conceals; and to resonate to the speech and silences of the text to speak what the speaker has left unsaid. Thus the text is not stable with respect to an animated reading: it is not a finished object-in-itself, but an object-in-birth whose being is its becoming, whose meaning is its development of new meanings, whose genre is its origination of discourse.

Where the relentless monologue whose production of meaning is a repetition that symptomizes the entropic depletion of the finite resources that still mean something, the animated reading re-stores the possibility of still saying something that is different. The domain of the concrete reading is concerned with saying something, the same thing, differently. The abundant intention of the animated reading is to continually re-new the possibility of saying something different, of constituting a difference that is different. Thus the uninterrupted speech which is produced by an animated reading is informed by the intention to say something new, whereas the uninterrupted speech of monologic repetition--for instance, the discourse of advertising--is informed by the substitution of differences that are not really

different in order to keep saying the same thing. The goal of an animated reading, then, is not uninterrupted speech as such, but to develop discourse in qualitatively new directions.

To read abundantly is to respond to silence as an invitation to resume speech, to overcome interruption, to enable the emergence of discourse. To read abundantly is to produce meaning where there was none, to move against the cultural despair of God's silence, or the State's silence, and its romanticization and mystification of man's silence. To allow silence to "stand" as meaninglessness, as sheer absence, is to reify it as an object-in-itself.

To grant silence a dualistic equivalence to speech is to institutionalize silence as an invariant structure of the human condition. It is to reify development, to transform process into dualism. To substantialize silence is to superimpose a "scarcity," an absence where there might yet be further development, ongoing presence in the form of discourse and meaning. To fail to intervene into the institutionalization of silence as a permanent, invariant structure of communication is to constitute speech acts, dialogue, or topics for discourse--whole problematics--as objects-in-themselves whose "outer limits" preclude the further making of meaning. It makes communication appear to be a dichotomous, Manichaean struggle between silence and speech which is at best a standstill and most probably, a process tending towards eventual entropic breakdown. Indeed, perhaps the most startling cultural display of this tendency is Lucky's speech in Becket's Waiting for Godot:

> Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without

extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished crowned by the Acacacacademy of Anthropopopometry of Essa-in Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt than that which clings to the labors of men that as a result of the labors unfinished of Testew and Cunard it is established as hereinafter but not so fast for reasons unknown that as a result of the public works of Puncher and Wattmann it is established beyond all doubt that in view of the labors of Fartov and Belcher left unfinished for reasons unknown of Testew and Cunard left unfinished it is established what many deny that man in Possy of Testew and Cunard that man in Essy that man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation wastes and pines wastes and pines and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts penicilline and succedanea in a word I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckham Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell fades away I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per head since the death of Bishop Berkeley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per head approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unknown no matter what matter the facts are there and considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running water running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great deeps the great cold on sea on land and in the air

> I resume for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis the facts are on in short in fine on on abode of stones who can doubt it I resume but not so fast I resume the skull fading fading fading and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis on on the beard the flames the tears the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the labors abandoned left unfinished the skull the skull in Conemara in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard (melee, final vociferations) tennis . . . the stones . . . so calm . . . Cunard . . . unfinished . . .[52]

In the view of an animated reading, however, the emergence of such an outer limit is an occasion for textual development, for a qualitative transformation in the social process of making meanings, and for producing a strategy that makes meanings that signify new possibilities for living that are genuinely different. The ongoing renewal and production anew of new meanings becomes its animating ask.

The main single premise which informs my reading of texts is that any process of communication is actively constituted not only by what is explicitly stated and how it is stated, but also, and this is crucial for my animated mode of reading, by what is not so stated. Put another way, every "text" can be grasped as both textual surface and subtext. Whereas a passive, positivist reading focuses primarily on what is immediately given to awareness by and as the surface as a set of explicit statements about objects, animated reading goes further. It discloses the existence of a subtext and also regards the dialectical relationship between surface and subtext as the dynamic process that both makes the whole--but never completed--text possible, and consitutes it as a total communication. Moreover, the subtext can be roughly characterized by two modes of communication: one as a set of

implicit meanings and resonances that are evoked and detonated by surface statements and conventions; the second, and more significant for my purposes, systematic gaps, absences, and omissions whose systematic "presence" is salient, and "calls for" interpretive attention.

To attend to "gaps," to silence, is to read a text that is both a saying and a not-saying. Consequently, it is possible to regard texts as at once constituted by and documenting a combined expression and repression. Read for its absences as well as its explicit statements, a text documents its own activity of not-seeing what it sees, of not-speaking what it says.

Methodologically, then, the work that distinguishes it from the positive, concrete reading lies here. My work takes the form of actively recognizing the relationship it takes up with silences, gaps, or absences in the texts it analyzes. The dynamic that animates the animated reading is precisely the ongoing interplay or dialectical relationship between the silences and presences in the text, and, correspondingly, the reader's intentions with respect to this recognition of a nexus between silence and statement.

Again, in presenting itself as complete, the text appears as clearly bounded, and, thereby, defines its own outer-limits, beyond which is that sheer absence or silence that separates it from the next self-bounded text, utterance (or other discursive or literary object). The silences or gaps within and outside of the boundaries of the text are an integral, inseparable part of the finished, positivist text. The silences, as absences, both include the surface finish, and define the specific boundaries of the surface of that specific text. These

silences actually complete the text; they off-set what is said there from what is not said there; they actively accomplish--while passively appearing just to be there--the completing and finishing of the text.

In principle, a positivist reading does not deny that silences may abide in a text. Rather, it treats silences one-dimensionally as simply "there": passive, unproblematical, natural, eternal. Silence, read in the positivist sense, is what results from having said something. As in Lucky's speech, it is an outcome, a monologic result, the residue of having depleted or consumed whatever there was or is still left to say. Silences encase and punctuate the presences in the positivist text, constitute its surface "finish" and, thereby, consolidate its proclaimed self-completeness against further qualitative development.

By contrast, an animated reading develops in relationship both to what is there and to what is not-there. The animated reading articulates both silence and statement and, at its most fertile moment, their internal relationship and rationale. Consequently, an animated reading is an active process of treating the text as not only seeing, but not seeing; not only listening, but not hearing; not only speaking, but not saying; revealing with the effect of concealing; concealing with the effect of revealing--in sum, as expression enwreathed with the repression of discourse.

This strategic animating of silences is a sensitivity to the text as a developmental relationship between statements and silences that is shared by a recent set of critical social theorists like Louis Althusser, Alan Blum, Pierre Macherey, and Roslyn Bologh.[53] Kindred in form and spirit to emancipatory interest of Habermas' schema, one

strategic intention that informs their animated readings of classic texts--especially Marx's--is producing fundamental structural transformations in capitalist social dynamics. The textual silences to which these analysts are attuned are the glosses, omissions, euphemisms and de-historicized speech which would produce descriptions and analyses of capitalist social development which view it as basically nonproblematical, unhistorical, existentially invariant, or a technically manageable without fear or possibility of fundamental, structural transformation.

Thus, we encounter Althusser's notion of a "symptomatic reading," that comprises two different but complementary modes.[54] In the first mode, a reading understands a text as a total communication: that is, a communication whose significance resides in both what is stated and unstated. Social theorists like Althusser read their chosen texts in terms of what is present and absent. Indeed they read by calling attention to what I, as their reader, would deem radical omissions.

A brief illustration of Althusser's strategy is displayed by the following text. Here, Althusser speaks of silences in the texts of classical political economy. Recognition of these silences is produced by reading those texts against the contrasting background provided by the texts of Marx's critique of political economy. To quote Althusser on this:

> Here again, it seems as if this balance of sights and oversights is found beneath a grid, the classical absences revealed by the Marxist presences. But there is one small, very small difference, which, I warn the reader straight away, we have no intention of not seeing! It is this: what classical political economy does not see, is not what it does not see, it is what it

> sees; it is not what it lacks, on the contrary, it is what it does not lack; it is not what it misses, on the contrary, it is what it does not miss. The oversight, then, is not to see what one sees, the oversight no longer concerns the object, but the sight itself. The oversight is an oversight that concerns vision: non-vision is therefore inside vision, it is a form of vision, and hence has a necessary relationship with vision.[55]

Roslyn Bologh complements Althusser here. What for Althusser is a "necessary and paradoxical identity of non-vision and vision within vision itself"[56] is approached in Bologh's formulation through what she calls an "animated reading."[57] On the one hand, the emancipatory readings of Bologh and Blum as well are outright assaults, violations, and critiques of the apparent stability, finality, and intactness presented by the surface re-presentation of everyday life by positivist texts. They undermine conventions and canons of positivist criticism which re-present texts as self-evident reflections, merely mirrored reproductions of life just as it is. An emancipatory animated reading violates this strategically naive consolidation of social life. Its intention is to say what is repressed and foreclosed by the prevailing everyday consensus as to what is actual as well as possible for "the human condition." On this point Bologh, citing Alan Blum, describes the results of this reading as follows: "It therefore can be understood as violating the text; it violates the 'surfaces and conventions' of the text in order to see the author as 'saying something other than what he speaks.'"[58] Thus, this approach strategically violates socially produced surfaces, and notes and develops silences in the lacunae that it discloses.

But there is more to animated reading as a strategic approach to texts than mere iconoclasm, however tempting the Luddite shattering

of surface images that gloss over what is felt to euphemize or conceal underlying social fissures. This "more" lies in that "saying other than what he speaks" to which Blum alludes. Indeed, for Blum and Bologh, the surface structures of texts are acts of concealment that reveal and, thereby, speak in their very act of concealing.

The production of a textual surface which appears complete, finished and impervious to disturbance is interpreted, from this standpoint, as a political act. Blum, Bologh, and this work are in unison on recognizing that textual surfaces are in fact produced, that they embody political intentions; and that the intention to appear complete is an act of repression. The setting-off of the text as a completed object Blum characterizes as a passive reading:

> A corpus can be confronted with violence or passively: passive readings accept the conventions of the text as secure or as unproblematic; if questions are addressed, they are always directed to technical matters of interpretation which still presuppose the fundamental stability of the terms of the discussion. That is, 'critical' readings merely recapitulate the authority to which both critic and author subscribe. To use a corpus passively is to rest secure in the conventions and familiar pleasures of the text; the most violent men show a natural impulse to preserve the Work from disturbance, and so the most violent men are often the most conventional.[59]

Convention, for this strategy,--textual or otherwise--is never merely there, unproblematically. Prevailing conventions always institutionalize power relationships which actively preclude alternatives. Their self-evidence, then, is only apparent and actively maintained as an exercise of power. The passive reading, the positivist text, then is a strategy for stabilizing priveleged meanings and repressing others. Its apparent "givenness" is actively and ongoingly achieved.

The non-positivist, animated reading of texts that will produce the thesis is aptly characterized as a "violation" of the text, of the text read passively in the positivist mode. To quote Blum here:

> In contrast, to violate the text is to break away from what it speaks in order to uncover what it says; what the text truly says lies covered over by the concrete terms and references of its speech. To violate the text is to distrust it not out of a maliciousness to the author, but from a respect for his work as concealing something that is truly under conditions of linguistic oppression is to see him as having something to say which he cannot concretely speak; to address this truth is to violate the surfaces and conventions of his speech, for it is to see him as saying something other than what he speaks, it is to hear his speaking as a saying.[60]

From this standpoint, positivist reading constitutes a distortion of communication "under conditions of linguistic oppression."[61] Again citing Blum, Bologh characterizes this mode of analytic reading and says: "For Blum, analysis 'treats all material, data, and text as exemplary, as having the status of examples for inducing the analyst to re-collect and re-orient to some fundamental problem which the surface structure of the example conceals.'"[62] The surface can then be read as a mask: one that expresses its underlying historical grounds in the very activity that conceals them.

The emancipatory animated reading of texts is an inquiry, then, into the grounds of texts, the conditions whereby they become possible in all their dimensions. The nonharmonious dialectic between textual silence and statement, textual concealment and revelation, is correspondingly the inquiry into a gap, a tension, a problematic. These instabilities of the text, its surface appearances notwithstanding, are its root instabilities, the instabilities of its historical grounds. This, in turn, becomes a problematic posed and

incorporated as and in the grounds that make the text possible in the first place. But what are these grounds? And how are we to intervene into the text, into traditions of discourse, in order to grasp and recognize them?

To begin, the central metaphor of the positivist reading of texts, which allegedly mirrors reality, would have to be replaced in an animated reading by what Pierre Macherey calls a broken mirror.[63] The broken mirror is both reformulation of the text in its positivist incarnation, as well as the central counter-image that informs Macherey's animated strategy for textual reading. In A Theory of Literary Production, Macherey gives a vivid new meaning to the difficult but recurring metaphor of reflection by suggesting that the text might be a broken mirror:

> The secret of the mirror is to be sought in the form of its reflections; how does it show historical reality, by what paradox does it make visible its own blindness without actually seeing itself? (For the text) is privileged because it does not have to elaborate the totality in order to display it; it can reveal just the necessity of that totality--a necessity which can be deciphered from the work.[64]

Through an emancipatory animated reading, historically-specific constraints and possibilities,--indeed the very grounds which make possible both the texts and their ways of being read--can be articulated. For Bologh, these grounds--half-concealed and half-revealed by the texts--are the prevailing historical form of life. Grounds are the total ensemble of historical-social relationships which constitute the current historical matrix which makes the text possible as well as the background against which the text proffers its present significations. Further, an emancipatory

animated reading displays the necessary relationship a text bears to its own historically-specific form of life, the historical grounds of its possibility. As Bologh defines it: "An animated reading treats the text as presupposing some form of life that is not stated, but which provides the animus for the text, a problem or contradiction that the text resolves."[65] The aim of such a reading is to reveal/disclose underlying structures, to illuminate concealed dynamics, to indicate the grounds for specific texts. Furthermore, this is undertaken with the strategic intention of transforming those grounds and, thereby, the very dynamics of the historical form of life that grounds their possibility.

The animated reading performed by this work will, in the emergent tradition of emancipatory inquiry, likewise read texts in relationship to the grounds that make them historically possible. The intention that infuses our animated reading of selected texts is similarly to both recognize and transform the social and historical grounds that make them possible. In the process of such a reading, the nature of these text-objects and their relationship to their grounds will emerge, developing with increasing clarity and urgency.

The ensuing animated reading attends to texts grounded historically in forms of life which are pervaded by material scarcity. It is nonetheless informed by the intention to posit the historical possibility of a post-scarcity mode of social development as a problematic for further theoretical analysis. Indeed, in my view, an emancipatory animated reading is suitable as a strategic method for reading texts that genuinely pose the problematic of scarcity and

abundance.

The problematic of scarcity and abundance is suitably posed by an animated reading in part because it treats itself self-consciously. That is, it treats itself as a method of reading which can itself be a display or demonstration of the possible abundant activity which it intends to articulate as its theoretical object. Indeed, the animated reader is an abundant producer of new meanings. He is engaged in the ongoing generation of discourse, not the consumption of a finite set of scarce meaning-resources, or the reduction of meanings to a single definitive interpretation. Thus, the production of an animated reading, the account of a text thereby produced, is a developmental activity generative of further accountings. By treating text as openings, rather than as unhistorical closures, animated reading becomes a method appropriate to articulating an abundant object as an historical possibility.

Given its qualitative difference from a scarce, depletable object, it may be said that the object in question already "possesses"--invites, entails, displays or induces--that animated strategy for attending/reading it. Indeed, the possibility of a post-scarcity form of life, is, as this thesis will show, a theoretical object salient towards a theoretical and reading strategy that would posit it. Insofar as one intention of this dissertation is to place the possibility of an abundant social formation on the agenda of sociological discourse, it is crucial, in my view, to perform this kind of reading of selected texts that display or repress that discourse which concerns social development.

It is crucial at this point to acknowledge a difference

between the kind of emancipatory animated reading thus far described and the animated reading which this work aims at. As stated, we share the transformative intention of: "the paradoxical identity of non-vision and vision" (Althusser); of "some fundamental problem which the surface structure . . . conceals" (Blum); of "the broken mirror" through which the necessity of the totality which, in relationship to the text, can be discerned (Macherey); of the "form of life" which grounds the possibility of the text (Bologh). Yet, for all the emancipatory summoning forth to animatedly violate the surfaces of texts, a silence resounds even here.

These emancipatory animated readings doubtlessly produce and violate texts which resonate to their transformative intentions. All, in other words, share a strategic approach to reading silences in order to develop new meanings, modes, discourse, et al., to, ultimately, transform the prevailing form of life. And yet, while our own intention is kindred, we nonetheless find these versions of an emancipatory animated reading strategy to be curiously formalistic and unhistorical. What is "absent," however, what calls for further development, what constitutes an invitation to violate even these texts, is some specific or concrete sense of the historical locus within which the emancipatory, animated reading is presently performed.

What the foregoing, emergent emancipatory tradition initiates is a formalistic strategy for animating seemingly inert texts and striking a blow at the repression of communication constituted by their one-dimensional silences. What is also needed, however, is historical content. Indeed, it is crucial to locate any emancipatory animated reading with respect to a historically-specific project or

problematic. The intention to transform, the interest that grounds emancipation, does not manifest itself in a self-evident, prefabricated content. The reading in service to an emancipatory intention needs to be specified and situated in terms of a concrete historical problematic. Here, then, a silence invites development even within the counter-tradition of emancipatory animated reading. This silence makes urgent the need for non-formalistic emancipatory animated reading.

Correspondingly, our problematic is situated (or, to use our term, grounded) in the historically unprecendented contradiction which constitutes the present historical moment, a moment we loosely characterize as advanced capitalism in crisis. Critical is its posing two deeply interwoven yet fundamentally inimical possibilities for the non-gradual eruption of a root and branch, qualitative formation in the hitherto prevailing, capitalist form of life. We have reached a hiatus; we confront ourselves with the choice between a future of copious post-scarcity possibility--an abundant mode of social development--and the end of history--the prospect of nuclear holocaust as the ultimate scarcity. Indeed, the present is riven by the relentless insistence with which that historically momentous choice is posed, elemental as if it were an onrushing tide, at once threatening to drown as it promises to buoy us.

We have reached and produced a momentous threshold. The prospect, mood and intention of an abundant future is articulated in Bookchin's Post-Scarcity Anarchism (1971):

> We of this century have finally opened the prospect of material abundance for all to enjoy--a sufficiency in the means of life without the need for grinding, day-to-day toil. We have discovered resources, both for man and industry, that were totally unknown a

> generation ago. We have devised machines that automatically make machines. We have perfected devices that can execute onerous tasks more effectively than the strongest human muscles, that can surpass the industrial skills of the deftest human hands, that can calculate with greater rapidity and precision than the most gifted human minds. Supported by this qualitatively new technology, we can begin to provide food, shelter, garments, and a broad spectrum of luxuries without devouring the precious time of humanity and without dissipating its invaluable reservoir of creative energy in mindless labor. In short, for the first time in history we stand in the threshold of a post-scarcity society.[66]

The abundant possibility is not mindlessly posited. It is, neither guaranteed, nor is it determined economistically. It is not automatically assured, as Bookchin states:

> The word "threshold" should be emphasized here for in no way has the existing society realized the post-scarcity potential of its technology.[67]

Nor is it merely a vastly enlarged, linear increase in the available supply of goods and services:

> To view the word "post-scarcity" as simply meaning a large quantity of socially available goods would be as absurd as to regard a living organism simply as a large quantity of chemicals. For one thing scarcity is more than a condition of scarce resources: the word, if it is to mean anything in human terms, must encompass the social relations and cultural apparatus that foster insecurity in the psyche . . . by the same token, the word "post-scarcity" means fundamentally more than a mere abundance in the means of life: it decidedly includes the <u>kind</u> of life these means support. The human relationships and psyche of the individual in a post-scarcity society must fully reflect the freedom, security and self-expression that this abundance makes possible. Post-scarcity society, in short, is the fulfillment of the social and cultural potentialities latent in a technology of abundance.[68]

Instead, what is actual as we read Bookchin, is abundance as an historical possiblity. It is a possibility that includes, but is neither reducible to nor explainable as a linear increase in economic

productivity.

The grim alternative, the harvest of scarcity, is like abundance also made possible by capitalist society in an advanced state of development. E.P. Thompson characterizes this social produced, entropic tendency to self-destruction through nuclear geo-cide as "exterminism":

> I am offering, in full seriousness, the category of "exterminism". By "exterminism" I do not indicate an intention or criminal foresight in the prime actors. And I certainly do not claim to have discovered a new "exterminist" mode of production. Exterminism designates these characteristics of a society -- expressed in differing degrees within its economy, its polity and its ideology -- which thrust it in a direction whose outcome must be the extermination of multitudes. The outcome will be extermination, but this will not happen accidently (even if the final trigger is accidental) but as the direct consequence of prior acts of policy, of the accmulation and perfection of the means of extermination, and of thestructuring of whole societies so that these are directed towards that end. Exterminism requires, of course, at least <u>two</u> agents for its consummation, which are brought into collision. But such collision cannot be ascribed to accident if it has long been forseen, and if both agents have, by deliberate policy, directed themselves upon an accelerating collision course. As Wright Mills told us long ago, "the immediate cause of World War III is the preparation of it."[69]

As we read Thompson, moreover, this development is spawned by the logic of the Cold War, the logic of deterrence. While appearing static, the deterrent state develops, albeit degeneratively in dualistic enmity. Thus, Thompson further characterizes this historically-specific mode of development in his <u>Protest and Survive</u>:

> Deterrence is not a stationary state, it is a degenerative state. Deterrence has repressed the export of violence toward the opposing bloc, but in doing so the repressed power of the state has turned back on its own author. The repressed violence has backed up and worked its way into the economy, the polity, the ideology, and the culture of the opposing

powers. This is the deep structure of the Cold War.[70]

Again, here, capitalist development reaches a threshold, albeit one at qualitatively opposite odds to the post-scarcity possibility with which it is enwreathed. To quote Thompson:

> I argue from a general and sustained historical process, an accumulative logic, of a kind made familiar to me in the study of history. The episodes lead in this direction or that, but the general logic of proces is always toward nuclear war.
>
> The local crisis are survived, and it seems as if the decisive moment - either of war or of peacemaking and reconciliation - has been postponed and pushed forward into the future. But what has been pushed forward is always worse. The weapons are more terrible, the means for their delivery more clever. The notion that a war might be fought to "advantage," that it might be "won," gains ground. There is even a tremor of excitement in our culture as though, subconsciously, humankind has lived with the notion for so long that expectations without actions have become boring. The human mind, even when it resists, assents more easily to its owndefeat. All moves on its degenerative course, as if the outcome of civilization was as determined as is the outcome of this sentence: in a full stop.[71]

And, finally, like the "post-scarcity" possibility, there is no fateful automaticity to the terracidal outcome:

> I am reluctant to accept that this determinism is absolute. But if my arguments are correct, then we cannot put off the matter any longer. We must throw whatever resources still exist in human culture across the path of this degenerative logic. We must protest if we are to survive...We must generate an alternative logic, an opposition at every level of society.[72]

This present need for an alternative logic to that of deterrence is, as we read it, a strategic demand for a logic and mode of social development that is an alternative to the logic of scarcity. A striking formulation of that logic bears a decisive parallel to the exterminist logic that suffuses the dualistic enmity of the Cold War. To cite Laing and Cooper in Reason and Violence:

> Scarcity determines that, for each, all the world exists as object of consumption. As such, it constitutes the negative unity of the multiplicity of men. The utilization of the object here and now prevents its use there and now or then. Scarcity makes real the impossibility of co-essential existence. Under the empire of scarcity, human beings are seen as excess, as future consumers, as unnecessary at least, as a threat more fundamentally. Men are seen as quantities, and as interchangeable. Man is put in question in his being, each is one-too-many. Each man exists as inhuman, as a strange species, as other than me. The other is a risk for me. I am a risk for the other.[73]

In our reading, then, the logic of exterminism is the terminal outcome of this logic of scarcity -- once it is grasped as a dynamic mode of social development. Correspondingly, the threshold that constitutes the historical crisis that grounds our reading specifically in our time can, as a strategic choice between a developmental logic of abundance and a developmental logic of scarcity be reformulated as a strategic choice between an exterminist logic of social development towards nuclear confrontation, and a developmental logic of post-scarcity social change. Indeed, both possibilities are grounded in capitalist development as well as made possible in part, as so many potentialities of its technological capacity. Again, insofar as our strategy for reading is both constituted by and, in part, constitutes the historical setting whereby it is situated, it is germane to that setting. As we have noted, then, our emancipatory animated mode of reading is necessarily informed by fostering abundant development as its strategic intention.

But, again, our aim is not to reproduce a thoroughgoing historical analysis of its scope and depth. Instead, assuming for now this crisis as the historical context and ground for our theorizing, we

will further situate our strategy for reading in relation to the rival modes of contemporary sociological discourse regarding social development. Modern social theory has seemingly long been organized around the apparently self-evident assumption that material scarcity was an eternal, invariant principle whereby social existence as such was made possible. The traditional version of material scarcity assumes that wants and desires are infinite while the natural, social, or existential capacity for their fulfillment are necessarily finite. Needs are relentless, ever-increasing, and indefatigable; while the means of fulfillment, material resources, are depletable, ever-diminishing, or, if expandable, then not expandable beyond the absolute invariance of some natural outer limit. In its neo-Malthusian formulation, the demands for satisfaction increase geometrically in the face of an invariant incapacity of the means of satisfaction to expand but arithmetically. In effect social existence is a plethora of necessarily conflicting and competing "interests," not all of which permit satisfaction, and any of which are fulfillable only at the expense of the relative deprivation of another's needs, most of which are necessarily redundant.

The assumption of scarcity as an eternal phenomenon has been the predominant, conventional "realism" that has undergirded Western social and economic thought since the Greeks. Alternative assumptions have been relegated by mainstream capitalist and socialist traditions alike to the pejorative, residual category of "utopian thought," "millenarianism," "prophecy," "infantile disorder," "science fiction," et al. Hobbes gave political social thought one of its starkest formulations of scarcity in his characterization in Leviathan of

the state of nature as a vale of "slaughter, solitude, and the want of all things."[74] One contemporary formulation of invariant scarcity expresses a no less fearsome formulation:

> Scarcity is the basis of the possibility of our history. . . . Scarcity determines that, for each, all the world exists as object of consumption. As such, it constitutes the negative unity of the multiplicity of men. The utilization of the object here and now prevents its use there and now or then. Scarcity makes real the impossibility of co-essential existence. Under the empire of scarcity, human beings are seen as excess, as future consumers, as unnecessary at least, as a threat more fundamentally. Men are seen as quantities, and as interchangeable. Man is put in question in his being, each is one-too-many. Each man exists as inhuman, as a strange species, as other than me. The other is a risk for me. I am a risk for the other. (Laing and Cooper, Reason and Violence)[75]

In view of this thesis, one or another theoretical version of essentially this formulation of material scarcity has silently or explicitly informed, pervaded, grounded, or anchored modern sociological thinking about social development, policy, and planning.

For example, in the contemporary prevailing understanding of the classical tradition that founds modern sociological theory, there is near unanimity regarding the nonproblematic nature of material scarcity as a ground assumption for that body of theoretical discourse. Indeed, this unanimity is consolidated and maintained insofar as surpassing material scarcity is characteristically not thematized as an "issue;" indeed, when noted at all, scarcity is simply taken for granted as a given. This taken-for-grantedness is, in my view, further actively accomplished for and by social theory insofar as the postwar social development which <u>appears</u> not to be obviously scarce, namely affluence, is explained as primarily a quantitative enlargement or additive extension of the selfsame social dynamics that

previously had explained scarcity as an insurmountable historical necessity. Moreover, as of this writing, the predominant hue of contemporary social thought has once again reverted from exploring affluence and its problems to an outright reassertion of the stark, almost apocalyptic primacy of invariant material scarcity. This reassertion of primal scarcity takes the form of the neo-Malthusianism of the pervasive social theorizing that envisions the mounting prospect of ecological holocaust as the "brute fact" to be faced squarely in all social policy and planning considerations.

Thus, "qualitative transformation" is transmuted into"internal tension", a mere moment of stress in the ongoing, otherwise smooth accomplishment of systemic "self-equilibration."

It is possible, then, to read the recent trajectory of mainstream American sociological theory on social development in terms of a pivotal shift away from a developmental account of social dynamics (e.g. Parsonian structural-functionalism) towards a revived, virtually static account (e.g. some neo-Malthusian theories of ecological holocaust). The theoretical trajectory traversed here is the rise and decline of the Affluence Paradigm (Potter, Reisman, Galbraith, Parsons, et al.), as a more and then less adequate strategic account and legitimation of the development of post-war American capitalism. In its hegemonic phase, the Affluence Paradigm constituted a discourse which both explained and defended the virtues and deficiencies of the so-called "affluent society" as if it were a qualitatively new kind of social order. Taken as a whole, the affluent society constituted a mode of social life that was ostensibly developmental, self-stabilizing, and capable of limitless expansion in terms of an

ongoing extension of its characteristic logic and principles of development. The primary motive, expression and measure of its mode of development of the affluent society was the production and, especially, consumption of "goods."

With consumer "goods" as the archetypal object, the epistemology of the Affluence Paradigm was based upon an account of objects as so many "stabilities" which are discrete, self-contained, quantifiable, accumulable, opaque to further qualitative transformation, and best expressed in quantitative terms--rates of productivity, GNP, and so forth. In its heroic phase, the boundary for this process of producing-consuming goods was considered dynamic and "infinitely expandable." That is, the outer boundary was possessed of a virtually infinite elasticity with respect to a single developmental process. The ongoing expansion of that one process suggested--in principle--a boundless capacity for exponentially increasing the available quantity of goods and services. The boundary-conditions of such a developmental object were formulated in a quantitative sense: its limitless expandability was intelligible only in terms of the relative increase or decrease in the total production and consumption of goods and services.

The process as a whole was considered in its theoretical re-presentation to be self-equilibrating; the affluent society paradigm was an ideal-type, theoretical cognate for what in actual practice has been the not so smooth planning and mangement of economic development through Keynesian fine-tuning. Given the hegemony and nearly iconic status of a boom-phase capitalist production, the eternal prospect of stability through growth without recurrent, cyclical economic crises

seemed securely in hand. With this, the prospect of abundance--now labelled affluence and defined strictly in terms of the limitless production of goods--seemed certain.

Starting in the early 1970's, the Affluence Paradigm entered into an apocalyptic phase. The limitless growth that was the alpha and omega of the heroic phase became the bete noire of modern civilization, the prime cause of impending ecological holocaust. That is, the boundless productivity that appeared as a crisis-proof passage towards an Edenic prosperity was increasingly repudiated. More and more the emphasis became the brute fact of irremediable material scarcity. This shift took the form of stressing an insuperable supply-crisis in finite, non-renewable resources. This recognition was presented as indispensable to any rational social policy, given the ever-mounting prospect of ecological holocaust were unbridled production and economic growth to continue unabated. The apocalyptic phase of the Affluence Paradigm entails the repudiation of ever-increasing productivity as a viable guiding principle for social development, let alone as the summum bonum of human history.

In its currently hegemonic range of neo-Malthusian theoretical formulations (Ehrlich, Commoner, Rifkin, Reports to the Club of Rome, et al.) and planned economic austerity (urban fiscal crises, economic triage, the Reagan budget, energy-autarchy, zero population growth), the prevailing iconic re-presentation of society has become static. The depletion of nature by mindless productivity has reach a fixed boundary, an absolute outer limit. The logic of survival now mandates that we repudiate our collective "materialistic" profligacy, and end our errant fetishization of limitless growth. We

must harness ourselves to programmed austerities, before it is too late.

As a result the previously hegemonic social development process--limitless production, hitherto formalized in theory as a self-equilibrating expansion has now given way to its polar opposite. It has been replaced by the self-depletion through that production of a form of life whose theoretical re-presentation now legitimates the wholesale practice of planned, brute austerity. With this turn, the Affluence Paradigm comes full circle: its initial full embrace of limitless productivity gives rise to its subsequent wholesale repudiation. The once expanding horizon of cornucopian possibility is now suddenly closed off by the granite boundary of invariant material scarcity. Stated epistemologically, the self-equilibrating dynamics of a self-developing bounded object are now supplanted by the tendential depletion of a finite static bounded-object. In essence, the limitlessly producible consumer "good" has been replaced by the finite "depletable resource" as the archetypal materialization of theoretical objects.

Whereas the strategic changeover appears on the surface to be a fundamental shift in epistemological, ideological, political and economic world-views, it is crucial to note the common ground shared by the theorizing of both affluence and austerity. Namely, both share a common conception of production defined strictly in terms of the quantitative increase/decrease of a collecton of seemingly stable, discrete, tangible objects-in-themselves--objects known as goods. In each case, the hegemonic account of production is the same. Both center on units of tangible quantifiable commodities. In both theoretical accounts, social development and planning are anchored,

albeit in seemingly opposite directions, in the ostensible consequences of the selfsame formulation of the productive process. Again, whether cast in the role of agent of salvation or harbinger of doomsday, the theoretical principles that drive social development comprise the same economistic account of production. Moreover, these principles remain self-identical and inured to qualitative self-transformation. In affluence and austerity theorizing alike, the central activity, namely the economic production of tangible commodities, is simply not intelligible in categories that could recognize, reflect, constitute or formulate the possibility of that activity itself either being produced or undergoing qualitative transformation. Production, in this economistic sense, is always-already there. Production stands as eternally given, just as it is.

The historical fate or outcome of this kind of production is expressed, formalized, and legitimated in both affluence and austerity theorizing. Their shared conception of production makes these two seemingly different conceptions of social development but two moments or modes of greater, unitary historical process: the history of capitalist production. For this reason, we can refer to them respectively as the heroic (Parsonian) and apocalytpic (neo-Malthusian) phases of the Affluence Paradigm.

In my view, then, the seeming self-evidence of material scarcity as well as that of limitless productivity in the prevailing mode must, as grounding assumptions for sociological theory, be put into question. The twin assumption of insurmountable scarcity and limitless productivity has too often been taken as a given, an article of faith, as virtually an existential invariance. It has been rendered

an icon without itself being subject to conscious sociological analysis. That is, scarcity has been posited unhistorically, non-developmentally, and statically, often at the price of the theoretical neglect of social tensions, undercurrents, contradictions, resonances, and embryonic developments which might, on another reading, alternatively be grasped as presaging some new kind of social and economic development--one that was not ultimately bound to the dynamics of material scarcity. In recent years, theory has been confronted with, for example, the paradox of formidable technological advances that presage the elimination of toil coexisting with persistent poverty, global starvation, and resource shortages. In my view, then, theoretical accounts that merely note one side or the other without analyzing their conjunction have displayed a crucial theoretical weakness. Namely, they neglect the possibility of discerning and analyzing newly emergent forms of social development, forms of social organization qualitatively different from those based upon material scarcity.

Affluence, then, cannot be mistaken for nor thematized as abundance in our sense. The affluence paradigm does accomplish the constitution of affluence as an object for theorizing. It does so, however, by contrasting affluence only with the previous scarcity-bound moment of capitalist development defined by the Industrial Revolution. Tht is, affluence derives its identity as a theoretical object from a retrospective analysis of a vast, less complex moment of capitalist development. What is left out of the process of its constitution for theorizing is a prospective movement whereby "affluence" gives rise to emergent possibilities for its own supersession.

Thus, affluence is constituted retrospectively without being constituted prospectively. It forms a conceptual whole in conjunction with the historical past of which it was an emergent possibility, as it is now recognizably as qualitatively distinct. As a dimension of this historical whole, however, it represents the completion of tencendies for development latent in the previous historical moment, the Industrial Revolution, which it brings to a final fruition. For purposes of situating this reading, then affluence must be grasped as a "critical mass" or "threshold." It is a pregnant moment in a larger developmental process. In this ongoing development, our advanced capitalism is a form of life which exists in a dynamic tension such that it cannot be permanently sustained without fundamental change. Indeed, it must either deteriorate or develop.

As a threshold, as a moment of history, affluence can generate a qualitatively more complex and developed mode of social organization, elements of which development are already present within affluence as emergent possibilities. Or, conversely, affluence can generate a retrogressive, backward development which would yield a more severe state of disorder than would occur if the retrogression had begun at a less complex level of social organization. That is, insofar as "affluence" represents a heightening and intensification of emergent possibilities from an earlier stage of social development, say, the Industrial Revolution stage of capitalist development, its disorganization would yield an even greater scope and depth of disorder than might have been the case at a previous pre-industrial level of development.

Affluence, then, we read as a moment of scarcity. In its

heroic phase, it is merely an expansion of its fundamental principles, not a qualitative break with them. That is, the "affluence" that constitutes the affluent society is really a scarcity-bound, distributive notion representing on a global scale, a differential distribution of that of which we already do not have enough. To state this in material categories, affluence does not represent enough, only more. "Enough," as we view it must be grasped as a category of qualitative development.

In my view, however, what has been missed by both one-sided approaches is an historical possibility for social existence that neither merely extends nor merely reverts nor reduces to the social dynamics and theoretical presumptions of material scarcity. That is, what is neglected a priori is the prospective or possible emergence of qualitatively different forms of post-scarcity social development. This neglect seems only natural in what otherwise appears to be either the ongoing acceleration of social disorganization, or the cruel persistence of the existential paradox of poverty amidst progress, invariant deprivation amidst progressive material fulfilment, spiritual malaise amidst material promise. For example we find the recent credo of Benjamin Nelson which he terms "The Social Reality Principle:"

> No social or cultural change, however revolutionary--not event collectivist planning or total sexual emancipation, for which so much is currently claimed by the spokesmen of the New Amalgam--will stamp out crime, vice, false consciousness, political domination, economic waste, group prejudice, status oppression, role conflict, religious fanaticism and other symptoms of individual and social malaise. They persist in varying proportions and with varying effects in all organized societies. They are the accompaniment and signs of strain among and within the several (but not concentric) systems which help to explain the characteristics of human action-systems we describe by the names of the personality, social-political-economic organization, and culture.[76]

What is crucial, instead, especially in the light of enormous prospects and prohibitions for and against large-scale, structural transformations in the current socio-historical context, is to demonstrate the need for modes of social theorizing that do not a priori preclude the possibility of a post-scarcity dynamics of social development from sociological significance. To include such an historical possibility as an integral dimension of theoretical analysis is not the same as substituting an a priori, inevitabilistic claim to the certain emergence of materially abundant social formations, as a way to compenste for their previous a priori exclusion. The intention here is not to legitimate what Weber called social prophecy. Instead, the point that requires demonstration is that not only must sociological theory avoid both the a priori insistence on the inevitability or exclusion of the possibility of post-scarcity modes of social development; but, further still, that the tradition of theoretical sociology can acknowledge the fact that the issue of post-scarcity development as an historical possibility has already been on the sociological agenda from its original, modern formulations. What makes this thesis worth propounding, then, is the dual purpose of its undertaking: first, the demonstration of the need for contemporary theory to seriously address the issue of abundance as an historical possibility; and, second, the remembrance and display of the problematic of scarcity and abundance as a central issue and unresolved, albeit real, tension for modern sociology.

In the next chapter, our animated textual analysis centers on another key problematic of our own time and place. We single out, at first, a sociologically little known but archetypal debate--the debate

on entropy, the self-depletion ascribed to nature or society. In terms of methodology, our overall set of procedures for analysis, the denial of entropy--or negentropy--serves next as historical and theoretical content for us. Negentropy serves as historical content in the same way that emancipatory animated reading serves (as we shall see by the end of Chapter Four) as both its "form" and its historical display.

Methodologically, we go still further. We treat form and content in the same way as we did reader and text. With each case, we posit their internal relationship; form and content alike are neither separate nor identical to each other. Like reader and text, they interact with each other in a developing unitary interplay. That makes their relationship an historical one as well as an internal one. Indeed, we will show how this whole work interrelates an emancipatory animated reading with the historical specificity of negentropy as a developmental human activity.

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CHAPTER TWO

READING THE SILENCE OF SCIENTIFIC LAWS

This chapter is an intervention into scientific discourse that prepares the ground for the full-scale intervention into accounts of the thermodynamics laws which follows in the next two chapters. For us theorizing is a socially constituted, developmental act which, in turn, is constitutive of its social world. We show how this is so in our animated reading of "scientific law" which, in its positivist formulation, ratifies the external relatedness of theorizing and the world.

Positivism has consolidated its cultural sovereignty through a version of natural science which continues to hold social scientists in its thrall. In this chapter, we examine the apotheosis of "the scientific law in its positivist version, its success in accomplishing paradigmatic status as exemplary knowledge. We do so first to demonstrate its alleged givenness, its airless ahistoricity, indeed its immunity and closure to further qualitative development. We note, further, the authoritative mood of closure that pervades the silence produced by its invocation in daily discourse as well as in the conduct

of inquiry. And then, we perform an emancipatory animated reading of that silence in order to display the possibility of a non-positivist, developmental version of "scientific law," one which would re-instate history, social development, and human intention into the very constitution of so-called scientific knowledge. Through this strategic intervention into positivist discourse, we realieve "scientific law" as of its iconic cultural status and note its hitherto concealed "openness" to strategic purposes. In so doing, we observe the socialized quality of all theorizing as well as its de-socialization by its positivist re-presentation.

Theorizing is neither self-enclosed and indifferent to the social and natural world, nor is it merely reflective, derivative activity in and of a social world which is indifferent to its activity and intentions. The hope of our intervention is that such theorizing can in addition be a truly emancipatory activity that would re-constitute possibilities for the re-humanizing, re-socializing and re-constituting of possibility within theoretical domains over which positivist science currently exercises hegemony.

In this chapter, our emancipatory animated reading of its discourse focuses on its version of "scientific laws" not to deny the possibility of scientific understanding, but to display the strategic rootedness of its prevailing re-presentation in a world of irremediable scarcity.

Positivist readings of nature and the social world re-present them as self-contained objects-in-themselves, as if the positivist subject (intention and so on) were itself not constitutive of the version of reality it in part produces. The resulting

separation of subject and object re-presents a world-object set off from and closed to human intervention and transformation. To then "discover" the "scientific laws" that govern the operations of such an object is also to ratify its finality as it purports to explain them. From the standpoint of our problematic, the issue at hand is not the by now shop-worn (albeit accurate) understanding that in pursuit of prediction and control over objectified processes, positivist inquiry re-inforces the status quo. Rather, as we read positivist discourse--including its apotheosis of "scientific laws" as it conceives of them--the issue is that in ratifying the status quo, positivism precludes the possibility of a qualitative change in the scarcity-infused principles which purport to explain its object.

The fruit of this display is, through our method of reading, to re-open the possibility of an alternative version of "scientific laws" so that the articulation and analysis of emergent, post-scarcity development in the domain of scientific inquiry becomes possible.

Our overall strategy in this chapter, then, is to de-stabilize the static sense of inviolability and eternality with which "scientific laws" cloak their content to protect it against its historical transformation. As stated above, we do so as an opening wedge for our strategic intervention, in the next two chapters, into the received, positivist reading of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Through our strategic reading, we seek to demonstrate the re-instatement of history, social development and human intention into the very processes by which our knowledge in and of the world is constituted.

Before reading the content--entropy--of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, it is necessary to treat the form or convention of what

is accepted as "scientific law." The invocation of a "law," specifically a "scientific law" is not merely an innocent speech act, an act without real social consequences. The invocation of a word or phrase, especially that of a "law", performs definite social consequences for thought and practice, and these, in turn, are intimately connected to the intentions or interests that inform or guide the invocation. The production of a silence by any invocation, especially the authoritative invocation of a law, can go unnoticed, or, alternatively, be heard. Both hearing silences and not hearing of silences are acts which signify learned or unlearned patterns of listening and reading that are embedded in specific, historical situations. In our present situation, the not hearing of the silence produced by the invocation of "scientific law" is not without its costs. To quote Althusser: "The price of this unheard silence is the empiricist temptation."[1] But, the not hearing or not-reading of the silence produced by the invocation, in spoken word or print, of "scientific law," signifies more than merely an intellectual temptation to "fall into" positivist habits of reading. Rather, it attests to the ongoing--albeit critically challenged--cultural hegemony of positivistic notions of meanings, conventions, understandings, and usages, in current everyday discourse, including the prevailing discourse within the social and natural sciences.

The customary effect of invoking "law" or "scientific law" within the context of the cultural hegemony of positivist using and understanding meanings--especially those of "science" and "law"--is to produce a silence that goes unheard, a text whose gaps go un-read, in sum, real patterns of real discourse that constitute the specific

boundaries of everyday communicative experiences. Insofar as any ongoing discourse--spoken or written-- can be treated as a text, then we cite Althusser to sharpen our point here:

> In other words, we can treat the silence in this text in one of two ways: either by taking it for a silence that goes without saying because its content is the dominant theory of empiricist abstraction; or by treating it as a limit and a problem. A limit: the furthest point to which Marx took his thought; but then this limit, far from returning us to the old field of empiricist philosophy, opens a new field before us. A problem: what is precisely the nature of this new field?[2]

The invocation of "scientific law" that produces "a silence that goes without saying" attests to the active cultural hegemony of positivist concepts of linguistic and scientific practice within everyday discourse. The production of a silence that functions to authoritatively pre-empt or punctuate further discourse is the active accomplishment of the hegemony of a specific paradigm in communicative practices. This ensuing silence speaks, when heard, the ongoing active accomplishment of cultural hegemony.

The cultural hegemony of the positivistic paradigm of scientific endeavor entails the current predominance of what Habermas terms the technical cognitive interest in prediction and control over objectified (natural and social) processes.[3] Correspondingly, the meanings and practices that are embedded in the prevailing paradigm as the predominant interest-guided strategy for inquiry carry with them two potentialities. One is the capacity to consolidate the ongoing hegemony of the positivist paradigm by establishing stabilized silences as final outposts of discourse. The other is the potential made possible by the fact that that very establishment of outer limits makes

those limits in principle visible. Once what was not seen is seen, what went unheard gets a hearing, what remained unread gets re-read, establishing silence is no longer a practice that only stabilizes paradigms (or prevailing discourse). Since the invocation of "scientific law" makes visible the credo and limit of a silence anchored to the technical cognitive interest, the silence it produces invites, when heard, alternative treatments.

One such treatment, the positivistic reading of "silence," "law," and "scientific law," would read these with the effect if not (more or less conscious) intention of achieving closure--whether theoretical, ideological, or practical. The alternative treatment of "scientific law" et al., is to notice them as outer limits, as agencies that produce silences, and then to read those silences in an animated way. Then they can be read as so many invitations to continue discourse, prompt new investigations, become theoretically self-conscious, posit new problematics. As Althusser states this difference between a positivist (ideology) and animated (scientific) treatment:

> . . . we can see the difference between the ideological treatment of a theoretical silence or emptiness, and its scientific treatment: the former confronts us with an ideological closure, the latter with a scientific openness.[4]

While Althusser's reversal of customary appellations,--calling positivistic science "ideology," while calling his animated critique "scientific,"--may itself fall prey to a positivism of its own making, the pivotal distinction for our purposes is the crucial difference between the intention to attain closure, and the intention to maintain

ongoing openness. This invocation of even this difference, however, cannot be treated as "the last word," as itself constituting dualistic categories of closure. That is, the intention to maintain ongoing openness is only the beginning salvo in a contest among specific alternative modes and conceptions of openness--"openness for what?," "What kind of openness?," "degrees of relative openness,"--all these, at least, are strategic problematics that only begin to unfold with the intention to opt for openness rather than closure.[5]

To return, finally, to the invocation of "scientific law," we can now discern that, depending on the intention at work, and the paradigm which invests it with specific meaning, this invocation can alternatively produce closure or openness in thought, discourse, and scientific practice. The tendency in the currently hegemonic, positivistic version of empirical-analytic-sciences, is to tie the technical interest in prediction and control to an intention to achieve closure. This intention towards closure has frequently taken the form in the social sciences of an ongoing demand to realize a context-free general theory of social behavior. The knowledge of social behavior thereby produced would display its validity and legitimacy in its capacity to hold with the force (read cultural hegemony) of "scientific law." Such laws would be verified statements, formulated in allegedly context-free language.

In this chapter, we will read the treatment of scientific law performed by the prevailing empiricist tradition in mainstream sociology. Our analysis of this version of scientific law will further elaborate the methodological and theoretical context and background for the alternative readings of the laws of thermodynamics,

addressed in Chapter Three. Ultimately, it is these readings which will constitute the content--that concrete, substantive historical dimension--that informs the otherwise formal strategy of emancipatory, animated reading of texts which this thesis performs.

One predominant tendency in the social sciences has been to revere the natural sciences, especially physics, for their alleged capacity to generate "legitimate knowledge." The natural sciences are seen as fashioning or discovering empirical uniformities, testable correlations amongst natural phenomena that can be generalized into causal laws. These laws then enable measures of predictability and control over the objectified processes they purport to describe. One succinct characterization of the revered object, the positivist version of science, is offered by Carl Hempel in The Foundations of Concept Formation in Empirical Science:

> Empirical science has two major objectives: to describe particular phenomena in the world of our experience and to establish general principles by means of which they can be explained and predicted. The explanatory and predictive principles of a scientific discipline are stated in its hypothetical generalizations and its theories; they characterize general patterns or regularities to which the individual phenomena conform and by virtue of which their occurrence can be systematically anticipated.[6]

As recently as 1978, one observer could describe the field of sociologists in the following terms:

> In terms of the number of conscious (or perhaps unconscious) adherents, neopositivism is the largest "school" in contemporary sociology. Neopositivism's major premise is that sociology is, or should be, a science and should, therefore, follow the methods of the natural, or more commonly, the physical, sciences. According to Wagner (1963), "It largely identifies scientific procedure with quantification and measuring.... Advanced forms...are based on systems of

> interlinked causal (instead of functional) propositions which are expected to lend themselves to an eventual mathematical restatement of theory."[7]

Merton had earlier correctly identified the imperative of (neo)positivist sociologists to model sociological inquiry and knowledge claims on the physical sciences as a quest for the legitimacy of their work and of their discipline:

> Another route has been folowed by sociologists in their quest to establish the intellectual legitimacy of their discipline: they have taken as their prototype systems of scientific theory rather than systems of philosophy. This path too has sometimes led to the attempt to create total systems of sociology--a goal that is often based on one or more of three basic misconceptions about the sciences.[8]

Indeed, what would legitimate sociological activity was the fact and degree of its approximation to the icon of science, positivistically sketched above. Merton agrees with the long-range enterprise of establishing a general sociological theory that could generate verifiable predictions which, in turn, would provide a measure of confirmation (in Popper's sense) for the whole theoretic system. Thus, his chiding of those who demand immediate general, explanatory theory on the part of a sociology allegedly in the image of physics is directed at the prematurity of their demand, but not the demand itself. To quote from Social Theory and Social Structure:

> The first misinterpretation assumes that systems of thought can be effectively developed before a great mass of basic observations has been accumulated. According to this view, Einstein might follow hard on the heels of Kepler, without the intervening centuries of investigation and systematic thought about the results of investigations that were needed to prepare the terrain.[9]

And again to cite his well-known characterization of the relationship between sociology and physics with respect to their uneven, historical development:

> The second misconception about the physical sciences rests upon a mistaken assumption of the historical contemporaneity--that all cultural products existing at the same moment of history have the same degree of maturity. In fact, to perceive differences here would be to achieve a sense of proportion. The fact that the discipline of physics and the discipline of sociology are both identifiable in the mid-twentieth century does not mean that the achievements of the one should be the measure of the other. True, social scientists today live at a time when physics has achieved comparatively great scope and precision of theory and experiment, a great aggregate of tools of investigation, and an abundance of technological by-products. Looking about them, many sociologists take the achievements of physics as the standard for self-appraisal. They want to compare biceps with their bigger brothers. They,too, want to count. And when it becomes evident that they neither have the rugged physique nor pack the murderous wallop of their big brothers, some sociologists despair. They begin to ask: is a science of society really possible unless we institute a total system of sociology? But this perspective ignores the fact that between the twentieth-century physics and twentieth-century sociology stand billions of man-hours of sustained, disciplined, and cumulative research. Perhaps sociology is not yet ready for its Einstein because it has not yet found its Kepler--to say nothing of its Newton, Laplace, Gibbs, Maxwell or Planck.[10]

Thus, in one sense, Merton is attempting to establish a middle-ground, avoiding both the overzealous optimism and the impatient despair that has pervaded the ranks of empiricist sociologists who have become enthralled with the practice of their profession in the then hegemonic image of the positivistic version of the physical sciences and their causal laws. Grasping the dangers to the profession of a volatile dynamic that flip-flops from naive-hope to premature-despair, Merton tries to establish some programmatic

perspective on this sociology-physics nexus, and to quell the distorted misconceptions of natural science that arise from this desperate quest for self-legitimation. To this end, Merton insists that sociologists are often prone to "misread the actual state of theory in the physical sciences."[11]

Merton offers the following assessment of the state of theory in the natural sciences as a necessary corrective to sociologists' pervasive self-doubts:

> This error is ironic, for physicists agree that they have not achieved an all-encompassing system of theory, and most see little prospect of it in the near future . . . . These observations might be pondered by those sociologists who expect a sound general system of sociological theory in our time--or soon after. If the science of physics, with its centuries of enlarged theoretical generalizations, has not managed to develop an all-encompassing theoretical system, then a fortiori the science of sociology, which has only begun to accumulate empirically grounded theoretical generalizations of modest scope, would seem well advised to moderate its aspirations for such a system.[12]

For Merton, here, the immediate aim is to moderate the desperate, self-legitimating aspirations of empiricist sociologists for a predictive general social theory, so as to formulate a new, more realistic short-run tactic for realizing that quest in the long-run. Merton's heralded theory of the middle-range, then, is a tactic intended to better accomplish the primary, long-range strategic intention of mainstream empirical sociology: namely, to anchor that primary "function" whereby "theory introduces a ground for prediction."[13] In a sense, then, Merton's project is to save the positivist intention from positivist self-misconceptions.

Obviously, Merton remains solidly connected with what Habermas calls the "technical cognitive interest"[14] in achieving prediction and control over objectified processes, the guiding interest of the so-called empirical-analytic sciences. And yet, from within that very strategy of inquiry, Merton has had to contend with the obstacles provided to further sociological progress (sociology, of course, in his sense), by the dominion or hegemony of one version of scientific endeavor: namely, the positivist version of science and its causal laws. That is, the misconception against which he does battle, the worship which he could moderate to better save the faith, is the virtual idolatry of canons of positivistic methodology, the iconic status of the positivistic paradigm.

Tne hegemony of the positivist paradigm, often notwithstanding differences in actual sociological practice, is expressed on the one hand as an enthusiasm for a sociology that is, or <u>should be</u> a "science." However, as a hegemonic paradigm, positivistic scientific icon entails the formulation of its own internal standards of self-correcting practice: for example, it has generated a set of status ascriptions to valorize those practitioners that more closely adhere to procedural purity. This active consolidation of correct paradigmatic practice involves, then, not only its moment of enthusiasm, but also its moment of internal repression, of insuring a "towing of the line." This system of intra-paradigmatic status ascriptions frequently takes the form of: first, the division of scientific activity into pure (value-free) and applied (planning, value-laden) science; and, subsequently, the valorization of pure, "basic research" at the expense of lesser "mundane applications." To

quote the anthropologist Edmund Leach's stark characterization of the status-hierarchy:

> Mathematicians have always been eminently respectable, and so are those who deal with the hard lifeless theories about what constitutes the physical world--astronomers, the physicists, the theoretical chemists. But the more a scientist interests himself in matters which are of direct human relevance, the lower his social status. The real scum of the scientific world are the engineers and sociologists, and the psychologists. Indeed if the psychologist wants to rate as a scientist he must study rats, not human beings. In zoology the same rules apply. It is much more respectable to dissect muscle tissues than to observe the behavior of a living animal in its natural habitat.[15]

The quest for scientific legitimacy, then, defines the practice and reinforces the outlook of those who occupy the lesser rungs in the culturally prevailing status-hierarchy. The fact of this quest for legitimacy, then, both expresses and maintains the boundaries of the positivistic paradigm.

Merton buttresses the overall paradigm by addressing this sense of second-class citizenry amongst sociologists who adhere in principle to positivistic canons with the consolation that even its most honorific denizens, the theoretical physicists, have not achieved the holy grail of unified, general, predictive theory. Correspondingly, while Merton notes the present disparity in theoretical development between the various sciences, he neither doubts in principle nor abandons in practice the technical cognitive interest in prediction and control. He maintains his faith in its eventual mature, "truly scientific" elaboration as general theory by the sociological enterprise. The icon remains unbroken.

Additional support for the positivistic version of science is discernible in the early Wittgenstein's more idiosyncratic formulation of acceptable criteria for meaningful discourse. Without exploring the formidable densities of Wittgenstein's universe of logical relationships, we simply take note of its dualization into a region of meaningful speech, and a mystical--in his idiosyncratic sense--region of inexpressibility. In his laconic brilliance, Wittgenstein both argues the hegemony of scientific discourse as what is meaningful within the bounded portion of the speakable, while institutionalizing absolute silence, non-meaningfulness, as characterizing the mystical region of the nonspeakable. Thus, we quote first the appropriate epigrams from the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, whereby Wittgenstein's dualism between the speakable and the inexpressible is posited:

> 6.5 When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words . . .
>
> 6.52 We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course there are then no questions left, and this itself is the answer.
>
> 6.521 The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem . . .
>
> 6.522 There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.[16]

The hegemony of positivistic scientific discourse in the realm of the speakable, i.e., the meaningful, is next asserted as follows:

> 6.53 The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e., propositions of natural science--i.e., something that has nothing to do with philosophy--and then, whenever someone else

> wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person--he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy--this method would be the only strictly correct one. . . . What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.[17]

Wittgenstein's dichotomy of speech and silence serves to valorize a positivistic mode of scientific discourse as the sole standard of linguistic meaningfulness. It serves further to sever facts from values, and science from ethics. This, in turn, serves to further institutionalize the hegemony of positivistic criteria of meaning in the realm of scientific discourse. It thereby both contributes to the hegemonic status already achieved by positivistic natural science in the conduct of inquiry, and solidifies--while bounding--the legitimacy of positivistic discourse for the articulation of scientific investigation.

The cultural hegemony of a positivistic version of natural science clearly has constituted a prohibition against alternative theorizing and practice within both natural and social science alike. One comparatively early statement of this hegemonic trend was formulated in and for the social sciences by Clark Hull in 1943:

> . . . there is reason to hope that the next hundred years will see an unprecedented development in this field. One reason for optimism in this respect lies in the increasing tendency, at least among Americans, to regard the "social" or behavioral sciences as genuine natural sciences rather than Geisteswissenschaft. Closely allied to this tendency is the growing practice of excluding theological, folk, and anthropomorphic considerations from the list of presumptive primary behavioral explanatory factors. Wholly congruent with these tendencies is the expanding recognition of the desirability in the behavior sciences of explicit and

> exact formulation, with empirical verification at every possible point. If these three tendencies continue to increase, as seems likely, there is good reason to hope that the behavioral sciences will presently display a development comparable to that manifested by the physical sciences in the age of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.[18]

It is even possible to discern the primacy of a pre-reflective, given world of self-subsistent, objective facts in the positivistic images in Sartre's landmark Existentialist novel of 1938, Nausea:

> I lean my hand on the seat but pull it back hurriedly: it exists. This thing I'm sitting on, leaning my hand on, is called a seat. They made it purposely for people to sit on, they took leather, springs and cloth, they went to work with the idea of making a seat and when they finished, that was what they had made. They carried it here, into this car and the car is now rolling and jolting with its rattling windows, carrying this red thing in its bosom: I murmur: "It's a seat," a little like an exorcism. But the word stays on my lips: it refuses to go and put itself on the thing. It stays what it is . . . . Things are divorced from their names. They are there, grotesque, headstrong, gigantic, and it seems ridiculous to call them seats or say anything at all about them: I am in the midst of things, nameless things. Alone, without words, defenseless, they surround me, are beneath me, behind me, above me. They demand nothing, they don't impose themselves: they are there.[19]

Thus what is given, allegedly pre-reflectively, is a world of self-subsistent objects vis a vis which human consciousness is itself reified as an outside observer. In spite of this, it is Sartre's intention to overcome this bifurcation by the active intervention and, thereby, importing meaning and purpose to an otherwise meaningless, pre-given world of mute objects-in-themselves, indifferent as such to human naming, and other intentions. Sartre's intention was to shatter that icon: that is, to bring speech into muteness of pre-reflective giveness, to impart meaninglessness by decisionistic, subjective interventions into a universe of self-encapsulated objects.

For the positivist scientist, however, this iconic world of self-subsistent objects is in one sense less "absurd" than Sartre's. But, and for the selfsame reason, it is perhaps even more remote from its outside onlooker. That is, whereas Sartre's world of objects-in-themselves is given without connections, meanings, names, et al., and, thereby, meaningless, the "world-text" of the positivistic reading of science is a universe of objects-in-themselves and their objective, causal connections. That is, Sartre's world of mute objects becomes an invitation to decisionistic intervention on the part of the now active subject who thereby actively "writes" the meanings and posits the connections whereby the world becomes a text for the subject's acts of reading and interpretation. By contrast, the positivist world-text is always already written, a given world of objects and their objective, causal interconnections which can be read, just as it is, without alteration, by the passive outside observer. The "reading" of this positivist world text is, as we have noted in the previous chapter, the passive mirroring of a pre-fabricated world of given facts. The "correct" reading of this world-text, the accurate mirroring of its objects and their objective, causal interconnections, is the discovery by neutral techniques of the "laws" of its causal operations.

The existentialist, an active, decisionistic subject who constitutes meaning and interconnections by imitating purposeful projects is replaced here by the positivist who discovers meaning and causal interconnections that are always-already "out there," given just as they are, independently of the subjective, decisionistic intentions. As a scientist, the subject is a neutral, objective

observer of a world of self-abiding facts: a faithful, passive mirror to causal connections embedded in a reality given externally to his will, values, and intentions.

The process of theory building within the framework of this reading of reality is succinctly characterized by Hampden-Turner:

> Most attempts at theory-building in the social sciences assume a monadic theory--one in which the relationships between unit entities are explained by some property of the units themselves. In other words first you analyze social reality into separate units--making sure that they are "mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive"--and then you discover how these units interact and relate.[20]

What is overlooked by "the positivist self-misunderstanding," as Habermas would call it, is that the units whose causal relations are then "discovered" as laws are not themselves "given" in their separateness. As Hampden-Turner puts this:

> What is overlooked in this almost standard procedure is the possibility that the overall organization of the pieces is what imparts to them the very property of life and that their meanings are not intrinsic but depend on how they are synthesized.[21]

Habermas and Hampden-Turner's insistence on the "non-givenness" of factual knowledge is seconded by Bittner's characterization of the constitution of the knowledge of what's there by some human interest. To the positivist, the positing of knowledge as interest-constituted is tantamount to a subjectivist, quasi-solipsistic denial of anything knowable. But knowledge-constitution is not the sheer invention of an account of what there is to be accounted for. Instead, it is the denial of the knowability of the object (or thing-in-itself), the positing of grounds that make any knowing possible. Echoing Habermas on this point, Bittner characterizes "the knowing":

> Whereas knowing and believing may be said to be contingent fact, the known and the believed are not. The molecule is merely there actually, but that which is known about it is not merely known actually, it is by definition subject to assessment with respect to its truth value. Thereby, however, is created a wholly new domain of realities, of cultural realities, about which assertions formulated in accordance with canons of scientific objectivity reveal remarkably little. . . About all these and such things it must be said that they are not merely actually existent, but that it inheres in the nature of their existence that what they truly are is inextricably connected with some human interest in them, and this makes them subject to normative assessment according to the specific nature of their value.[22]

With this, we have reached, given our purposes, the crux of the matter, the status of "the given." For the positivist, the "givenness" of the object-world and its causal linkages is tantamount to its actuality, to what it calls its "objectivity." The ultimate expression of this is the objective, scientific law. For Bittner, Habermas, and Hampden-Turner, the matter is quite otherwise. To use Bittner's laconic critique of the positivist credo: "The object of its objectivity vanished" with the demise of the "truly objective object"; then, the honorific status of the so-called scientific laws must similarly be put into question.[23]

For the positivist, however, all this is tantamount to a denial of the very possibility of objects, causality, and discoverable laws, the epistemological scandal <u>par excellence</u>. To counter the subjectivist concert, the positivist asserts the primacy of the formulation of objective laws as the <u>sine qua non</u> of the possibility of any intelligible claim to legitimate knowledge. This is well-stated in Bittner's account:

> ...the "organ" through which scienfitic realities are "sensed" is the scientific method. As part of this

> method, efforts to do justice to realities-as-they-are, that is, efforts to be objective, are controlled by explicit procedural norms, whose aim is to permit the formulation of assertions that would be as far as can be controlled free of implications arising out of the actual circumstances under which they were formulated and free of implications that arise out of the particular interest and limitations of him who makes them. . . . It is easy to see that with both the procedures of observation and the procedures of inference regulated by general norm, there is nothing left to the unruly factor of subjectivity--or so it would seem, in any case.[24]

The hallmark of the positivist version of natural and social science alike is its formulation of so-called objective, causal laws; laws whose raison d'etre is the explanation of pre-given, objective reality, by which is meant the capacity to predict events. To explain is to formulate causal laws that have predictive force (at least in hypothetical form). The lawful formulation of objectified processes is the bedrock, capstone, and motivating force, the primum mobile of the positivist mode of scientific inquiry. In Bernstein's summary in The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory:

> At the core of this naturalistic interpretation is the conviction that the aim of the social sciences is the same as that of the natural sciences. Collecting and refining data, discovering correlations, and formulating testable empirical generalizations, hypotheses, and models, all have important roles to play, but they are not sufficient to establish the social disciplines as mature sciences. There must also be the growth of testable and well-confirmed theories which explain phenomena by showing how they can be derived in nontrivial ways from our theoretical assumptions. At the heart of scientific explanation there must be discovery of and appeal to laws or nomological statements.[25]

The hegemony in scientific theory and practice of the positivistic icon is anchored to the honorific status accorded, or not, to its version of the causal law, its giveness, discoverability and,

hence, in positivistic terms, its objectivity. The allegiance to a lawful causal chain, discoverable "out there," is its primary article of faith. Bittner characterizes the centrality of the objective causal link and its stabilizing function for the entire paradigm as follows:

> Objective scientific explanation means, essentially, explanation in terms of lawfully linked chains or complexes of antecedents and consequences. Even when the object of the researcher's interest is the analysis of a structure--for example, the structure of a molecule--the attempt involves throughout references to causal ties between the elements of the structure and within the structure as a whole, and therefor every why and every how in the sciences searches for answers and explanations of a causal nature. . . . It is claimed that the introduction of canons of objectivity into science had as its revolt laying bare material structures purged of extraneous relevances and stabilized wholly by causal ties.[26]

Hence, we are able to cite Nagel's model of canon law from The Structure of Science[27] as archetypal, in principle, we note, however, that this formulation of the faith stands quite apart from whether it is possible to accomplish such a discovery, with absolute stringency, in actual social scientific practice.

Nagel's 1961 candidate for scientific discovery and lawful, objective, reformulation is taken from chemistry:

> The sense of "cause" we wish to identify is illustrated by the following example. An electric spark is passed through a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gas; the explosion that follows the passage of the spark is accompanied by the disappearance of the gases and the condensation of water vapor. The disappearance of the gases and the formation of water in this experiment are commonly said to be the effects that are caused by the spark. Moreover, the generalization based on such experiments (e.g., 'Whenever a spark passes through a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gas, the gases disappear and water is formed') is called a "causal law."[28]

Such a generalization is designated as a "causal law" insofar as the relationship it cites among "events" satisfies four necessary conditions. To enumerate these conditions:

> In the first place, the relation is an invariable or uniform one, in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs so does the alleged effect. There is, moreover, the common tacit assumption that the cause constitutes both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the occurrence of the effect. In point of fact, however, most of the causal imputations made in everyday affairs, as well as most of the causal laws frequently mentioned do not state the sufficient conditions for the occurrence of the effect. . . . The event frequently picked out as the cause is normally an event that completes the set of sufficient conditions for the occurrence of the effect, and that is regarded for various reasons as being important.[29]

In the second place, to continue the stipulation of conditions, we encounter "spatial contiguity":

> . . . the relation holds between events that are spatially contiguous, in the sense that the spark and the formation of water occur in approximately the same spatial region. Accordingly, when events spatially remote from each other are alleged to be causally related, it is tacitly assumed that these events are but termini in a cause-and-effect chain of events, where the linking of events aae spatially contiguous.[30]

The third criterion for being a causal law involves temporal sequencing:

> In the third place, the relation has a temporal character, in the sense that the event said to be the cause precedes the effect and is also "continuous" with the latter. In consequence, when events separated by a temporal interval are said to be causally related, they are also assumed to be connected by a series of temporally adjacent and causally related events.[31]

The final criterion is that of the "assymetry" of cause and effect:

> And finally, the relation is asymmetrical, in the sense that the passage of the spark through the mixture of gases is the cause of their transformation into water, but the formation of the water is not the cause of the passage of the spark.[32]

Finally, it need be noted that while Nagel is often cited as the prime defender of the positivistic mode insofar as he manages to

deflate arguments as to the logical or conceptual impossibility of accomplishing a social science in the more successful mode of the natural sciences, he does not, by doing so, establish in turn its practical possibility. His strategic formulation of conditions for causal laws is coupled with his defense of the conceptual and logical possibility of scientific investigation in, what Bernstein terms, the "naturalistic" mode. Nonetheless, without establishing its practical possibility, Nagel's effort on behalf of the positivistic paradigm has served more to reinforce its cultural hegemony than to advance its concrete achievement. Thus, focusing on the strategy for maintaining paradigmatic hegemony we cite Bernstein's critical assessment of Nagel's overall accomplishment in the classic defense of "scientific" social science in The Structure of Science:

> But we must be careful not to draw the wrong conclusions from Nagel's analysis. There is a slippery path here along which many mainstream social scientists have all too easily moved. No good reasons have been advanced to demonstrate the impossibility of social science, therefore it is possible. From this it seems a small step to claim that since it is possible, it is likely or probable that a genuine social science will be achieved--if we work hard enough and are sufficiently ingenuous in formulating and testing hypotheses, models, and explanatory theories. Then it appears almost irresistable to believe that one ought to adopt a properly scientific attitude to advance the maturity of the social disciplines.[33]

As we shall explore in the next chapter, Nagel's positivistic notion of scientific law pervades the received orthodox statement and interpretation of the so-called laws of thermodynamics. In his book The Law of Entropy, Jeremy Rifkin tries to solidify the positivistic notion of those laws and further consolidate the cultural hegemony of positivism's paradigm by invoking the cultural prestige and scientific

authority of Albert Einstein. To quote the citation:

> Albert Einstein once mused over which of the laws of science deserved to be ranked as the supreme law. He concluded by making the following observation:
>
> A theory is more impressive the great is the simplicity of its premises, the more different are the kinds of things it relates and the more extended its range of applicability. Therefore, the deep impression which classical thermodynamics made on me. It is the only physical theory of universal content which I am convinced, that within the framework of applicability of its basic concepts will never be overthrown.[34]

While Rifkin is impressed by Einstein's invocation of "universal content," our animated reading of Einstein's text resonates to another meaning-configuration: namely, the de-limitation of the laws of thermodynamics "within the framework of applicability of its basic concepts." That is, we "violate" Einstein's text and contravene Rifkin's intention--both by noticing, and developing "framework of applicability" as an abiding silence that speaks. It is salient in relationship to our intention and problematic. Its speaking enables us to conceptualize an alternative reading of "scientific laws" that contravenes that of the culturally hegemonic positivist tradition.

Our re-reading of "scientific laws" hinges on the counter-tradition of reading "scientific laws" that speaks through the silence of Einstein's notion of "framework of applicabiltiy." In the parlance of Caudwell and Prigogine,[35] Einstein's phrase is termed "domain," that is, a region or context of applicability for strategic inquiry and analysis.

The notion of a "domain" as a "framework of applicability" of "scientific laws" restricts the scope of scientific laws to more specific regions of the behavior of phenomena. This undercuts the

culturally hegemonic notion, usually in everyday discourse and the discourse of the mainstream social sciences, that a genuine causal law, legitimate for inclusion as a component of general social theory, must be "universal" in its applicability. By universal, what is usually signified is that the law is necesarily trans-contextual (or context free) and, correspondingly, devoid of historical content.

To offer one explicit citation of the positivist model of candidates suitable for inclusion in a "scientific body of knowledge," we quote from Reynolds' A Primer In Theory Construction (1971). It starts out with a Nagelian archetype from chemistry:

> Under certain conditions (constant volume, rate of succession) a change in one variable (temperature of a gas, organizational size) is followed by a change in another variable (pressure of the gas, formalization of the organization).[36]

And now we cite Reynolds' commentary, stressing the self-evident ahistoricity of law-like statements and the simple obviousness of their de-contextualized linguistic formulations:

> Statements of this form compose a scientific body of knowledge and can be used for prediction and explanation of scientific events, using a form of explanation of scientific events, using a form of explanation adopted from symbolic logic . . . Notice that no mention of time (in a historical sense, a particular time in history) enters into the first statement premise in the explanation. Abstract statements of this sort and, therefore, explanations based on them, are independent of historical time. In othr words, these statements can be used to explain past events and to predict future events.[37]

An alternative reading of laws from within the natural sciences themselves is suggested by their contextualization with respect to a "domain" or "framework of applicability." There is more

to this, however, than simply relativizing scientific laws and positing their mere specificity to a clearly-bounded separate region of phenomena. That is, one possible consequence of specifying domains of applicability for laws is to simply reproduce the same positivistic notion of scientific law as a descriptive mirror of the merely disoverable objective facts and causal links that exist "out there," within the framework of that specific domain. Relativizing positivistic notions of scientific laws to specific domains treats these laws, their seeming purely formal statement, the objective facts and causal links that allegedly comprise the domain, and, finally, the domain itself, as utterly unhistorical and non-developmental. Instead of being universal in scope, they now are bound to the specific domain, defined monadically, as a self-contained world, an object-in-itself, discoverable in its self-bounded dynamics, just as it is. To contextualize a reading of scientific laws in this way is to merely localize their otherwise general positivistic conception.

Consequently, an alternative reading of scientific laws with respect to domains entails a non-static reading of those "frameworks of applicability": that is, a reading that grasps domains as themselves historical, developmental, and neither self-contained nor merely homogeneous with respect to all other domains. Correspondingly, the formulation of laws and the discovery of facts that occurs with respect to historically specific developing domains enables an animated re-reading of the meanings of laws and facts. Simply stated, reading laws and facts with respect to historical, developing domains provides a new text which resonates to new strategic readings and produces new meanings. Facts and laws could then be treated historically and

developmentally, not merely as already-given, finished, just as they are.

Such a text is produced and presumed as we shall note in the physical scientific theorizing of, among others, Ilya Prigogine, Paul Feyerabend,[38] and--in a completely forgotten mode--Christopher Caudwell. Indeed, in his brilliant, recently re-printed The Crisis in Physics (1939),[39] Caudwell elaborates a notion of domain as a system or mode of dynamic developing order. The universe or, in our terms, world-text is a kind of "interacting hierarchy of approximately closed systems, each with a certain autonomy but, due to interactions with other domains, not completely self-determining."[40] The context, then, for one animated reading of "scientific laws" becomes a world-text reconceptualized with respect to development, history, and an interplay of semi-autonomous domains. The universe as a whole is no longer merely given, always already there. This context is clearly summarized in Caudwell's chapter, "Reality," from his better-known Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture:

> This is our premise: that the Universe is a material unity, and that this is a becoming...We take as our premise 'becoming', the becoming of a material unity which is generated by our transformation of matter. Becoming, which involves change, which involves like and unlike, involves also development. If we had no development, we would have no 'becoming' . . .[41]

Consequently, if we take "A" and "B" as objects, or as "facts," they cannot be grasped as discrete, self-subsistent objects-in-themselves. Rather, they can be "read" as constitutive elements in a developmental process which both makes them possible; and, therefore, which enables them to be characterized as objects in the first place. They are made possible as objects insofar as they

both constitute and are, in turn, constituted by a historical mode of becoming, of developmental process.

To continue with Caudwell's formulation of the meta-theory of change which informs this theorizing:

> A-B do not exist as eternally discrete entities. The universe is a becoming, a development. The becoming is a primary. Reality does not become <u>in</u> time and space, but time and space are aspects of its becoming.[42]

As a becoming, then, the development of a domain does not take place as an activity <u>in</u> time and space, as its objective, empty container(s). Rather, time and space are read here as categories that express and elaborate a becoming, a development of which they are an internal, integral dimension. Again, to speak this in Caudwell's metaphorical formulation:

> Development does not take place <u>in</u> time and space. Development, becoming, and change, <u>secrete</u> time and space. Time and space are abstractions of it.[43]

In such a context, other readings of the nature of any scientific law would become possible: that is, another interpretation which both limits and differently explains the law in terms of qualitatively different frameworks of applicability. That is, it becomes possible to treat physical law as a feature of a natural domain--or more correctly, the specification of a natural domain. In other words, "nature" could itself be understood differently, especially as having a history. That is, nature could be grasped as being a developmental process of becoming. Hereby the novelty of ongoing new emergences within and of different, overlapping domains becomes its constitutive historical dimension. Thus, on this reading,

the forward movement of historical time constitutes the set of natural domains in its constitutive historical development: perpetually self-transformative, whereby emergent "newness" is integral to that development.

The scientific laws of this version of natural domains not only "specify" these domains but, further, they are a feature of those domains. That is the laws, as formulated, are themselves an integral dimension of the very domain which they would describe and explain. As such, they too can be read developmentally, historically, and as an internal aspect of the domain which, on the positivistic account, they would stand fully outside of, mirror, and describe just as it is. Alternatively, Caudwell's developmental reading of scientific law treats it as a dynamic part of an ongoing history of a domain in which it is both a transformative force, and itself a kind of developing self-reflective generalization of that history.

This reading of scientific law contravenes the claims to universality, ahistoricity, and transcontextuality that anchor the hegemony of the positivistic account. Thus laws can be read not only as specifications, but, further, as features of the very domains they specify. The intention that would pursue theoretical closure through the achievement of a general, transcontextual theory of social action and development is contravened by an open reading of laws as themselves integral aspects of an ongoing historical development in which they are embedded--not which they "overlook," just as it is. Thus, the hegemonic ideal of a pure, general science is contested by an animated, fully historical version of science.

One re-reading of science is proferred by Paul Feyerabend in his iconoclastic work, Against Method:

> Nothing is ever settled, no view can ever be omitted from a comprehensive account. Plutarch, or Diogenes Laertius and not Dirac, or von Neumann are the models for presenting a knowledge of this kind in which the history of a science becomes an inseparable part of the science itself--it is essential for its further development as well as for giving content to the theories it contains at any particular moment.[44]

Feyerabend pushes this notion to a redefinition of the task of science in ways that contravene their positivistic interpretation as primarily providing, in Merton's phrase, "a ground for prediction."[45] As Feyerabend speaks this alternative version of the scientist's task:

> The task of the scientist, however, is no longer 'to search for truth', or 'to praise god', or 'to systematize observations', or 'to improve predictions'. These are but side effects of an activity to which his attention is now mainly directed and which is 'to make the weaker case the stronger' as the sophists said, and thereby to sustain the motion of the whole.[46]

Thus, in its most polemical formulation, Feyerabend's re-reading of the scientific project utterly contravenes the positivistic reading of the scientific ideal as producing an accurate mirror of a work of self-abiding facts. Feyerabend reads science as, to use Macherey's phrase, always already, "a broken mirror" as the following citation makes clear. The text is a counter-image to the positivistic notion of a genuine empirical science, rooted in real experience:

> Knowledge so conceived is not a series of self-consistent theories that converges towards any ideal view; it is not a gradual approach to the truth. It is rather an ever increasing ocean of mutually incompatible (and perhaps even incommensurable alternatives), each single theory, each fairly tale, each myth that is part of the collection forcing the others into greater articulation and all of them

> contributing via this process of competition, to the development of our consciousness.[47]

Whether the reader shares Feyerabend's counter-reading of the task of science of participates in the oceanic pluralism of its counter-image, it is crucial to see the possibility of an animated reading of the hitherto fundamental, culturally hegemonic version of science. If the history of scientific theorizing is itself an integral dimension of "doing science," then the formulation of "scientific laws" must itself be grasped in relationship to, not inured to, the history of that endeavor. Moreover, in that the scientific endeavor can itself be read a feature of the very domains which its laws would specify and explain, then science cannot fashion a pure account, an ideal observation, a de-contextualized description of any domain. The reason is that the history, past and ongoing, of doing science is itself constitutive of the situation it purports to analyze and understand. The doing of science, the formulation of theory, is itself, past and present, "part of the data." In effect, scientific laws are, at least in part, formulated "from the inside out." That is, they are formulated from within the history of doing science as a moment of the historical development of the domain which they would appear--a positivistic account--to be mirroring and explaining from a privileged, outside position.

If science is then done from the inside of an historical process, as a moment of activity in an historically developing domain, then science cannot be ahistorical, or severed--except by active intention--from self-reflexive attempts at its own self-understanding. Part of that understanding is, in Feyerabend's view, that it can never

produce a final, closed reading of itself, a completed self-reflection. To quote from Against Method, this is particularly so for the positivist stragegy of inquiry:

> However, the material which a scientist actually has at his disposal, his laws, his experimental results, his mathematical techniques, his epistemological prejudices, his attitude towards the absurd consequences of the theories which he accepts, is indeterminate in many ways, ambiguous, and never fully separated from the historical background. This material is always contaminated by principles which he does not know and which, if known, would be extremely hard to test.[48]

Indeed, the materials at the scientist's disposal, the legacy of "scientific laws," "accumulated data," et al., are always-already "contaminated" by the history of doing science as a part of the history of the overlapping domains within which the conducts of inquiry are situated. The admission, then, of a developmental history as an integral dimension of the practice of theorizing and experimentation renders a merely neutral, technical, procedural purity an unattainable ideal at best, a self-misconception at its heart. Yet the view of science as itself an historical practice--within and as a part of an historically developing domain of inquiry--does more than undermine the strict dichotomy between pure and applied science. That is, the "contamination" of scientific theorizing and law making by history--its own and its domain's--goes even deeper: it "contaminates" "the evidence." As Feyerabend states this point:

> Consideration of all these circumstances, of observation terms, sensory core, auxiliary sciences, background speculation, suggest that a theory may be inconsistent with the evidence, not because it is incorrect, but because the evidence is contaminated. The theory is threatened because the evidence either contains unanalysed sensations which only partly correspond to external processes, or because it is presented in terms

> of antiquated views, or because it is evaluated with the help of backward auxiliary subjects...It is this historico-physiological character of the evidence, the fact that it does not merely describe some objective state of affairs but also expresses some subjective, mythical, and long-forgotten views concerning the state of affairs, that forces us to take a fresh look at methodology. It shows that it would be extremely imprudent to let the evidence judge our theories directly and without any further ado.[49]

Thus, the historical contamination of the conduct of inquiry infects its experimentation, its theorizing, and, most significantly perhaps, "the evidence itself." To read the evidence in this way, then, is to give up the notion of a world of self-subsistent, monadic unhistorical facts-in-themselves, objectively given in objectively discoverable causal relationships.

A corresponding reading of the relationship of "scientific law" to "the evidence" denies both the culturally privileged, unhistorical status of these laws, and undermines the notion of self-subsistent, "raw data," as bedrock of scientific evidence. Abraham Kaplan voices his laconic critique of the positivistic notion of basic, raw data in The Conduct of Inquiry:

> The basis of scientific knowledge is taken to be a "reading" or protocol which does not interpret but merely records a perceptual content...What we observe are bare shapes, sounds, colors, and textures, which are then organized and interpreted as the familiar objects and events of experience. The contents of observation itself are free from conceptual contamination.[50]

As a rejoinder, Kaplan re-members Nietzsche's iconoclastic remark:

> Nietszche's label for this philosophical doctrine is not, I think, unjust; he called it "the dogma of the immaculate perception." The fact is that no human perception is immaculate, certainly no perception of any

> significance for science. Observation is already cognition, not just material for subsequent knowledge.[51]

Thus, in Kaplan's conception, the data are neither brute nor mute: they already are constituted by acts of cognition, always-already theory-impregnated.

Whereas the brute data of positivist accounts are silent, Kaplan's animated reading of those accounts suggests that the data necessarily speak the cognitive strategy and theory by which they are made possible as data in the first place. In parallel fashion, Feyerabend hears the silence produced by invocations of "the evidence"; or of the presentation of scientific law or "verified theory" as if it simply "speaks for itself." In his reading of law and theory, their conventionally unheard silence speaks the history of the entire scientific endeavor for any domain and its relationship to other domains. And, finally, returning to Caudwell, the very possibility of domain-specific modes of inquiry and statements of scientific law is their being made possible by the ongoing, historical development of the self-autonomous domain whose history is both expressed and produced by the formulation of scientific laws specific to that developing domain. For Caudwell, then, a domain is never just as it is: it is always already engaged in ongoing development. Thus, the invocation of a scientific law is never merely an expression of what is merely "out there." Instead, it is an occasion for re-reading the law as positivist text. And, once having heard new resonances where once there was empty silence, it becomes an occasion for us to reformulate its title with Bernstein as "The Myth of the Given."[52]

Against the background of the foregoing discussion, it becomes

possible to meaningfully discuss the focal issue of the next chapter: the implications posed for social development by alternative strategic readings of the so-called laws of thermodynamics. One principal intention of the foregoing discussion is to challenge the by-now-taken-for-granted habits of social scientists--mainstream and critical alike--long-wedded to or intimidated by the paradigmatic hegemony of the naturalistic or positivistic reading of scientific inquiry, to lapse into acquiescent silence--whether worshipful or paralyzed--at the ritual invocation of "causal laws," "natural science," and "predictive value" as preludes to the knowledge-claims that then follow.

Given the cultural hegemony still enjoyed by the positivistic paradigm--however amended--for scientific investigation, it seems crucial to assert that "laws" in the natural sciences, just as in the not-as-yet "legitimate" social sciences can be treated as "texts" which resonate differently with respect to alternative, interest-anchored strategies for inquiry which guide divergent readings. That is, the foregoing discussion posits the possibility of placing in radical doubt the hitherto privileged claims to unproblematic, honorific epistemological status--if not virtual certainty--granted to laws formulated in the image of a positivistic iconography. That is, the positivist reading of causal law would posit its knowledge--claims as simply given, as established transhistorically, embedded for eternity in those objective causal linkages that it reifies as engraved in the very structure of nature itself. The unwillingness or, further still, the inconceivability of alternative readings of the knowledge-claims of positivistically read natural scientific laws is testimony to the <u>de facto</u> dominion of the (neo)positivistic paradigm

and the silence produced by the invocation of central tenets that maintain its boundaries.

Nonetheless, as we have noted in the previous chapter, an animated reading of texts contravenes the positive readings of silence as just being there, an insuperable taken-for-granted outer limit. The specific, salient intention of this chapter's animated reading of texts then is to both recognize and confront the hegemonic silence that is produced with respect to the invocation of the positivist reading of tne second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy. The possibility of alternative readings of that entropy law demonstrates, as will be shown, the historical possibility, or not, of forms of life and social development that can transcend the hitherto seeming invariance of material scarcity.

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CHAPTER THREE

READING ENTROPY:

THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF LIMITATION

The next two chapters explore the nature and significance for social development of the strategic contest to define the social meanings of entropy, the Second Law of Thermodynamics. As we shall show below, this struggle over rival meanings is contextulaized within and against the background of a striking incipient convergence of analysis and concern, within natural and social scientific theorizing alike, on the nature of development and change. The strategic rivalry and significance of competing readings of the thermodynamics laws in the social sciences will be displayed by the opposed readings produced by anthropologists Claude Levi-Strauss and Leslie White. In this chapter and in the next, we demonstrate that contest in the natural sciences by reading rival accounts produced on the one side by Eddington, Commoner and Rifkin and, on the other, by Christopher Caudwell and 1977 Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine.

In an epoch of economic upheaval, enforced austerity, ecological crisis, alleged resource shortages and alleged

overpopulation, it is impossible to overestimate the import of the Seond Law as an ultimate legitimizer for perception and theorizing, for social planning and the production of ideology. At stake is nothing less than the determination and definition for theorizing and for praxis of what is possible in and as human development.

If the positivist reading of the Law of Entropy prevails in its social significances, human history becomes an invariant fate. History cannot be made fundamentally different from what it has been and must tendentially degenerate into a vale of increasing chaos and brute simplicity. As a consequence, humankind would have to relinquish the possibility of a qualitatively different mode of socialization, a life freed from the depredations and deprivations imposed by material scarcity. Read, then as a fate inscribed in the very laws of molecular motion, the best humanity could hope for under the reign of entropy would be a gradual mitigation of desire and a more equal distribution of that of which there was already too little, and of which there could be no qualitative change.

In its positivist reading the entropy law portends in its mood, mode and intention as a social theory and social policy, unassailable grounds for the repression of desire, the institutionalization of deprivation, and the pre-emption of qualitative development as an historical possibility. In sum, the Second Law, positivistically read, consolidates closure and eternalizes material scarcity as an unsurpassable regime.

The tension between the dynamics of material scarcity and the historical possibility of a social development which would surpass the parameters of material scarcity has recurrently surfaced in modern

social and sociological thought. The evidence for these "surfacings" is not only discernible in both the classical founders of modern sociological thought, namely Weber and Marx; but abides as well in the more recent reciprocal attention paid by sociological theorists and theoretical physicists to one another. One aim of this chapter is to demonstrate ways in which this theoretical tension between a form of development constrained by material scarcity and a form of development that would surpass material scarcity is actually manifest in the theorizing of social scientists and theoretical physicists alike.

The sociologist Randall Collins, for example, has noted that sociological theory is situated at the crossroads of much of the intellectual excitement and breakthroughs in theorizing that have marked the development of the widest range of social and natural sciences in the twentieth century. Collins' conception of sociological theory as a locus for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, a fertile borderline as it were, is kindred to both our need and intention to not only reconstruct but, further, to develop in our own right, the problematic of scarcity and abundance for the sociological agenda. It has long been evident that groundbreaking work in theoretical physics, namely Einstein's work in relativity, has been a fertile source of sociological analysis in a range of theorists of whom Parsons perhaps is the most prominent. Correspondingly, Collins envisions the prospect of an eventual informing impact of sociological theory on the development of the natural sciences. Collins' theoretical ecumenicism is stated as follows in his and Makowsy's work, <u>The Discovery of Society</u>:

> Sociology is at the crossroads of much of this intellectual excitement. We have been heirs of the great philosophies (and, to an extent, of the linguistic theories), perhaps even more so than the actual members of those disciplines themselves; it is in modern microsociology above all that their themes are taken up and transformed into a still-emerging empirical discipline. The borderline between psychology and sociology is gradually fading, as sociological explanations of individuals' thoughts and emotions seem more and more to apply in the psychologist's domain.
>
> The development of the physical sciences seems more remote, but even that presses upon us. In one direction, we are closing the gap ourselves, with a steadily improving sociology of science showing the human conditions that determine scientists' actions and perhaps even their discoveries as well. What a strange circle we will seem to be closing if we ever get to the point of a truly powerful, predictive sociology: its application to the sociology of science could tell us of the discoveries to be made even before the scientists themselves.[1]

At the outset, then, the thesis will display the centrality and relevance of the problematic of scarcity and abundance in bodies of theoretical discourse which, while at times are not immediately identifiable as sociological in the strictest sense, are nonetheless of undeniable and immediate concern to social theorizing: that is, to any sociological analysis that would speak to the nature and issues of contemporary social change and development. Indeed, at the heart of our reading this cross-fertilization of theoretical orientations is our recognition of the strategic rivalry between qualitatively different conceptions of material development.

One obvious theoretically complementary locus for the convergence of social and natural scientific concerns bearing upon the issue of social development is the recent ecological debate as to the desirability and possibility of sustaining growth relative to the natural environment. At the heart of this debate is the question of

the "nature" of nature: namely, the question as to whether nature is a finite, outer-delimited, depletable resource; or, alternatively, a developmental, energy continuum capable of historical transformation with respect to alternative forms of social and economic development. In the view of this thesis, the debate counterposes divergent notions of material development; one delimited by and the other potentially transcending of material scarcity. Indeed, the present urgency of the environmental question forces the convergence of theoretical concern in natural and social sciences alike on the nature of parameters of a planetary mode of development which is inextricably both social and biophysical. This is one concern that informs the ensuing reading of texts by this chapter.

In the context of these remarks, the reading of texts performed in this chapter will be deeply involved with the recent convergence of the social and natural sciences in the realm of thermodynamics. As our reading will demonstrate, the problematic of scarcity and abundance has recently been couched as a debate over the nature and possibility of ongoing, qualitative systemic development versus the inevitability of long-term entropic disorganization as the invariant "fate" of any systemic order, natural or (by extension) social.

Questions posed for human development by the so-called laws of thermodynamics and the possible <u>meanings</u> of these laws for human development is the issue. Thus the strategic reading of those laws will be the heart of our immediate concern.

In this context, another nexus whereby theoretical convergence between physics and sociological analysis is manifested is the

theoretical and experimental work in thermodynamics by the Nobel Laureate (1977) physicist Ilya Prigogine[2], and in recent theorizing, by the sociologist Robert Nisbet.[3] In Nisbet's view, the "problem of social change" presupposes a formalistic conception of change defined as follows inthe volume Social Change (1972):

> Change is a succession of differences in time in a persisting identity.[4]

Nisbet stipulates the tripartite nature of any formally adequate notion of change:

> There are three equally vital elements of that definition: "differences," "in time," and "persisting identity." Failure to note all three and also their necessary union, is frequently responsible for confusion of change with forms of motion and interaction that are not change at all: merely motion and interaction.[5]

These formal preconditions of the possibility of any adequate theory of social change correspond to crucial structural dimensions of the so-called laws of thermodynamics.

Thus, the convergence of criteria for an adequate model of change at the heart of significant theoretical enterprises in both physics and sociology is crucial for the theoretical task to be performed in this chapter. For example, Prigogine's so-called "social thermodynamics" are illustrative of just such a convergence in its formal correspondence with Nisbet's criteria.

Thus, in Prigogine's view, which will be analyzed in far greater depth below for purposes of the theoretical project at hand, energy sytems, living and non-living, can be analyzed as processes of immanent structural transformation through irreversible time. The "persisting identity" which abides through successive differentiations is an energy-potential which, by virtue of the First Law of

Thermodynamics is, at the least, conserved. The "differences" made in the condition of the object, in this case an energy-system, for purposes of analysis, are the qualitative transformations, in both structure and principles of organization, which are regularly undergone by a wide array of energy systems. Finally, as we shall note below, Nisbet's criterion of "temporal succession" is met by the fact that these energy-systems regularly constitute and develop through bifurcation points, thresholds past which the system in its ongoing developmental must undergo qualitative transformation.

Formal convergences amongst the sciences notwithstanding, the crucial issues they raise for substantive social development still depend upon the conflict amongst social meanings attached to alternative strategic readings of the thermodynamics laws--of which Prigogine's non-positivistic reading is but one. Thus, it is crucial here to address more systematically the fact of these different readings, the different meanings that emerge with respect to different interests and intentions, and to note their fundamentally conflicting consequences for social development.

As we have noted above, sociologists--mainstream and critical (embracing Marxian currents) alike--have long awarded privileged, unquestionable status to material scarcity. It has been taken for granted as self-evident, an existential invariant, an outer limit to discourse, thought and planning. To "read" scarcity in this sense, is to invoke it--explicitly or implicitly--to terminate further or alternative modes of communication. Correspondingly, to "read" the "laws" of thermodynamics as a set of self-evident, objective causal laws that simply mirror a reified nature, just as it is, is to posit material scarcity for eternity. To read them positivistically is to make scarcity the

content of the last word utterable; the rest is silence, there is no more to be said. Then the subsequent silence is made necessary and legitimated on the seemingly irrefutable formalistic grounds of the second law.

Entropy, in brief, is the notion that for any given organization, there is a greater probability of disorder, loss of complexity, disorganization, reduction of information, and loss of energy available for purposeful use than its opposite. In other words, the world is tendentially and irreversibly deteriorating. Alternatively, this thesis posits that a re-reading or an animated reading of this received version of the Second Law of Thermodynamics will show that what appears to be organizational breakdown can be an integral moment of a more complex, energized and orderly process of development and reorganization. Consequently, depending on the "reading" that interprets the implications of the second law of thermodynamics for social thought, material scarcity must be treated in fundamentally different ways. One is to read it as an existential invariant of systemic order as such. Alternatively, entropy is a dynamic process going on at any of a particular "stage" of systemic order, and which is capable, in principle, of giving rise to a qualitatively different mode of organization based upon qualitative different principles of development. At stake in the debate is positing the legitimate possibility of a mode of development beyond the parameters of material scarcity.

The positivist/naturalist reading of scientific laws has long dominated the received tradition defining the social meanings of the laws of thermodynamics. This tradition encompasses the classic

accounts of Clausius and Boltzmann, through the more recent neo-positivistic accounts of Eddington (1958), Georgescu-Roegen (1971, 1976), Commoner (1977), and Rifkin (1980).[6] Rifkin's summary statements of the Law of Entropy, as he capitalizes it, will serve to characterize briefly the heart of this reading; a fuller analysis will be provided in our ensuing elaboration of Commoner's account. To quote then from Rifkin's Entropy: A New World View:

> Now, however, a new world view is about to emerge, one that will eventually replace the Newtonian world machine as the organizing frame of history: the Entropy Law will preside as the ruling paradigm over the next period of history. Albert Einstein said that it is the premier law of all science; Sir Arthur Eddington referred to it as the supreme metaphysical law of the entire universe. The Entropy Law is the second law of thermodynamics. The first law states that all matter and energy in the universe is constant, that it cannot be created or destroyed. Only its form can change but never its essence. The second law, the Entropy Law, states that matter and energy can only be changed in one direction, that is, from usable to unusable, or from available to unavailable, or from ordered to disordered. In essence, the second law says that everything in the entire universe began with structure and value and is irrevocably moving in the direction of random chaos and waste. Entropy is a measure of the extent to which available energy in any subsystem of the universe is transformed into an unavailable form. According to the Entropy Law, whenever a semblance of order is created anywhere on earth or in the universe, it is done at the expense of causing an even greater disorder in the surrounding environment.[7]

In our view, the condition of material scarcity has been eternalized by Western theoretical science by this hitherto prevailing positivist reading of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The received interpretation of that law has made the probability of entropic disorder an unfortunate, but invariant condition of all forms of organized existence. The irreversible tendency towards disorganization becomes a universal law of nature itself.

To offer Commoner's reading of the Second Law, the Law of Entropy, we quote from his recent The Poverty of Power:

> Thus, we can account for the universal experience that, with the passage of time, more and more disorder is observed in the world if we assume that the world was once a more ordered system than it is now. . . .
>
> This is the foundation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which, together with the First Law, governs the outcome of every energetic process. The Second Law asserts a single cosmic fact: that the universe is constantly, irreversibly becoming less ordered than it was. It is this behavior of the universe that accounts for the one-way direction of events and the irretrievable passage of time.[8]

As we will see, this kind of abstract statement of the entropic laws provides the rationale for social theories and practices that assume material scarcity as an unsurpassable condition of both natural and social existence.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics concerns the loss of energy across the boundaries of a closed, organized system of patterned energy. Once that energy has been released across the boundary into the environing context (nature, the universe), it is no longer recoverable for purposeful activity (work). While, as stipulated by the First Law of Thermodynamics, there is no absolute loss of energy in the universe as a whole, this universal conservation of energy as energy is not incompatible with the ongoing "loss" of energy for future purposeful activity (work). Indeed, it is precisely the depletion of energy in organized forms (as energy sources) through present organized, purposive activity (work) that is responsible for the future unavailability--indeed, unrecoverability--of that energy for the purposes of its further purposeful deployment.

This general, positivistic reading of the Second Law takes two

forms: the probabilistic "iron" version of Commoner,and the more stringent, certainty version of Rifkin and Georgescu-Roegen. The prospect for any organized system of order then is, depending on which positivist reading, either the probability or certainty of its ongoing increasing disorganization, an irreversible process given as "available" for use in intentional activity, or in systemic self-ordering, its "use" renders it "used-up." The overall conservation of energy in the universe as a whole notwithstanding, the present availability of energy for "use" is necessarily a prelude to its probable depletion for purposes of further "use." Insofar as energy-available-for-use exists, in this reading of the Second Law, in a state of greater organization than energy once-utilized, the most probable outcome for any state of organization is its tendency to increasing disorder through the necessary utilization of energy, if only for its ongoing self-maintenance and reproduction.

Thus, in Commoner's reading of the Second Law, tendencies toward disorganization over time are more probable for systems of order than the maintenance or increase in the level of complexity and organization of constitutive parts that comprise the system of order at hand. Commoner states the Second Law from the standpoint of such a notion of probability:

> "Every system which is left to itself will, on the average, change toward a condition of maximum probability." Note that, stated this way, the Second Law does not claim that the system will certainly change into a more probable configuration. It claims only that this will happen <u>on the average</u>. Any particular change might go the other way, but with a low probability.[9]

The probability of an event can be increased, according to this reading, by the application of "work," intentional activity that is

purposive, to the organizational object at hand. "Thus, work can powerfully increase the probability of an event. Work suitably done on a disordered heap of lumber can produce the more ordered, less probable state known as a barn."[16] In contrast to "work," however, this reading of the Second Law takes "spontaneous, random activity" to be really real; and, statistically speaking, more probable. Formulated in the language of statistical probability, Commoner's reading posits the possibility of a reversal of the entropic process amidst the probability of its dismal outcome:

> The central assertion of the Second Law is that the spontaneous processes that are the actual events of the real world always lead to states that are less ordered, more probable, and represent less information than the states in which they began. This means that every spontaneous process irreversibly decreases the order of the universe and brings it to a more probable state that contains less information than before. Whatever happens in the world leads in this downhill direction. The Second Law also tells us that such a natural process can be reversed by the application of energy. . . .[11]

Thus, there appears to be a glimmer of hope for the survival of the species or any particular social formation by which it constitutes its survivability in the "application of energy," once again, the purposeful, intentional activity that comprises "work." Yet, lest any critic embrace this insight too wholeheartedly and theorize or implement tendencies for negentropic social developments, such a possibilistic reading of the Second Law is probabilistically foreclosed. To quote Commoner:

> . . . <u>but</u>--as we shall see--this can be accomplished only at the expense of further decay in the overall order of the world.[12]

The application of this presumed law to social life or, alternatively stated, the mirroring of social and natural life through

this positivist reading of the Second Law, amounts to the seeming discovery of an immanent logic of universal development, the necessary logic of material scarcity. Understood as a Universal Scientific Law, applicable to all domains of existence, the Second Law can be taken as an outer limit to social and natural possibilities for development. Rifkin would characterize the totality of social developmental meanings and consequences anchored by his reading of the Second Law as a new, culturally hegemonic paradigm:

> Throughout history, human beings have felt the need to construct a frame of reference for organizing life's activities. The need to establish an order to explain the hows and why of daily existence has been the essential cultural ingredient of every society. The most interesting aspect of a society's world view is that its individual adherents are, for the most part, unconscious of how it affects the way they do things and how they perceive the reality around them. A world view is successful to the extent that it is so internalized, from childhood on, that it goes unquestioned.[13]

The discovery, or is it re-discovery, of the Second Law then, serves as a reality principle which must necessarily inform all social and human activity, past and present.

Rifkin and Georgescu-Roegen cast that necessity in its iron form, as a statement of certainty. That is, for them, the probabilistic versions of entropic decline are "last gasp" cop-outs, hopes against hope, consummate exercises in human conceit and self-deception. Thus, sensing the "loophole" in the probabilistic version of the entropy law, Rifkin and Georgescu-Roegen intend its closure. They are intent on "discovering" a "scientific law" which in classic positivistic purity, is chiseled, self-evidently, in the granite givenness of a nature fixed for eternity, just as it is. The self-deceptive fantasy of the probabilistic account is attributed to

its originator, Ludwig Boltzman, in whose footsteps Commoner walks the same crooked line. To quote Rifkin:

> Adding embarrassment to fantasy, Ludwig Boltzmann jumped into the fray, determined to rescue classical physics from the steady encroachmentof the Entropy Law. Boltzmann's "h-Theorem" is a remarkable sleight of hand designed to accommodate the Second Law while at the same time undermining its clout. Boltzmann acknowledged the validity of the Second Law up to a point.[14]

Hence, the unpardonable sin against positivistic science, Boltzmann's refusal (to use Dewey's phrase) of the quest for certainty:[15] "He was willing to admit that in a closed system entropy increases but was unwilling to claim that it was an absolute certainty. He preferred the word probably to certainly and in so doing attempted to turn the second law into a probability or statistical law."[16] Disdaining the probabilistic denial of the quest for absolute certainty, Rifkin deploys Eddington's authority to demonstrate the "practical," bottom-line meaninglessness of the "sand-castle" degree of probability for which the probabilists hold out against the entropic tide. Rifkin says that "Sir Arthur Eddington" gets right to the point about the likelihood of Boltzmann's probability theorem ever working, even once, in the real world." Rifkin cites Eddington's conclusion that the reversibility of tendential disorder is improbable in the extreme:

> If an army of monkeys were strumming on typewriters they "might" write all the books in the British Museum. The chance of their doing so is decidedly more favorable than the chance of the molecules returning to one half of the vessel.[17]

The positivistic reassertion of "scientific law" as certainty is clearer still in Georgescu-Roegen's critique of statistical, probabilistic thermodynamics: To quote from The Entropy Law and the Economic Process (1970):

> It must be admitted, though, that the layman is misled into believing in entropy bootlegging by what physicists preach through the new science known as statistical mechanics but more adequately described as statistical thermodynamics. The very existence of this discipline is a reflection of the fact that, in spite of all evidence, man's mind still clings with the tenacity of blind despair to the idea of an actuality consisting of locomotion and nothing else. A symptom of this idiosyncrasy was Ludwin Boltzmann's tragic struggle to sell a thermodynamic science based on a hybrid foundation in which the rigidity of mechanical laws is interwoven, with the uncertainty specific to the notion of probability. . . . According to this new discipline, a pile of ashes may very well become capable of heating the boiler. Also, a corpse may resuscitate to lead a second life in exactly the reversed order of the first. Only the probabilities of such events are fantastically small. If we have not yet witnessed such "miracles" the advocates of statistical mechanics contend--it is only because we have not been watching a sufficiently large number of piles of ashes or corpses.[18]

Rifkin, on the ground of this assertion, forges the link in the objective causal chain that connects the realm of nature to social development:

> We have looked at the second law from the perspective of energy moving from available to unavailable states and from high concentrations to low. There is still another way to view the second law, the most profound way of all. The Entropy Law is also a statement that all energy in an isolated system moves from an ordered to a disordered state. The minimum entropy state, where concentration is highest and where available energy is at a maximum, is also the most ordered state. In contrast, the maximum entropy state, where available energy has been totally dissipated and diffused, is also the most disordered state.[19]

And the naturalistic link:

> This conforms to our everyday sense of the world around us. Left on their own, things do not tend to spontaneously move to more and more ordered states.[20]

Hence, the positivistic invocation of "scientific law" to enunciate the cultural hegemony of its tacit reality principle: the real is what appears (i.e., the observable). Whether expressed as an "outerlimit,"

"immanent, necessary logic," "reality principle," or "invariant condition" for all existence, any view of life that reads the Second Law of thermodynamics this way effectively grounds existence in the conditions and logic of material scarcity.

The increasing disorganization found probable or certain by the alternative positivistic readings of the Second Law is known in conventional usage as "The Law of Entropy." The relation of entropy to the dynamics of social life is that social life develops on the basis of expectations, motivations, categories of understanding, and grounds for action that are rationalized and understood in terms of the logic of material scarcity. Through this inexorable, unsurpassable logic, all existence is pervaded by a sense of paradox and irony. What is available for use is rendered eternally unavailable by its utilization. Possession is but a prelude to loss. We find this sense, mood, and world-view reflected in Commoner's account of these laws.

In Commoner's reading of the Second Law, the extension of the principles of the Second Law to illuminate the dynamics of social development is justified by the fact that ". . . every event, everything that happens in the world, is fundamentally connected with energy. And in this relationship we begin to see the strong links between the abstract, cosmic aspects of thermodynamics and its prosaic uses in industry and everyday life".[21] The quality of paradox and irony referred to above is then ontologized, on the authority of a "scientific law", as an invariant of existence, social, natural and universal. The existential fate of the human species is demonstrated in those noble albeit transitory attempts by social beings to bring out of chaos through work:

> What people do, then is to use energy to reverse, in highly specific, localized ways, the overall decay of the universe toward disorder, increased probability, and loss of information. We cannot of course change the fate of the universe; overall the spontaneous, downhill process continues. But human activity does create, for a time, local islands of order, improbability and information...This takes work, which is available to us from the very spontaneous processes that mark the downhill course of the universe. The practical value of thermodynamics is that it can teach us how to mobilize this energy and most effectively use it to generate the activities of civilized life.[22]

Man's existential project is to posit order in the face of its inevitable decay.

In Commoner's version, the laws of thermodynamics posit two basic attributes of energy--its amount and its value. That is, the First Law stipulating the conservation of energy posits that the energy of the universe is constant and gives us the means of measuring amounts of energy. The Second Law tells us that the value of energy resides in a specific quality it possesses in relation to human intentionality; namely, its ability to perform work, its capacity to enable tasks. The available work that can be obtained from the energy is that quality of energy which gives it value. Its value is value for human purposes; and what we value is its ability to do work. Unlike the total amount of energy, however, this quality of energy is not conserved but is, in the present version of the Second Law, "irretreivably lost whenever energy is used to produce work".[23]

For Commoner, then, the unavailability of energy for work and thus, its potential capacity for creating increasing order is what is the principal meaning of entropy. The Second Law indicates that the entropy of the universe is constantly increasing. This does not contradict the notion of the conservation of energy for the universe as

a whole as stipulated by the First Law; rather, through tendential disorder and the ongoing consumption of energy resources, the increasing loss of work potential for that total system of energy is posited. As Commoner puts it:

> There emerged a new concept, entropy, which was mathematically related to all of these thermodynamic properties. Entropy is a measure of the unavailability of energy for work, of disorder of a high degree of probability, of a loss of information. When the entropy of a system increases, its energy is less able to do work. Thus, in any real irreversible process, in which entropy necessarily becomes larger, the total energy is conserved, but some of the work which can be gotten out of it is irretrievably lost.[24]

This very activity of maintaining order requires the purposive utilization of energy which disorganizes the very mode of order which it intended to maintain. All is self-depletion: fertility presages barrenness, order foreshadows chaos, we are born astride a grave. While our pretentions are those of Ozymandius, our "fate" is his too; like Xerxes our efforts are preludes to the futile rage that flagellates the ocean tides as compensation for the failed intentions of men. The human condition, then, is an exercise in building sand-castles, noble, yet fragile islands of momentary order against the on rushing, relentless entropic tide.

On this reading, the affluent society, conceived of in terms of "limitless productivity," can only be regarded as a "tragic mistake." The error consists in the fact that nature has not been treated as a finite resource in terms of human intentions, in terms of the capacity of energy sources to sustain work. Instead, the "production system,"[25] as Commoner terms it, has appropriated natural resources in terms of efficiencies measured by the First Law of

Thermodynamics which posits the eternality of energy as such for the universe as a whole; whereas the appropriate standard for measurement of resource efficiencies is the Second Law which posits the overall entropic loss of work-potential for the overall store of energy. By this account, "limitless productivity," the hallmark of the affluence that initially appears as capitalism's "assured plenty," is de-mystified as a self-depleting, autogestive process. Indeed, in this reading of thermodynamics as extended to the production system, affluence and its motor, mass production, are characterizable as: "the massive production and use of energy that is the cardinal sign of modern civilization".[26] This sign is tantamount to the pursuit of expontential levels of productivity and resource-utilization within the framework of a nature taken as finite: the inevitable trajectory of such miscalculated activity conforms utterly with the entropic tendencies that may be extrapolated from the Second Law. That is: the Second Law assumes that the irreversible forward movement of temporal events necessarily generates the ongoing disorganization of any state assumed to be given as a state of greater order.

This extrapolation fits neatly with the early formulations of the Affluence Paradigm by mainstream sociologists--ranging from Potter, to Reisman, to Galbraith.[27] These formulations see the development of cultural crisis of affluence as a necessary corollary to the apparent economic capacity for limitless productivity. That is, the ostensible existential paradox that consitutes our Western condition, and emerges fully-developed only with the onset of affluence, is that our very breakthroughs are the source of our undoing; that the fate of Midas is the necessary outcome of the Midas touch; that having needed the song

of the Sirens we must dash our ship upon the rocks that abort our voyage; that having perceived the Sun as our goal, we must suffer our wax wings to melt and drown in the Sea of Material Plenty. Such is our despair, our inevitable fate. Thus, the Second Law undergirds the notion of existence as a scandal, an absurdity, a tease. Thus, the worm of despair eats at the apple of affluence. Having invested ourselves in the illusion of material progress in the first place, we necessarily face the ironic eruption of an existential condition which disillusions us without remedy.

Taken as a whole development, however, the affluence paradigm moves full-circle: from the "conspicuous production" of David Reisman[28] to the humiliation of the species in its need to accept what Heilbroner calls "a permanent change in our capacities,"[29] a new condition marked by the assault on our most precious values by "overriding claims of human survival." In the terms of the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth,[30] the nadir of the affluence tradition, its autogestation, our moment of affluence has necessarily led to the imminence of global ecological holocaust through our pursuit of exponential growth in a finite natural world--humankind hoisted by its own petard. The development of the affluence paradigm symptomatizes the course of Western capitalism read as a Greek tragedy and rationalized by the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

When one uses demystified, less metaphysical terms, they translate into a ruthless logic of competitive survival, the logic of material scarcity. It is this starker logic which persuades the readings of entropy offered by Rifkin[31] and others. Given the irreversible depletion of organized energy and its irreversible unavailability for

further use, all purposes and intentions are necessarily at cross-purposes. Given the unrecoverability of energy used up by purposeful activity, each intention consumes the finite totality of energy available for the realization of projects. So that in a fundamental sense, each is one-too-many relative to each other. Thus, the undertaking--let alone realization--of all intentions necessarily implies the increasing unlikelihood of the realization and undertaking of some other project.

In order to be realized, then, all desire or capacity, in short, all intentions, must be converted into interests. Here interest presupposes the need to overcome the resistance to its realization offered by a neighboring interest. Indeed, by this logic, the sheer maintenance in existence of any actual or even potential intention necessarily jeopardizes the prospect for the realization of any other intention. Thus, each one necessarily constitutes a risk to the other one. The existence of each is pervaded by the jeopardy presents to each by the other's sheer presence.

As a shared mutual jeopardizing of one another, social life is constituted by the shared sense of competitiveness and the privatized dreads of one's superfluousness. Construed in this way, life, at best, is a bad joke. The punch line, given the reality principle as stipulated by the Second Law, is that even the activities of sharing, cooperation, and interdependence by their mere fact necessarily deplete the finite store of organized energy which makes them possible at all.

Thus, in an existential situation that is necessarily competitive, the activity of cooperation interdependency takes on the ruthless logic of scarcity, a cruel pastime. Cooperation, given its

presupposition and production of organizational forms of increasing complexity, is rendered less probable than competition. Nonetheless, even granting the success of any cooperatively organized intention, its very realization is the source of its inevitable downfall: its increased level and depth of complexity, once achieved, simply increases its production of entropy. Consequently, whether one competes or cooperates, all projects are, in the end, ratifications of the law of entropy, of the logic of material scarcity. All is self-depletion.

Having theoretically constructed the presumably natural limits to human possibility in terms of this hegemonic reading of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the theoretical emergence of this starkest, virtually Weberian logic of rationalization, in the social sciences is hardly an occasion for surprise. Indeed, its most eloquent recent expression can be found in the lamentations of Claude Levi-Strauss in this anthropological classic Triste Tropiques:

> The world began without the human race and it will end without it. The institutions, manners, and customs which I shall spend my life cataloguing and trying to understand are an ephemeral efflorescence of a creative process in relation to which they are meaningless, unless it be that they allow humanity to play its destined role. That role does not, however, assign to our race a position of independence. Nor even if Man himself is condemned, are his vain efforts directed towards the arresting of a universal process of decline. Far from it: his role is itself a machine, brought perhaps to a greater point of perfection than any other, whose activity hastens the disintegration of an initial order and precipitates a powerfully organized Matter towards a condition of inertia which grows even greater and will one day prove definitive.[33]

Indeed, given a reading of social life through the version of the Second Law thus far presented, the hitherto most complex forms of

interdependent social organization are now de-mystified as so many disguised forms of producing entropy.

> Whatever pretensions to human progress, they are dissolvable by the universe solvent, the existential invariant of the Second Law: No doubt he has built cities and brought the soil to fruition; but if we examine these activities closely we shall find that they are also inertia-producing machines, whose scale and speed of action are infinitely greater than the amount of organization implied in them. As for the creations of the human mind, they are meaningful only in relation to that mind and will fall into nothingness as soon as it ceases to exist.[33]

As Rifkin formulates this:

> Entropy destroys the notion of history as progress...The Entropy Law is the assassin of the truths of the Modern Age, truths that once provided us with an illusion of security and order. Now those truths have metamorphized into monstrous lies which threaten our continual existence.[34]

Thus, in its consummate expression within the social sciences, the "bad joke" which is the human situation is expressed by Levi-Strauss's ironic reformulation of anthropology. He turns the Science of Man into Entropology, the science of human beings, as self-depleting and nature-devouring:

> Man has never--save when he reproduces himself--done other than cheerfully dismantle million upon million of structures and reduce their elements to a state in which they can no longer be re-integrated....Taken as a whole, therefore, civilization can be described as a prodigiously complicated mechanism: tempting as it would be to regard it as our universe's best hope of survival, its true function is to produce what the physicists call entropy: inertia, that is to say. Every scrap of conversation, every line set up in type, establishes a communication between two interlocutors levelling what had previously existed on two different planes and had had for that reason, a greater degree of organization. "Entropology," not anthropology, should be the word for the discipline that devotes itself to the study of this process of disintegration in its most highly evolved form [35]

In the last analysis, then, all that passes for progress in the conventional wisdom reveals itself, under the de-mystifying gaze of entropology, to be so many more advanced forms of entropy production. By "advanced," Levi-Strauss means that while structures proliferate in their organizational complexity, the "arithmetic" increase in scale and complexity (to lapse into the Malthusian discourse) serves only to generate a "geometrical"(exponential) increase in the rate of overall disintegration of the system as a whole. Moreover, from the foregoing, the process of quantitative increase in level of organization is accomplished only on the basis of the disintegration of qualitiatively different modes of social and natural organization. Thus, there is a structural proliferation of a levelling sameness that both erodes difference and, ultimately, in the process of its expansion, races even faster towards an ultimate systemic inertia (for example, Helmholtz's "heat death").[36]

The penetration of the Second Law into the interstices of everyday life is considered total: everything is levelled to the relentless penetration of the logic of material scarcity. That is, qualitative differences become subsumed and re-constituted in quantitative categories of description and explanation. Ultimately, all that is life-sustaining is conceived of as a fixed quantity. Under the reign of scarcity, rationalized by the Second Law of Thermodynamics, there can never be "enough," only "more." Since each is always necessarily one-too-many for each other, the survival of each constitutes the possibility of the other's non-survival.

It is only possible to obtain "more," to buttress one's "life chances"[37] (to use Max Weber's term) through additive accumulations of

what there is not, and can never be "enough" of. "Enough" then, implies a qualitatively different mode of being and acting in the world from "more." To pun with the vengeance of the Second Law: more can never be enough. Since the survival of the other necessarily constitutes a "risk" for each self, no quantity can ever provide absolute certainty of individual survivability. The compulsion to continually "add" to one's "store," to accumulate, is the behavioral expression of the survival imperatives mandated by the logic of the Second Law. Indeed, in this context, all "giving" is really "giving up"; all sharing is ultimately sacrifice and self-denial; all desire is transmuted into renunciation.

Moreover, given the "loss" of utilizable energy entailed by all purposive activity, all acts that produce, that construct order, are ultimately acts that deplete the resources that make production possible. Thus, given the Second Law, all production is ultimately de-mystified and needs to be "read" anew as consumption. To produce order and complexity, then, is to consume energy; and, thereby, to dis-organize and de-structure. What appears to be purposive production and construction must be "re-read" as production and dis-integration. Thus, the emergence of humanity in the universe is ultimately a catalyst for universal self-consumption. Human vanity and self-deception mask this kind of entropy as humanity's self-production of its social and natural context. As the universal solvent, the Second Law dissolves illusions and reduces "realisms" to the recognition and uncovering of the logic of material scarcity at work in every domain of universal existence, in every bit and corner of it.

In this prevalent, positivist reading of it, the Second Law of Thermodynamics is a theoretical sine qua non of a form of life, a whole social practice. This form of life both presupposes and re-produces a social world on the basis of the logic of material scarcity. That is to say, the Second Law both expresses and rationalizes a way of life that presupposes material scarcity as an invariant condition. Consequently, to argue for or present the real possibility of a qualititatively different form of life from that of material scarcity, it is necessary to mount a successful challenge to this reading of the Second Law which ratifies it as an ultimate reality principle of the limits of social order and natural processs. To do so would be to establish the principle of negative entropy (or negentropy), as an actual or possible dynamic of social and natural development.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

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CHAPTER FOUR

READING NEGENTROPY:

THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF DEVELOPMENT

To the extent that the Second Law, in the received positivist reading, expresses and rationalizes the logic of material scarcity, such a change enables us to theorize and act intentionally in terms of the real possible emergence of a social formation for which material scarcity was not an invariant condition. Indeed, the possibility of a post-scarcity, abundantly developing society would entail the utter reconstitution of the meanings and logic and mode of activity that constitute and are constituted by the dynamics of material scarcity. The mode of development of such a society could not be grasped as in Levi-Strauss as entropology.[1] Rather, post-scarcity or abundant development would entail the formulation of a new theorizing adequate to the strategic formulation and understanding of its object for theorizing, namely, cornucopiology.

In this chapter, we will principally consider just such a revision of the received reading of the Second Law in the work of Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Prize Winner in 1977. Prigogine does nothing less

than qualitatively transform the received understanding of thermodynamic processes.[2]

The opposed readings of thermodynamics and interpretations of overall cultural development by Levi-Strauss and Leslie White[3] will be paralleled within the so-called natural-environmental and physical sciences. Clearly, the positivist tradition, anchored in a technical interest in achieving prediction and control over objectified natural and social processes will produce texts whose meanings differ significantly from those of other strategies. By contrast, the strategic role in which we cast Prigogine in this chapter, parallels Gadamer's[4] in the first chapter. That is, informed by a hermeneutic or practical cognitive interest, Prigogine offers an animated reading of the received tradition of the positivist's scarcity-bound interpretation of the thermodynamics laws.

We in turn read the positivist account of these laws against their animated reformulation by Prigogine. Our intention, moreover, is emancipatory. Correspondingly we radicalize Prigogine's reading of thermodynamics by contextualizing it within a historically specific emancipatory interest. That is, beyond the highly suggestive, albeit formalistic formal possibilities for ongoing development which Prigogine's reading re-covers from positivist accounts of the Second Law, our emancipatory intention is to perform an animated reading of the silences in Prigogine's texts. That is, our intention is to treat the formal possibilities for ongoing systemic development which we find in Prigogine's text as so many occasions inviting further qualitative

development. Our intention is to develop these formal, albeit silent possibilities for qualitative change in terms of a specific historical content and problematic--namely, the possibility of a post-scarcity, abundant mode of historical development.

For example, we develop Prigogine's luminous, albeit formalist, reading of matter as a thoroughly historical process of development and, through the work of economic historian, Kenneth Tribe[5] specify that development in social-historical terms as production organized capitalistically. In addition, we read Prigogine exploring fundamental material processes that make possible--or ground--the possibility of whatever is possible. We then display a striking moment of convergence between the physical sciences and humanitites on precisely this concern with grounds: namely, the confluence, albeit formalistic, of David Bohm's "higher dimensional ground"[6] and Frederick Jameson's "vaster ground" and primary process"[7] as pivotal articulations of basic material processes of by which whatever is possible--indeed the very act of reading--is made possible. Through our method of emancipatory animated reading, we develop these formalist silences and suggest a unifying developmental notion of material grounds towards which Prigogine, Tribe, Bohm and Jameson all reach--namely, negentropic development.

Here our animated reading gives birth to a theoretical category, Negentropy, which will be central to the ongoing re-constitution of the problematic of abundance that we are engaged in producing. Moreover, we are conscious that our theorizing takes place

in a long-standing but suppressed tradition whose re-memberance we will display in Part Two in our reading of the works of Karl Marx.

To argue for or present the real possibility of a qualitatively different form of life from that of material scarcity, it is necessary to mount a successful challenge to the dominant reading of the Second Law. As the last chapter brought out, that reading ratifies it as an ultimate reality principle of the limits of social order and natural process. To challenge successfully would be to establish the principle of negative entropy (or negentropy), as an actual or possible dynamic of social and natural development. That is what this final chapter on our methodology seeks to do. In that way, we seek to fuse a historically specific content--an alternative to entropy--with a timeless, ahistorical form: animated reading as an alternative to positivism. To fuse this form and content is, as I have said, my main procedure. The fusion lies at the core of all I do in the present work.

A "reading" of social reality in terms that escape the outcome and social consequences of the received reading of the Second Law is given voice, within the mainstream of the social sciences, by the anthropologist Leslie White. It is in White's theorizing that we initially define and characterize negative entropy, to quote from his The Science of Culture:

> Everything--the cosmos, man, culture--may be described in terms of matter and energy. The Second Law of Thermodynamics tells us that the cosmos as a whole is breaking down structurally and running down dynamically; matter is becoming less organized and energy more uniformly diffused. But in a tiny sector of the cosmos, namely living material systems, the direction of the cosmos process is reversed: matter becomes more highly organized and energy more concentrated. Life is a building up process. But in order to counter the cosmic current, in non-living

> systems, capture it and put it to work in the maintenance of the vital process. All life is a struggle for free energy. Biological evolution is simply an expression of the thermodynamic process that moves in a direction opposite to that specified for the cosmos as a whole by the Second Law. It is a movement toward greater organization, greater differentiation of structure, increased specification of function, higher levels of integration, and greater degrees of energy concentration.[8]

Thus, in White's view, the process that negates entropy can be discerned in the dynamics of biological evolution.

Human social organization enters the evolutionary process as culture, which as White then points out, is a means of carrying on the life process through its utilization of energy for purposive, intentional activities:

> From a zoological standpoint, culture is but a means of carrying on the life process of a particular species, Homo sapiens. It is a mechanism for providing man with subsistence, protection, offense and defense, social regulation, cosmic adjustment, and recreation. But to serve these needs of man, energy is required. It becomes the primary function of culture, therefore, to harness and control energy so that it may be put to work in man's world.[9]

By defining the development of culture in terms of the relative availability of free energy, White is able to posit the possibility of negentropic development as a constitutive feature of human social evolution. That is, it would be conceivable to "read" cultures, social formations, and the like in terms other than what the entropology of Levi-Strauss[10] allows for:

> Culture thus confronts us as an elaborate thermodynamic, mechanical system. The functioning of culture as a whole therefore rests upon and is determined by the amount of energy harnessed and by the way in which it is put to work.[11]

The crucial differentiating "factor" between White's anthropology and

Levi-Strauss's entropology is the difference made for development by "the way in which energy is put to work." The crucial problematic posed for human devlopment in his view, then, entails the "success" of the struggle for "free energy." Success here means that energy's successful harnessing and utilization by appropriate systems of cultural organization:

> Energy by itself is meaningless. To be significant in cultural systems, energy must be harnessed, directed and controlled.[12]

For White, it is possible to read the history of cultural development from a negentropic standpoint. This development is grasped as proceeding in terms of an invariant principle of cultural evolution:

> We can now formulate the basic law of cultural evolution: Other factors remaining constant, culture evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year is increased, or as the efficiency of the instrumental means of putting the energy to work is increased. Both factors may increase simultaneously of course. We may now sketch the history of cultural development from this standpoint.[13]

Thus, whereas Levi-Strauss reads the Second Law into the process of cultural development as an invariant reality principle which enables social development to be de-mystified as onrushing dis-organization, White does the reverse. He regards the Second Law as if it were an inevitability, an ontological principle of existence. White's invariant, the "basic law of cultural evolution," is an invariant, historical potentiality of human social practice. Potentiality is not inevitability.

The implications of negative entropy as a "reality principle" constitute a complete reversal of the dynamics of a world constituted by the logic of material scarcity. Rather than a static object for

consumption, whose constitutive dynamics entail its ongoing self-depletion, it would be necessary to "read" the world as a self-developing process of self-production and reproduction whose constitutive dynamics entail the possibility of ongoing self-expansion. Indeed, it would become possible to conceive of the world in terms of the possibility of its ongoing growth, increase of organization, and further proliferation of complexity. Thus, negative entropy would entail that the "utilization" of "free energy" in the development and maintenance of systemic order was an act of the production--or recovery for use--of hitherto unavailable energy; rather than the inescapable depletion of a fixed quantum of energy.

In such a view, the overflowing of the boundaries of a prevailing system by the energy it harnesses for productive work would indeed de-stabilize those boundaries and progressivly undermine the parameters of that prevailing energy system. What is crucial, however, is such disequilibration of the possibility of systemic order, as in the received version of the Second Law. Rather, the increasing production of entropic tendencies might be viewed as the momentary, rather than terminal, dis-organization of systemic parameters. This momentary dis-organization is a larger process of re-organization of the system in terms of wider, qualitatively different parameters and principles of development. This view grasps the system as a developmental process which produced its own conditions and, in so doing, gave rise to the possibility of its own further self-development. In the same way, we should note, theory (and reality) could surpass the view of reality as a process of self-depletion.

Instead of regarding the production of entropy as an absolute loss of energy for the purposes of further work, it would be possible to regard that loss as a loss only for the specific energy system which generates it. The loss of energy could be grasped as a "loss" that was relative to the principles which constituted that particular energy system in its way of producing energy. As White puts it, "by the way in which it is put to work insofar as the First Law of Thermodynamics indicates the universal of conservation of energy for the universe as a whole, a 'reality based' alternative reading of the Second Law could make that energy re-coverable and available for work--provided that it, that the system which generates were re-organized on qualitatively different principles of production (work)."[14]

This is not to say that a new interpretation of the Second Law would allow for the mere mechanical reversal of the entropic processes that resulted in the ongoing dis-organization of the prevailing system. That is, time, even in the alternative reading, would still be irreversible in its flow. What is being said is that the re-coverability, re-organization, or re-constitution of "used-up" energy, and, in principle, the production of new modes of energy, thereby would become possible. New modes of energy become possible through the qualitative transformation of the social and economic dynamics whereby the energy-system had re-produced itself, and in the process, produced the conditions of its own self-development. Thus, what constitutes "used-up" energy relative to a given mode of energy-organization, could be reconstituted as free energy, readily available, relative to a newly emergent mode of energy-utilization. What appeared as an absolute loss of energy could be re-formulated as

the process whereby a system underwent its self-produced re-organization. Thereby, that particular system can re-new the supposedly lost energy, albeit relative to a new kind of systemic order.

The prospect offered by such a re-conceptualization of the Second Law would enable a re-reading of the meaning of social change. In place of systemic dis-organization, we now stress a developmental sense, a sense of systemic re-organization. This would reconstitute the Second Law from a principle of terminal chaos, into quite a different principle: namely, that of ongoing developmental order and increasing organization of the basis of qualitative transformation.

To the extent that the Second Law, in the received, positivistic reading, expresses and rationalizes the logic of material scarcity at the level of social systems, such a change in meaning, if well-founded, enables us to theorize and act in terms of the real, possible emergence of a new kind of social formation: one for which material scarcity was not an invariant condition. Indeed, the possibility of a post-scarcity, abundant society would entail the utter reconstitution of the meanings and logic that constitute and are constituted by the dynamics of material scarcity. The science of such a society and set of dynamics would not be revealed a la Levi-Strauss as entropology. Rather, post-scarcity (or abundance) would entail the formulation of a new science adequate to the formulation and understanding of its new object for a new kind of theorizing--say cornucopiology.

Thus far we have explained the opposed mainstream readings of thermodynamics and interpretations of overall cultural developments by Levi-Strauss, Commoner, Rifkin, Eddington, et al., and contrastingly, by Leslie White."[15] What is crucial here is our reading of scientific laws in an animated way within the context of the so-called environmental and physical sciences themselves. Thus an animated re-reading of scientific laws by Prigogine"[16] and Caudwell[17] will be opposed to the positivist reading of the laws of thermodynamics.

By performing an animated reading of the received tradition of the positivist's scarcity-bound interpretation of the thermodynamics laws, Prigogine recovers and produces meanings and interpretations of natural phenomena that stabilize and reinstate the ongoing possibility of ongoing qualitative growth. Our intention, however, is to further radicalize Prigogine's reading of thermodynamics. We try to do so by contextualizing it within a concrete emancipatory interest. That is, Prigogine's experimental work rescues the formal possibilities for ongoing development from the positivist accounts of the Second Law. Going beyond that, our intention is to perform an animated reading of the silences in Prigogine's texts with an emancipatory intention. Again, our intention is to treat the formal possibilities for ongoing systemic development which we find in Prigogine's texts as so many occasions for positing further strategies for understanding and achieving concrete, qualitatively different, modes of development.

Methodologically, the intention of this chapter is to develop those formal, albeit silent possibilities for qualitative change in

terms of a specific historical content: namely, the possibility of a post-scarcity, abundant mode of historical development. Thus, we will first "violate" the texts of the positivist tradition through Prigogine's intervention into scientific discourse. Subsequently, we perform an emancipatory animated reading of Prigogine's texts. Through calling attention to the controversy pervading the laws of thermodynamics, our own reading intends to re-instate the problematic of scarcity and abundance on the agenda for sociological analysis.

In our view, Prigogine's thermodynamics must be understood in terms of a conception of scientific laws that contravenes their positivist understanding. We have already introduced his animated re-reading of scientific laws by critically scrutinizing Rifkin's appeal to the scientific authority and cultural prestige of Albert Einstein to anchor his own positivist account of the Law of Entropy. Hoist by his own petard, Rifkin's appeal to Einstein's text enabled us to notice the silence in Einstein's phrase, "framework of application."[18] This, in turn, provided us with an occasion to introduce Caudwell's notion of "domain" into our discourse, a notion which animated our re-reading of scientific law in the direction of meanings and resonances that speak of ongoing history and development where the positivist paradigm speaks of general unhistorical theory and timeless causal laws.

Caudwell's version of reality has been described as a system of interacting, continually developing and newly emerging domains, domains in the process of becoming, in the dialectical process of

transformation of quantity to quality and vice versa.[19] The ongoing emergence of new domains, in new kinds and levels of developmental order contravenes the received and recently revived positivist version of the laws of thermodynamics. Caudwell's reading of the second law of thermodynamics is strikingly at odds with its currently hegemonic interpretation whereby the irreversibility of the flow of time necessarily entails tendential terminal breakdown:

> . . .it is a physical evolutionary transformation law, and as such, is the foundation of all higher evolutionary processes. . .It explains that, taking the universe as a whole, becoming is a certain universal characteristic which is what we mean by Time as immediately experienced by us in the passage of past, present and future. The universal characteristic is that the present can in no circumstances become the past. Time flows. New news emerges. All is becoming. . .[20]

From Caudwell's standpoint, the crux of the matter is emergent novelty, the development of some thing or process truly different, a new kind of order. The orthodox reading of increasing order or new modes of organization is to interpret them ironically, as so many ways of increasing the entropic flow against which they only apparently prevail. All is maya. As Rifkin puts it:

> It must be emphasized that whenever the entropy increase is reversed in one place, it is only done by increasing the overall entropy of the surrounding environment. This is so because every time an event occurs, some amount of energy is dissipated in the process and thus made totally unavailable for future use. This dissipated energy is added to the sink of dissipated energy that has accumulated as a result of the occurrence of every other past event. The tremendous implications for society that flow from this are truly mind-boggling. To quote Agrist and Hepler: "each localized, man-made or machine-made entropy

> decrease is accompanied by a greater increase in entropy of the surroundings, thereby maintaining the required increase in total entropy."[21]

By contrast, Caudwell's version of reality as an ongoing process of newly emergent domains that are qualitatively different from previous modes of their organization, puts the universal timeless pretension of statements like Rifkin's into radical doubt. That is, Rifkin's reading of entropy is performed in the context of an historically-specific moment of the development of a specific overlapping of domains. The historically-specific physical laws appropriate to explaining the consequences of entropy production relative to that domain are not necessarily appropriate to account for newly emergent elements and processes within that domain. To quote Lovejoy on this:

> . . . since the transformation of quantity into quality brought forth a new level, a new domain, and thus contained elements which, by definition, were outside the purview of previously existing laws and give rise to the existence of new laws. . . . Quality, newness, order were all created simultaneously but on a new level or domain. To account for the newness, new facts and new laws had to be found, thereby enlarging the scope of physics.[22]

Thus, whereas positivist readings of the Second Law would, in the long run, necessarily treat the production of all "newness" as so many moments of entropic disorganization, it is nonetheless possible, on Caudwell's account, to specify the framework of applicability of the Second Law to a particular moment of natural history, to a given mode of natural organization. It then becomes possible to envision that newness and order could continually emerge but on a new level or in a different domain.

In Caudwell's view, there is an endemic problem at the heart of statistical, positivist readings of physical laws. They cannot account for genuine or emergent qualitative differences amongst the entities and processes that constitute their respective domains. Caudwell's critique of theoretical physics, the crucial loss in the formulation of statistical laws is the loss of the quality of phenomena to a quantifying methodology incapable of accounting for their qualitative differences. The root of the problem is that energy is treated one-sidedly in strictly quantitative terms. In Caudwell's view, energy is the most general mode of quality, and it is precisely that dimension which is repressed by its positivistic reformulation in statistical laws. To quote Caudwell:

> Energy is the most generalized component of quality. Energy, the quantum, quantity, is the likeness in all quality.[23]

Caudwell's critique of the statistical positivist reading of the Second Law is that as essentially a statistical law, it treats large aggregates of particles in strictly quantitative terms: the particles are turned into abstract units devoid of distinguishing attributes. Thereby, each particle is abstracted from its particular natural context or region of historical activity with the result of losing its distinguishing qualitative characteristics. The fundamentally repressive outcome of this cognitive strategy is to rule out qualitative differences amongst units as methodologically non-intelligible, non-observable, non-empirical. Once qualitative difference is neutralized, the possibility of the emergence of

qualitatively different domains is similarly ruled out as non-significant for analysis. The reason for this is that there can be no emergent qualitative difference at the level of system when there is no methodological way to merely notice simple, abiding qualitative differences at the microscopic level of particles that are "just there." In Caudwell's view, it is precisely the fact that differences amongst particles are dynamic rather than static attributes, that makes qualitative emergence and ongoing development possible at all. Caudwell's explanation of this possibility is based upon his assessment of the impact on development of the qualitative attributes of particles. Indeed, qualitative development of new domains is excluded from consideration by the statistical reading of the Second Law.

> . . . this reduction of particles to units excludes their small differences, and this difference may always and and emerge in the effect as a big difference, as accident. This accident is, however, an aspect of necessity, and means that in spite of physics, as it were, a new domain has been generated.[24]

By not seeing qualitative difference and qualitative development, the process and dynamics whereby these emergent differences are made possible is simply not thematized. It is excluded from theoretical and experimental consideration. Thus, the prevailing reading of the laws of thermodynamics is anchored eternally to the immediate domain, its immediate framework of applicability. The possibility of alternative conceptualizations of qualitatively different domains is methodologically precluded. What remains, by default, while appearing as if by necessity, is a given universe irreversibly running-down. As Lovejoy summarily reads this pivoted role of qualitative difference for Caudwell's theorizing:

> Thus, accident, change, or, as we now conceive it fluctuation plays a decisive role in the generation of new domains. Not surprisingly, this is as close as Caudwell came to explaining evolution. His solution is formally correct, demonstrating fairly well that mechanistic materialism, by stripping matter of all qualities except those of numbers and by reduction of all physical relations to particles with no individual attributes, leads to the notion of universe running down. . .[25]

By developing a nominally empirical method that can not see qualitative difference, positivistic statistical thermodynamics can suppress, in the name of experience itself, precisely the difference that quality could make in changing the prevailing state of affairs. Thus, in Caudwell's case, what is strategically overlooked by statistical thermodynamics is his noticing the concrete possibility of contravening the tendency towards terminal disorder, otherwise called "thermodynamic equilibrium" The spectre of a reversion to thermodynamic equilibrium is the spectre that haunts human develoment, and, in the end, renders it absurd. As Rifkin defines it, the "equilibrium state" is the "essence of the law":

> The equilibrium state is the state where entropy has reached a maximum, where there is no longer free energy available to perform additional work[26]

Thus, the Second Law so read posits the eventual occurrence of "thermodynamic equilibrium," at which point while no energy has been lost relative to the universe as a whole--according, that is, to the First Law--nonetheless, the production of entropy is maximized so that the energy available for work is so minimized that the production of order eventually ceases.

The contravening possibility to "thermodynamic equilibrium" is negentropy. Caudwell states this notion in the context of the theory

of domains:

> Thus the continual decrease of available energy between particles is matched by an increase in the available energy between systems or domains.[27]

Thus, negentropy, the possible flow of increasing energy between old and new domains, is what makes possible the qualitative development of emergent new domains. This flow or increased energy "throughput" is made possible by the dynamic interactions amongst qualitatively different particles. Any system of order is composed of energized particles and, thereby, dynamic. Any system of relative order, by virtue of this selfsame quality, is always producing entropy and thereby, always exists simultaneously as a condition of relative disorder.

In this reading, then, it becomes possible to allow for the simultaneous occurrence of order and disorder, of entropic and negentropic processes within a given domain. Consequently, what appears immediately to positivistic perception as only a domain increasing in disorder--and, thereby, icon-clad confirmation of the inexorable workings of the Second Law--might, on another reading, become evidence for the qualitative re-constitution and fundamental transformation of that domain. Thus, it becomes possible to regard immediate systemic disorder more fully as constituting the embryonic generation of new domains; rather than seeing it one-sidedly as reified evidence of a finite universe running down.

As Caudwell puts it, there is a dialectical relationship between order and disorder, two moments of an overall process of

systemic development. Thus, order and disorder are not substantialized as natural conditions, self-evident, static states of affairs. Rather, they are always-already relative, contrasting moments and qualities of a larger ongoing developmental process. To quote Caudwell's illustration of this:

> Every increase in complexity makes possible an increase in disorder--a well-furnished room can be more untidy than a monastery cell. Hence the disorder of entropy is artificially created. . .[28]

With this it becomes possible to surpass the Commoner, Rifkin, et al., version of "work" as merely an absurd, but ennobling prelude to the void: the futile positing of order against the inexorable tide of universal entropy. Instead, it becomes possible to regard work as an order-constituting activity which makes possible both the production of immediate entropic disorder, and, significantly, the ongoing qualitative re-constitution of a given domain (or energy-system), on a new level, as a new domain. Again, this possibility is negentropy. The possibility of such a reading of "reality" posits negentropic development as an invariant dimension of natural experience. The flow of increasing energy between old and new, qualitatively different domains would have to be empirically demonstrated, however, in order to satisfy positivist criteria for analytic significance and intelligibility. The cultural hegemony of positivist versions of "science," "lawfulness," "observable evidence," "facts," and so on, have made such an empirical demonstration of negentropy a virtual impossibility. Thus, Lovejoy characterizes Caudwell's explanation of evolution, "the increase in available energy between systems or domains," as "formally

correct," the empirical evidence not yet at hand.[29]

When we turn to Prigogine, the significance of his accomplishment in thermodynamics is multiple. Its significance lies both within the parameters of positivist criteria for "scientific legitimacy" while, at the same time, undermining the hegemony of the positivist reading of the "meaning" of the second law. As a prelude to examining the magnitude of his accomplishment, it is crucial to demonstrate just why it is deemed so significant in our reading of it. To do this, a brief re-examination of the dynamics of positivist hegemony will suffice. For this display of just what Prigogine was up against, we return to Feyerabend's critique of positivist method.

The consolidation of the positivist paradigm as well as maintenance of its cultural hegemony as a strategy for inquiry are rooted in its hitherto successful monopolization of the definition of scientific evidence as strictly observable fact. Second, its hegemony is displayed by its success in monopolizing the definition of what a legitimate method is for the discovery of facts that would anchor a genuine body of scientific laws. The apparent self-evidence of positivistic methodology and definitions of empirical evidence is put into question by, amongst others, Paul Feyerabend.

We display Feyerabend's strategic iconoclasm in the quote that follows from Against Method:

> My intention is not to replace one set of general rules by another such set: my intention is, rather, to convince the reader that all methodologies, even the most obvious ones, have their limits. The best way to

> show this is to demonstrate the limits and even the irrationality of some rules which she, or he, is likely to regard as basic.[30]

Feyerabend repeatedly demonstrates how it is that the so-called empirical method of positivist science winds up suppressing the ongoing possibility of accumulating new empirical content. To do this is irrationally to destroy its own raison d'etre, its self-proclaimed ability to gather the empirical data which would ultimately ground a genuine, predictive science. Nonetheless, Feyerabend asserts that, in fact, positivist methodology suppresses the ongoing, unfettered accumulation of empirical content and thereby betrays its own claim to defend the empiricist faith.

In my reading of Feyerabend's texts, the endemic irrationality of the positivist conduct of inquiry is that its interest in maintaining cultural hegemony as the paradigm for science has hardened into pseudo scientific, dogmatic inabiliy to maintain that "openness" to discovering the facts. This, of course, is the very basis for its self-asserted superiority to other methodological strategies and versions of inquiry.

Feyerabend demonstrates the self-contradictory outcome of the positivist quest for closure, for paradigmatic hegemony, first by Tentatively accepting--for his strategy--the positivistic "autonomy principle": the assumption of "a class of facts (or observation statements) which are assumed to be 'given' somehow."[31] Having "embraced" the positivist credo, he demonstrates its self-betrayal by

the positivist paradigm's active suppression of alternative empirical strategies for generating new facts. To trace his demonstration, we begin by citing the following text:

> Facts and theories are much more intimately connected than is admitted by the autonomy principle. Not only is the description of every single fact dependent on some theory (which may, of course, be very different from the theory to be tested), but there also exist facts which cannot be unearthed except with the help of alternatives to the theory to be tested, and which become unavailable as soon as such alternatives are excluded.[32]

The methodological exclusion of alternative hypotheses to the hypotheses being tested achieves procedural purity at the expense of generating new facts.

A second line of consolidating and maintaining paradigmatic hegemony is the positivist stringent insistence on what Feyerabend terms the consistency principle. This principle demands that the introduction of new testable hypotheses be confined to only those hypotheses which are consistent with well-established theories. Feyerabend argues that the strict enforcement of the consistency principle suppresses new data and prevents the addition of new facts: To quote his critique of positivistic hypothesis-testing:

> Both the relevance and the refuting character of decisive facts can be established only with the help of other theories which, though factually adequate, are not in agreement with the view to be tested. This being the case, the invention and articulation of alternatives may have to precede the production of refuting facts.[33]

Next, the fact of empiricism's self-betrayal through positivism:

> Empiricism, at least in some of its more sophisticated versions, demands that the empirical content of whatever knowledge we possess be increased as much as possible. Hence the invention of alternatives to the view at the centre of discussion constitutes an essential part of the empirical method. Conversely the fact that the

> consistency condition eliminates alternatives now shows it to be in disagreement not only with scientific practice but with empiricism as well.[34]

Finally, the nature and condemnation for that self-betrayal:

> By excluding valuable tests it decreases the empirical content of the theories that are permitted to remain (and these, as I have indicated above, will usually be the theories which were there first); and it especially decreases the number of facts that could show their limitations. . . . This is how the condition may finally create a situation where a certain point of view petrifies into dogma by being, in the name of experience,completely removed from any conceivable criticism.[35]

On a more obviously sociological plane, Feyerabend demonstrates the social process by which positivist epistemological strategy is institutionalized as the reigning scientific paradigm. Again, the endemic flaw in this social process is the de facto suppression of potentially fertile alternative sources of empirical content. To quote the text:

> Now if it is true . . . that many facts become available only with the help of alternatives, then the refusal to consider them will result in the elimination of potentially refuting facts as well. More especially, it will eliminate facts whose discovery would show the complete and irreparable inadequacy of the theory. Such facts having been made inaccessible, the theory will appear to be free from blemish and it will seem that 'all evidence points with merciless definiteness in the . . . direction . . . that all the processes involving . . . unknown interactions conform to the fundamental quantum law.' This will further reinforce the belief in the uniqueness of the accepted theory and in the futility of any account that proceeds in a different manner.[36]

The social-psychological dynamics of accomplishing paradigmatic hegemony are now specified:

> Being now very firmly convinced that there is only one good microphysics, the physicists will try to explain adverse facts in its terms, and they will not mind when such explanations occasionally turn out to be a little clumsy. Next, the development becomes known to the public. Popular science books (and this includes many books on the philosophy of science) spread the basic postulates of the theory; applications are made in distant fields, money is given to the orthodox, and is withheld from the rebels.[37]

What has been accomplished by this institutionalization process is the social production of the appearance of success. This successful appearance, the accomplished cultural hegemony of one version of science, not only achieves the suppression of alternative cognitive strategies, but further--as it is Feyerabend's strategy to demonstrate--it is in no way the realization of the positivist criterion for truth: namely that its theoretical statements correspond with nature, just as it is. To quote Feyerabend's arch-characterization:

> More than ever the theory seems to possess tremendous empirical support. The chances for the consideration of alternatives are now very slight indeed. The final success of the fundamental assumptions...seems to be assured.
>
> At the same time it is evident, on the basis of our considerations, that this appearance of success cannot in the least be regarded as a sign of truth and correspondence with nature. Quite the contrary, the suspicion arises that the absence of major difficulties is a result of the decrease of empirical content brought about by the elimination of alternatives, and of facts that can be discovered with their help. In other words, the suspicion arises that this alleged success is due to the fact that the theory, when extended beyond its starting point, was turned into rigid ideology. Such ideology is 'successful' not because it agrees so well with the facts; it is successful because no facts have been specified that could constitute a test, and because some such facts have been removed. Its 'success' is entirely man-made.[38]

Thus, in a nearly ethnomethodological account of the process, "scientific evidence" is grasped as a socially produced set of appearances whose "success" has been the outcome of the activity of

members of the community of interest who subscribe to and live off the hegemonic scientific paradigm:

> It was decided to stick to some ideas, come what may, and the result was, quite naturally, the survival of these ideas. If now the initial decision is forgotten, or made only implicitly, for example, if it becomes common law in physics, then the survival itself will seem to constitute independent support, it will reinforce the decision, or turn it into an explicit one, and in this way close the circle. This is how empirical 'evidence' may be <u>created</u> by a procedure which quotes as its justification the very same evidence it has produced.[39]

Whether the reader is persuaded or outraged by Feyerabend's account of the positivist paradigm's successful establishment of cultural hegemony in the conduct of inquiry, the hitherto pervasive fact of that hegemony is indisputable. Correspondingly, the applicability to our present problematic of Feyerabend's account of paradigm-consolidation is evident on several counts. First, it provides a model of the socio-epistemological process by which negentropy and its attendant social correlate, namely abundant social development, could be suppressed from empirical significance or analytic consideration in the theoretical domains of statistical thermodynamics and social development alike. Indeed, given the success of received positivist reading of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the consistency principle alone would preclude Caudwell's possibility of qualitatively different, emergent domains from serious hypotheticating and scientific testing. Its strategic complement, the autonomy principle, would preclude Caudwell's notion of the constitution of laws and observation statements as both features of and specifications of historically-specific, developing domains, including the history of the

disciplines by which they are constituted.

Without the possibility of such alternative conceptions of development, there could be no discovery of "potentially refuting facts" to the received account of the Second Law. Further, the fact that Caudwell demonstrates the non-visibility of qualitative differences to quantifying statistical methodologies seems to fit nicely with Feyerabend's notion of the necessary, circular limitation of a methodology to treating as scientific evidence only that which could be unearthed within the limited framework of applicability available to the method. Moreover, assuming the accuracy of Caudwell's noticing the strategic inability of statistical thermodynamics even to notice qualitative differences amongst unit-particles, Feyerabend's notion that "empirical 'evidence' may be <u>created</u> by a procedure [here, the statistical analysis of aggregate units] which quotes as its justification the very same evidence it has produced"[40] seems at least plausible.

Finally, the virtually unchallenged assumption of tendential disorder and breakdown as the "true meaning" of the Second Law would seem to attest to the <u>de facto</u> "success," the cultural hegemony, of an alleged scientific law that eternalizes material scarcity and naturalizes structural economic crises. The alternative version of material scarcity and economic crisis as specific, historically-surpassable moments in the ongoing development of historically specific domains, is relegated to the silent/silenced category of "emergent, qualitative development." The function of such a residual category is that it "contains" hypotheses that are so

inconsistent with "well-established theories," that they remain non-candidates for empirical testability. Again, these non-testable, inconsistent hypotheses are precisely those silences produced by the selfsame hegemonic cultural discourse that invokes "scientific laws," "well established theories," "testable hypotheses," and "scientific evidence" all in their postivisitic sense. Indeed, given the obvious lacunae constituted by both negentropic and post-scarcity development in the realm of "successful" empiricist practice and discourse, we resonate affirmatively to Feyerabend's noting that "the suspicion arises that this alleged success is due to the fact that the theory, when extended beyond its starting point, was turned into rigid ideology."[41]

Feyerabend notwithstanding, for all Caudwell's brilliance in formulating the possibility of the negentropic development of specific natural domains, the de facto hegemony of empiricist--let alone positivist--criteria for "scientific evidence" must be considered. That is, it renders Caudwell's analysis highly vulnerable to the charge that a negentropic conception of maintaining increased energy flow between old and new domains is sheer formalism, hyper-abstracted theorizing and, lacking ostensible empirical content, speculative self-deception. It is at this point, then, our attending an empirical silence in reading Caudwell's theorizing, that the contribution of Ilya Prigogine becomes salient and commands our attention. Indeed, through his work in thermodynamics, Prigogine intervenes fundamentally into several domains of scientific discourse. Thus, Enter Prigogine.

Prigogine's accomplishment is two-fold. First, he discovers observable, thermodynamic processes which account empirically for the

possibility of the emergence of qualitatively new domains and systemic organizations. Prigogine's discovery of intermediary, dynamic structures that enable qualitative systemic transformation of old domains into new domains fills the formalistic lacunae in Caudwell's anticipatory, but incomplete, account of negentropic development. In so doing he successfully meets positivistic standards that define legitimate scientific evidence in terms of strictly observable behaviors.

However, by so doing, Prigogine makes visible the outer limits of the orthodox, hegemonic reading of the Second Law by showing its specific delimitation to closed systems of energy, at or near thermodynamic equilibrium. He thereby demonstrates the unhistorical, and non-developmental version of an organized system that is presumed by the orthodox reading of the Second Law. Thus, his work provides an occasion for the recovery of meanings and resonances, attendant to the uncovering of new "observables," that re-instate the possibility of ongoing growth and qualitative, systemic change into empiricist scientific discourse: a body of discourse within which, under the dominion of positivistic standards of meaning, they had become increasingly inexpressible. By recovering meanings that express and presage ongoing growth and qualitative systemic development for empirical discourse, Prigogine contravenes the intention to theoretical closure that characterizes the Eddington, Commoner, Rifkin, et al. positivistic reading of the Second Law.

As we read Prigogine, his theorizing undermines the apparent "success" of the positivistic paradigm in fully appropriating theory and practice to its image of genuine science. Further still, he

undermines the hitherto unchecked, hegemonic capacity of the positivistic invocation of the Second Law to produce that cultural silence that speaks the submission and ratification of its "authoritative account" of global development. Thus, by making visible the outer limit of the Second Law, by specifying its framework of applicability, by recovering the possibility of meaningfully speaking of growth and qualitative change in scientific discourse, Prigogine undermines the automatic, culturally hegemonic authority of positivistic invocations of "scientific law" to circumscribe theoretical discourse. Indeed, by challenging the hegemony of the received reading of the Second Law, Prigogine undermines its ability to eternalize, rationalize, and thereby, put beyond question the necessity of material scarcity as an invariant feature of natural development. By strategically checking the positivistic thrust towards theoretical and discursive closure, Prigogine opens the terrain of meaningful scientific discourse for a restoration of the problematic of post-scarcity development. The recovery of the possibility of a suppressed discourse not bound to the givenness of material scarcity categorizes Prigogine, partly by the role that the so-called hermeneutic sciences occupy in Habermas' schema of cognitive interests.[42]

Against this background, then, what follows is a close-up animated reading of Prigogine's texts to both demonstrate and contextualize his accomplishment within our own <u>emancipatory</u> intentions. Of special note for our purposes here is the work of Prigogine on the emergence of new domains through the interplay of microscopic and macroscopic dimensions of energy systems.

In his Nobel Laureate Speech (1977)[43] Prigogine notes the discovery of a class of energy systems which exhibit two radically different modes of activity. In one situation, in which the energy system remains close to thermodynamic equilibrium, the system can increase the production of entropy within its boundaries so that it tends to evolve towards a state of maximum disorder in accordance with the Second Law. In the second situation, wherein the energy-system is already far from thermodynamic equilibrium, "it came as a great surprise when it was finally shown that far from equilibrium the thermodynamic behavior could be quite different."[44]

What Prigogine has in mind is that non-equilibrated energy-systems may make possible the emergence of new types of "dynamic states of matter known as 'dissipative structures'."[45] That is, the second situation, already far from equilibrium, constitutes an energy-system which is in fact maintained by a large entropy flow across the boundaries of the system to the environment. Such systems are what Prigogine terms "dissipative structures." Significantly, it is precisely through their "excess entropy production" that these systems--I repeat, not existing at or near thermodynamic equilibrium,--exhibit negative-entropic or "coherent behavior."[46] Their coherence is demonstrated by the fact that it is through the dissipation of excess entropy into the environment that the system as a whole reaches a state of lower disorder and greater organization than what it started with. What is remarkable is that it is precisely in accordance with the Second Law that entropy increases. However, it does so in so new a way that a whole new, qualitatively different material structure of organized energy emerges. This new dissipative

structure, a "spontaneous excitation of internal convection,"[47] cannot be generated from an energy system "at rest which is at thermodynamic equilibrium."[48] Instead, arising only from a state that is "far from equilibrium," a kind of "threshold" condition is reached.

By describing such a threshold in the context of hydrodynamics, Prigogine illustrates the emergence of a new mode of order from what immediately appears to be a state of increasing disorder:

> ...the state of rest becomes unstable and convection starts. The entropy production is then increased as the convection provides a new mechanism of heat transport. Moreover, the state of flow, which appears beyond the instability, is a state of organization as compared to the state of rest. Indeed, a macroscopic number of molecules has to move in a coherent fashion over macroscopic times to realize the flow pattern.[49]

Again, given a sufficiently large value far from equilibrium, apparent chaos turns out to be a new mode of systemic ordering on a new level of organization:

> However, above some critical value, certain fluctuations are amplified and give rise to a macroscopic current. A supermolecular order appears which corresponds basically to a giant fluctuation, stabilized by exchanges of energy with the outside world. This is the order characterized by the occurrence of dissipative structures.[50]

In our reading of Prigogine's views, evolving systems have an evolutionary potential because of the increased availability of energy to them in contrast to the minimum available energy state for systems maximizing disorder near or at thermodynamic equilibrium. This developmental process whereby newly emergent order is produced involves an energy-system approaching and crossing a threshold, the former boundary or, in Prigogine's term, "bifurcation point."[51] Thereby

thermodynamic equilibrium is superseded and new coherent modes of self-organization emerge. Once a system nears such a threshold or "crossover point," there random--from the point of view of the prior mode of macro-organization--molecular fluctuations emerge and can act catalytically in a way that--to indulge a spatial metaphor--transports it across the boundary. Sean Lovejoy characterizes the development this way:

> Near the point of crossover from the realm of thermodynamic disorder to the domain of coherence, molecular fluctuations play a critical role in the behavior of the system. And these fluctuations are essentially random; they follow different laws than the macroscopic laws obtaining before. As the system goes over into coherent behavior, it also becomes very dependent on the large-scale structures...Large things such as the size and shape of the vessel, that could be ignored before, now become critically important. There is a dialectical interaction between higher and lower domains that was previously not significant. [52]

And, by way of summary, Lovejoy summarizes the development as a whole:

> Thus the system can evolve deterministically under control of macroscopic variables between bifurcation points but once near a bifurcation, random molecular fluctuations and large scale boundary conditions are decisive in determining its state...The Dialectics of chance, i.e., the fluctuations thus play an essential role in the necessity of producing order. [53]

What we witness is the creation of a new mode of order, of self-ordering process through dissipative structures which produce excess entropy and expels it into the trans-systemic environment. Indeed, it is precisely the notion and demonstration of "dissipative structures" which allows Prigogine to empirically develop the formalistic silence that abides in Caudwell's version of negentropic development. Thus, to quote Lovejoy:

> Caudwell described this as the effect of now-no-longer negligible differences between particles, which add up to a

> decisive role through appearing as accident in the larger domain. Thus, the new quality emerges on a new domain, giving rise to qualitatively new laws not reducible to the old laws. Caudwell stressed the need for physics to accommodate new laws in order to be able to describe the evolution of the new domain. [54]

Prigogine's notion of "dissipative structures" and (as we shall see below) the emergence of "bifurcation points" as crucial moments in qualitative systemic development provides empirical and structural content to Caudwell's anticipatory--albeit formalistic--silence in the theorizing of negentropic development.

As we read him, Prigogine demonstrates how the breakdown of the previous mode of order and its subsequent re-emergence as a new mode of order occurs <u>through</u> its development of an as "dissipative structures" of dynamic matter. Prigogine thereby is able to demonstrate the simultaneous production of systemic disorder and the origination of a new mode of order on a new qualitative level. This transmutation of apparent chaos into different order occurs, moreover, in consonance with the Second Law's stipulation of increasing entropy.

It is crucial to grasp here that Prigogine's reading of the Second Law is decisively <u>not</u> its wholesale rejection. On the contrary, he "accepts" it, albeit within a qualitatively different context. That is, Prigogine locates the laws of thermodynamics within a version of nature that is a set of overlapping domains which are: developmental, not static; ongoing, not inert; capable of qualitative reorganizations, not given just as they are; and finally, as undergoing ongoing historically-specifiable transformations, not eternal. The universe becomes an energy continuum whereby the total energy conserved in accordance with the First Law is not a static, fixed quantity. Rather,

the energy continuum is capable of qualitative re-organizations such that nature itself cannot be regarded as a simply fixed object-in-itself, whose energy-contents are merely finite and depletable.

Read in this context, the Second Law is no longer a mirror that reflects and articulates a closed energy system whose irreversible tendency towards terminal disorder is partly a function of its finite quantity of energy resources. Prigogine reads the production of disorder by increased entropy production,--that is, the heart of the Second Law,--as an integral moment of the ongoing qualitative development and re-organization of a given domain. This implies that like Caudwell, Prigogine's notion of energy is not a merely quantitative and depletable thing. But, rather, as a qualitatively differentiated continuum of domains, continually open to qualitatively different forms of organization and reorganization.

In brief, Prigogine's version of energy is not merely a quantity, nor is it reducible to a thing, nor is it primarily an occasion for depletion and consumption. Instead, energy is a qualitatively transformable continuum, a mode of organizeable potentialities for producing dynamic order and, in turn, for being produced in alternative modes. Consequently, the laws that would account for energy production, deployment, and transformation are themselves subject to re-constitution or re-contextualization depending principally on the respective kinds of energy-systems, i.e., domains which they articulate and to which they are applicable. A reading of the Second Law with respect to an energy-system conceptualized as "closed" produces, then, qualitatively different meanings from readings

of it which specify (and, in Caudwell's case, are even features of) domains that are conceptualized as "open" to ongoing systemic development. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that Prigogine's reading does not jettison (or annihilate) the Second Law as such; but, rather, it re-contextualizes it as a moment of a larger, multi-levelled, qualitatively differentiable process, a simultaneous production of order and disorder. As Lovejoy summarizes it:

> Finally, since order can be created far from equilibrium, via dissipative structures which expel entropy into the environment, order is produced simultaneously with disorder, in agreement with rather than in violation of the second law.[55]

That increasing the level of entropic production generates newly emergent dissipative structures, for energy-systems already far from equilibrium makes it possible to undermine and transcend that reading of the Second Law which defines entropy one-sidedly as the making-energy-unavailable-for-"work," i.e., for the further production of any order. The notion of a qualitatively new mode of organization producible precisely through the expulsion of excess entropy into the environment, is simply not at all consonant with the positivistic reading of the Second Law. That reading equates the increase of entropy with the unavailability of energy for "work," the constitution of <u>any</u> purposive ordering of energy.

In this crucial sense, then, the reading of the Second Law accomplished by Prigogine contravenes Commoner's reading of the Law of Entropy. Indeed, on Prigogine's reading of the Second Law, what emerges is the relentless possibility of new modes and conceptions of order, system and organization. Correspondingly, theoretical structures and new kinds of scientific laws become possible, which

supersede outmoded conceptions rooted in a positivistic interpretation of entropy as the immediately self-evident, necessary running down of any mode of order. Thus, by extrapolation, it is possible to understand "work" as something more than merely mankind's futile production of "islands of order" against the onrushing entropic tide. The long-range social implications of Prigogine's reading of the Second Law is the re-instatement of the possibility of purposive human intentions, in some new organization of "work" (as we have thus far deployed the term), as making a real difference in determining the modes of natural and social systemic order that ground life on the planet.

A second--and in some ways even more far-reaching--theoretical trajectory is generated by Prigogine's recovery of historical meanings in his re-contextualization of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. One intention of his work is stated in the words of his Nobel Prize acceptance lecture (1977):

> In this way we introduce in physics and chemistry a historical element, which until now seemed to be reserved only for sciences dealing with biological, social, and cultural phenomena. [56]

In Prigogine's view, the development of theoretical physics now enables physicists to distinguish between "levels" of time and to permit a "diversification of the concept of time" beyond its traditional one-sided reduction to "a geometric parameter associated with motion." [57] The introduction of "time," understood as "history," "into theoretically-mediated, dynamic material processes, is grasped as a necessary aspect of any adequate interpretation of the state of a given energy system existing under conditions far from equilibrium."[58]

As we have noted, conditions of immediate molecular instability in energy-systems, encompassing the macro-environment and micro-particle chemical systems alike, give rise to the emergence of "dissipative structures." In essence, both these immediate molecular fluctuations and more global, macroscopic features of the environing system (for example, the size and form imposed on chemical systems by their boundary conditions) create a "threshold" condition. At this moment the system exceeds some critical value and thereby gives rise to emergent dissipative structures which emerge, as Prigogine puts it, under conditions far from equilibrium:

> The critical size of the system is a complex function of the parameters describing the reaction-diffusion processes. Therefore, we may say that chemical instabilities involve long-range order through which the system acts as a whole.[59]

The notion of "system" is relevant to our inquiry at this point, especially insofar as thermodynamics can be grasped as a "science of systems":

> Thermodynamics is concerned with the properties not of separate things but, of things organized into a system, the behavior of which is determined by relationships among its parts.[60]

In Prigogine's view, it is precisely at the level of system that "history"[61] becomes a meaningful category in explaining the ongoing development of energized matter in its multiple domains. (Again, as our forthcoming exploration of Prigogine's thermodynamics will demonstrate, the exploration of systemic development is an emergent arena for the convergence of multiple interests amongst social scientists and theoretical physicists.) As understood here, then, theoretical activity necessarily embraces some notion, working

assumption, or metaphor of "organization." This, in our view, is a necessary condition for the possibility of intelligibility--or, for that matter, of stipulating non intelligibility for some realms of phenomena.

Ilya Prigogine, through his theorizing activity, constitutes a notion of systemic organization which emerges from his research work in thermodynamics. This is the notion of a "long-range order through which the system acts as a whole."[62] This notion is processive rather than static, inert, or thing-like. Systemic order is not a thing-in-itself, finished, unchanging, closed to further transformation, but rather, exists as developmental activity. That activity can be one of a self-reproducing sort wherein the parameters of the entire organizational activity are both re-established continually, barring the intervention of outside force, and, further, they serve as the immanent pattern whereby the process of reproduction recurs and reproduces the entire organization as an ongoing process. Thus, the organizational parameters, as immanent to systemic development, both guide the reproduction process and are thereby reproduced by the process they guide. In any event, so to speak, the system acts as a whole.

With a notion of systemic order as a long-term developmental process through which a system behaves as a whole, it becomes possible to strategically introduce "history" into the domain of theoretical physics as a mode of systemic behavior of so-called "natural" phenomena. In Prigogine's view, history is always already a dimension of developing domains, energy systems. The notion of "history," of ongoing temporal transformation, as an integral dimension of the

ongoing development of matter--is both entailed and displayed, as we have seen, by the emergence of dissipative structures. Furthermore, the notion of a history of dynamic matter,--or of energy-systems developing--is further sharpened by Prigogine's conception of history as the ongoing passage of organized systems through a series of bifurcation points. In systems already far from equilibrium, the molecular fluctuations whereby dissipative structures emerge take on a new qualitative potential for change. Prigogine, to reiterate, calls this quality of energization a bifurcation point, a point or moment at which molecular fluctuations are such that the old systemic boundary conditions break down and the dynamic system as a whole "crosses over" the boundary and undergoes qualitative transformation.

Whereas Caudwell went as far as to posit qualitative change as a result of the qualitative differences amongst particles reaching a kind of "critical mass," Prigogine provides an "empirically verifiable" structural mechanism to demonstrate it. Thus, systems will undergo "successive bifurcations"[63] in their ongoing development, typically when the value of some characteristic parameter of the system is increased to a critical value. Thus, it is possible to interpret a system as existing as a state, say C, which developed to that state through an increase in the value of some characteristic parameter, say P. What is crucial is that the interpretation of the current state at which the system exists at a given point ". . . implies the knowledge of the prior history of the system which had to go through the bifurcation points, say A and B." The "going through" of bifurcation points must be grasped, moreover, as radical discontinuities in the kind of qualitative development which non-equilibrium systems

continuously undergo. Consequently, it is through the knowledge of a system's constitution by the history of successive bifurcations through which it has developed that introduces history into the domain of physics.[64] Thus, to extrapolate Prigogine's meaning here, the interpretative knowledge of a system is possible as a developmental process. This, in turn, is a history of that system constituted, in part, by its successive bifurcations. Finally, it is the successive bifurcations which give rise to the emergence of new, qualitatively different domains of systematically ordered energy.

It is clear from the context within which our Prigogine presents his work that the applicability of his findings beyond the parameters of theoretical physics are very much on his mind. After characterizing the applicability of classical theromodynamics to equilibrium structures such as crystals, Prigogine cites the need for a new kind of thermodynamics, a new notion of dynamic structures, to account for non-equilibrium structures:

> For example, from the macroscopic point of view, classical thermodynamics has largely clarified the concept of equilibrium structures such as crystals... Are most types of "organizations" around us of this nature? One need only ask such a question to see that the answer is no. [65]

Obviously in a town or in a living system we have quite a <u>different</u> type of functional order. To obtain a thermodynamic theory for this type of structure we have to show that nonequilibrium may be a source of order. [66]

At issue is the notion of a system characterized by its capacity to evolve through and on the basis of successive instabilities. That is, evolving systems are conceived of as open

systems: characterized by nonequilibrium order whose creation is only possible far from equilibrium. The "history" of any given system is made possible by the fact that the variety of possible de-stabilizations to which the initial steady-state system is subject could, in turn, produce a variety of qualitatively new configurations. Given the historical dimension introduced through the bifurcation process, systems are defined as always already including the possibility of alternative futures. Possibility, defined as the ongoing emergence of alternative possible modes of organization, is aleady a constitutive principle of any system driven far from equilibrium. Thus, systems are defined in terms of their potential for alternative histories, for non-equivalent modes of development in terms of qualitatively different structural relationships.

From a thermodynamic standpoint, all energy systems are necessarily characterized by fluctuations, a phenomenon defined as "the spontaneous deviations from some average regime--which are a universal phenomenon of molecular origin and are always present in a system with many degrees of freedom."[67] The permanent openness of such a system to fundamental reorganization, to qualitatively different developmental histories, is underscored by Prigogine, Nicolis, and Babloyantz in their "Thermodynamics of Evolution":

> Thus a system in an average state close to but below the transition threshold will always have a nonvanishing probability of reaching the unstable region through fluctuations. When this happens, certain types of fluctuations will be amplified and they will subsequently drive the system to the new regime.[68]

Indeed, the amplification of fluctuations de-stabilizes the system to the point whereby a transition "threshold" is surpassed and,

in the process, the system is reconstituted on the basis of a new principle of order:

> In all these situations a new order principle appears that corresponds essentially to an amplification of fluctuations and to their ultimate stabilization by the flow of matter and energy from the surroundings. We may call this principle "order through fluctuations." [69]

Thus, the nature of nonequilibrium systems is always such that the system is constituted by the probability that it is always already the domain of the formation of a new structure. The final regime will depend on the "probability of creating a fluctuation of a given type."[70]

Such a developmental process may be further understood as the ongoing generation of historical novelty in such a way that every disorder becomes the basis for a new order which in turn grounds the possibility of a new disorder ad infinitim. To cast this notion in development of Caudwell's formulation in The Crisis of Physics (1939):

> . . . there is a constant emergence of unlike from like and its in gathering as a homogeneous like into a new unlike.[71]

Moreover, given the irreversibility of events in time, again in accordance with the Second Law,--a point agreed upon by all readings of the thermodynamics laws--it is necessary to see historical time as a constitutive dimension--indeed, a necessary condition--for the very possibility of any developmental order. Thus, it is impossible to account adequately for material organization without grasping it as, in part, constituted and necessarily in-formed by and as a history.

The demonstration of non-equilibrium order through fluctuations developing in irreversible temporal succession (which is not to say linearly) is the heart of Prigogine's historical conception of matter, energy and organization. Their empirical demonstration is

the specific content that develops the formal silence on negentropic development that abides in our reading of Caudwell's text. The dynamic site of qualitative change, the locus of the historical development of matter, the process that produces the qualitative transformation is the "threshold condition," the moment of critical destabilization of the boundary conditions of a given system. The possibility of qualitative systemic change, then, is produced by the transformation of seemingly stable boundary conditions into a threshold, or set of dynamic bifurcations points, through molecular fluctuation. We turn, therefore, to a brief exploration of the nature and meanings of the "threshold" with respect to systemic development and qualitative systemic change.

In Prigogine's model of organizational development, the notion of threshold is a dynamic boundary which has reached a level and quality of instability such that development of a system past that point will engender a qualitative transformation in the parameters and constitutive principles of the immanent organization of the system. The emergence of such a boundary, moreover, is symptomatic of that system's having reached such a critical point of bifurcation. The notion of a boundary beyond which there is "something" rather than "nothing," entails the continuance of process, whether entropically or negentropically, with respect to the previous state and quality of organization of the system. Again, whether in an entropic or negentropic mode, the energy-system is a processive mode of organization that continually develops through time.

Furthermore, temporal succession must, in accord with the Second Law of Thermodynamics, be irreversible. For this reason, the

system's "forward development"--whether entropic or negentropic, always already guarantees that the system cannot revert to a level and quality of organization that is identical with its previous configuration at an earlier stage of temporal development. Thus, having developed "so far" it cannot, the developmental moment and mode being qualitatively different, reproduce itself exactly as it was at an earlier point in its organizational development. So-called "regression" to an earlier "stage" of development is itself a qualitatively different moment of a forward-moving development, not merely its linear reversal. Given such a conception of development, it becomes possible to analyze the development of organizing systems of order a succession of "events" in which the constituting and re-constituting of boundary conditions are taken as intrinsic aspects of the overall development.

It is important, however, to grasp the constitution and re-constitution of boundaries as a dynamic activity which is not intelligible in abstraction from the overall systemic development in relation to which a "boundary" is defined as a "boundary." There is nothing "real" about "boundaries" as such. "They" are constitutive moments of an overall process of development which they both constitute and, in turn, are constituted by. Boundaries are always already moments of a larger developmental process. They neither exist in-themselves as absolutely different from the process which they constitute, nor are they homogeneous with and thereby undifferentiable from the overall process by which they are constituted. As "pivotal" points in a developmental process, boundaries are simultaneously harbingers of further development and in-gatherings of previous development. Again, boundaries exist both as "horizons" of the

forthcoming and "departures" from the previous. Boundaries are points of dynamic tension, both fertilized and pregnant, both recapitulation and prelude. They are neither mere extensions of what has been actual nor are they pre-fabricated consolidations of what is not-yet-actual. In sum, boundaries are "destinies," points at which "the actual" and "the possible" coverge as a "moment" in an overall, historically-specific developmental process.

In Prigogine's conception, a boundary exists as a dynamic instability of molecular fluctuations. These fluctuations are neither totally random nor are they totally "patterned" in a clearly discernible coherent order. As a "field" of fluctuating instability, the "threshold" exists neither homogeneously nor as completely differentiated. It is neither a homogeneous unity nor an atomized plurality. Rather, the threshold condition is a point at which the conditions of the previous mode of organization are in the process of entropic disorganization <u>while</u> the pre-conditions of the emergent mode of re-organization are in a state of embryonic proto-organization. Thus, a threshold condition exists simultaneously as an "order-disorder."

From the standpoint of the old "order," the threshold constitutes a "crisis"; from the standpoint of the emergent "order," the threshold constitutes a "gestation." Thus, the qualitative "shift" that constitutes the qualitative changeover <u>through</u> one mode of organizational development to a subsequent mode, is itself intelligible only as a developmental process. And, to put it mildly, the qualitative transformation in an emergent mode of organization occurs ("becomes") as a process of uneven, multi-layered, multidimensional

development. That is, while the historical emergence of a "threshold," the "making-visible" of a boundary to a prevailing organization state, presages a potential changeover in the entire qualitative state of systemic organization, the changeover does not occur all at once, on all fronts--so to speak--like a "bolt from the blue." Indeed, the "threshold condition" is constituted by discernible, specific points of fluctuation, not all necessarily at the same level of potentiality. Rather, the "threshold condition" is constituted by a discernible set of particular "regions" of especially critical instability: that is, of specific parameters which are approaching or have reached a "critical value." The actual emergence of the threshold condition, then, is generated by the successive and/or simultaneous interplay of the set of regions or parameters that constituted the previous mode of organization. Thus, the threshold condition emerges as these parameters and pivotal regions begin to approach or actually reach a critical value which, taken together, constitute the threshold condition as a kind of critical mass whose developing "potential" for qualitative self-transformation is now "at hand."

To summarize: for Ilya Prigogine, the Second Law of Thermodynamics "works" in fundamentally different ways with respect to both the two possible modes of organization. First, regarding organization as self-equilibrating activity, the activity of a closed or isolated system of organizational process, the Second Law can be grasped, with the meaning derived by statistical positivists, as the probable tendential decrease in organization, the "running down" of the mode of organization. By contrast, in the context of the second or nonequilibrium organizational mode, the Second Law becomes a dynamic

principle through which the organization of systemic activity continually reconstitutes itself as a threshold of instability through which--and across which--the activity is re-organized as a new mode of activity. Non-equilibrium organization is characterized fundamentally by the ongoing probability of its qualitative re-organization as an organizational process of greater complexity and organization than the previous mode: hence, it displays negentropy as its modus operandi.

Systemic organization, seen in this developmental light, can be grasped as the activity of production. Organized matter is both means and product of this historical activity. For non-equilibrium organizations, the system of order produces itself as the precondition for its own supersession. It thus produces itself as the precondition for emergent novelty. Whereas the equilibrium activity constitutes a sameness and features itself as the activity of monologue, the non-equilibrium activity constitutes an unstable sameness that necessarily gives rise to a difference, a qualitatively transformed mode of orderly process. Again, this orderly process is itself a simultaneous production of order and disorder. Indeed, all orderly process, is in our view, order produced and, in turn, producing.

Thus, for Prigogine, the production of qualitatively new modes of organization (read dynamically) involves the qualitative transformation of the very principles by which organization is itself produced and producing. On his reading of the laws of thermodynamics, the meaning of the Second Law cannot be reduced merely to the relentless consumption or increasing depletion of a static, finite or eternally fixed object--e.g., a closed system of energy. For Prigogine the production of entropy is not, as Rifkin would have it, merely

disguised energy consumption or resource-depletion. Rather, the production of entropy, in and by systems already far from equilibrium, is itself the production of preconditions for a new mode of developing organization. Crucially, the production of entropy is itself a moment in a long-run process of producing new modes of systemic order.

The ultimate meaning of entropy as we read Prigogine then, is not the terminal end to growth (indeed, to any further order as such) of the state of "thermodynamic equilibrium." But, strikingly, producing entropy is itself a precondition of the possibility of ongoing growth. Growth of this sort, however, is not linear mode of growth. It is not a version of growth based upon the infinite extension of the selfsame principles that have produced it all along, (or, for the specific energy system, in the first place). Rather, the production of order and growth through the production of entropy produces qualitatively new kinds of growth, new kind of order, and new principles of producing to boot. In Prigogine's reading of the Second Law, then, producing entropy is undisguised as producing a qualitatively new way of producing--i.e., of producing new modes of growth and order. In sum, producing entropy becomes an historical moment of producing negentropically: that is, producing qualitatively new modes of order at increasing levels of (qualitatively new) complexity, information, and energization.

The question of the relationship of theoretical physics and sociological theory, and of the applicability of the findings regarding thermodynamic behavior in energy-systems to social behavior in social systems is complex. It is noteworthy given the cultural schism that dichotomizes natural from social sciences to find theoretical

convergences between physics and sociological analysis emerge in recent times as a shared concern with the nature and processes of systemic change and development. Correspondingly, our intention here is to read Prigogine's theoretical notion of developmental order into the realm of sociological discourse and, by way of this intervention to explore its implications for a reconstitution of social organization and development as a meaningful category for sociological theory and analysis.

On this score, Prigogine hints strongly at the potential applicability of his theorizing "beyond crystals," closed systems, to encompass the developmental dynamics of such non-equilibrium modes of social organization as, for example, "towns."[72] Again, with the "introduction" of "history" into the development of energy-systems through successive bifurcations, Prigogine indicates the emergence of new material structures that incorporate time in its "full meaning,"[73] combining irreversibility and multi-dimensionality.

Introducing the "historical element" into the objects for the theorizing activity of natural science, Prigogine cites "history"--in some form--as a possible ground for future reconciliations of the natural and social sciences:

> In this way we introduce in physics and chemistry a historical element, which until now seemed to be reserved only for sciences dealing with biological, social, and cultural phenomena.[74]

That is, the potential for overcoming the traditional theoretical dualism of history and nature could exist here in embryo and prefigure a possible reconciliation of natural and social science on new theoretical and practical grounds. Prigogine ends his Nobel speech

with a formulation that prefigures such a re-integration, also within the natural sciences, on the ground of a similarly reconstituted notion of historical time:

> I believe that this diversification of the concept of time permits a better integration of theoretical physics and chemistry with disciplines dealing with other aspects of nature.[75]

Conversely, Prigogine's notion of unifiable domains of natural science which are already and integrally historical (historical time not necessarily being of the same sort within each) is echoed in a parallel statement about the social sciences by Anthony Giddens:

> As a minimal claim it can be said that what history is, or should be, cannot be analysed in separation from what the social sciences are, or should be. However, I should want to go much further than this. <u>There simply are no logical or even methodological distinctions between the social sciences and history--appropriately conceived.</u>[76]

This introduction of historical, qualitative, and possibly negentropic development into a domain of discourse that has previously excluded them constitutes a significant intervention indeed. Nevertheless, it is precisely at the point of its most breathtaking theoretical possibility--its becoming a possible ground for the ongoing convergence of the natural and social sciences--that we read a significant silence.

Prigogine's animated reading of matter as historical development enables a reconceptualization of the seemingly impenetrable boundaries between the natural and social sciences and history as themselves an emergent "threshold"--a "crossover point"--presaging a qualitative change in this otherwise dualistic mode of theorizing. Nonetheless, the notion of history that is, on the one hand, so

theoretically suggestive is, on the other hand, highly formalistic. That is, left without further development, this notion of history is itself unhistorical. It is lacking in content and historical-specificity. While it is possible, in Prigogine's reading, to read matter in terms of qualitative historical development, and to read the boundary between and within the natural and social sciences as a prelude to qualitative systemic transformation, it is incumbent upon an animated reading of this situation to "do" two things. First, it notices the formalism of this suggestive possibility. And second, it is to read this formal lacuna as a silence that invites further development. That is, we need to read Prigogine's silence so as to develop it qualitatively, in concrete, historically specific ways.

To perform any reading is, as we have noted, to embody an intention. An emancipatory animated reading of Prigogine's silence might just "settle for" the possible emancipatory resonances of his recovery of "qualitative development" for scientific discourse. To do this would be, thereby, to fall into an emancipatory formalism. Alternatively, an emancipatory animated reading of these texts which reads in terms of an historically specific interest, intention, or problem, could avoid formalism and develop these silences in ways that produce and provide new historical content and specificity. Consequently, any non-formalistic, emancipatory reading of Prigogine's statements and silences that intends their deployment intervention within the discursive domain of social history and science must further develop these texts in historically specific ways. One recent, striking example of such a reading is performed by Keith Tribe's reading of economic discourse about the Industrial Revolution.

We now turn briefly toward a "slice" of historical specificity by reading selected texts from Tribe's Land, Labor, and Economic Discourse (1978). It provides an example of the reconstruction of our theoretical self-understanding enabled by Prigogine's conception of organization, in its revisionist historical approach to an understanding of the "Industrial Revolution."

As an object for theorizing, the Industrial Revolution has been represented as a change from pre-industrial production whereby "the primary change that is usually remarked on is the organisation of factory production based upon machine processes using steampower sources."[77] In this prevailing reading of the Industrial Revolution, the critical dynamic that differentiates it from previous stages of social life are those changes in production technique in which the tangible presence of new machines and sources of energy are identified as the representatives of the new order.[78] In Keith Tribe's view, however, such a reading is one-sided and reductionistic insofar as it reduces the Industrial Revolution to an immediate, material tangibility whereby something "economic" is considered "really real" vis-a-vis what is "non-economic." Moreover, the economic is most truly represented by its most tangible representation, machinery and "hard" energy resources. For Tribe, this one-sidedness is a "technicism."[79] As such it overlooks and denies any reading that is consonant with the view of development advanced so far: namely, that it is not machinery or techniques as such which constitute the qualitative newness of the new development, but the emergence of new modes of organization for the production process.

Moreover, as the following citation displays, such organizational emergence embodies historically-specific intentions:

> It is not so much changes in technique but changes in organisation that make the crucial difference. Machinery is not an index of modernity but rather is introduced to increase the control of the capitalist over the pace and flow of work. Some advanced capitalist enterprises could not in any case mechanize their basic processes, but this did not mean that they were thereby handicapped.[80]

As an example, Tribe cites the famed Wedgwood pottery works at Etruria:

> For example, Wedgwood designed his pottery works at Etruria not around some set of machinery (which could not in any case be used in the pottery industry) but rather around a spatial flow of production: materials offloaded from the canal travelled through the factory from process to process in a semi-circle until they arrived back at the canal ready for shipment.[81]

Now it is true that Tribe's reading is vulnerable to criticism on the grounds of its loaded use of a nonmechanizable industry to exemplify the anti-mechanization, anti-technicist reading. Yet it is Tribe's strategy to make the same case for the exemplary industry of the technicist account of the Industrial Revolution, the textile industry.

Citing S.D. Chapman's work on typologies of factory development, Tribe offers the following argument for his reading:

> Chapman...in a survey of the organisation of eighteenth century textile factories, has also concluded that the principal feature of the factory was the inauguration of flow production, which might or might not utilise new machinery for its execution.[82]

Thus, in Tribe's reading, new machinery and production techniques are not in themselves necessary, let alone sufficient, causes of the development known as the Industrial Revolution. Instead, he reconceptualizes the significance of the Industrial Revolution in the following, "lower-case" account:

> The conception of the industrial revolution as a period of rapid technical advance requiring substantial inputs of money-capital is being displaced from its heroic pose and is being rewritten as a period of concentration

> and organisation of second- and third-hand equipment set to work in disused buildings and in fact requiring somewhat less disposable capital than preceding forms of production in which the materials, stock of the manufacturer, proceeding slowly through a dispersed and disorganised production process, represented a large portion of his assets. If there is such an occurrence that can be called an 'industrial revolution,' then it is one characterised by a series of reorganizations of the production process, events whose significance was not always apparent to their contemporaries, and which have only recently become clearer to historians.[83]

By reconstituting the Industrial Revolution in terms of a reading that defines "it" as a qualitative reorganization of the production process, Tribe is about to shift the explanatory ground away from an account of historical development rendered possible only by spontaneous discovery of new techniques and machines and hence, technological determinism.

This shift is precisely opposite to that reading of history which attempts to appropriate historical process for the once dominant structural-functionalist model in mainstream sociology. To exemplify this reading, a summarizing quotation from Neal J. Smelser's work will suffice:

> In bringing the model of structural differentiation to the Industrial Revolution, I proceeded by attempting to ascertain the degree to which the general relations of the model were replicated in many institutional contexts... To make my application manageable, I chose the cotton textile industry, the leader in the British Industrial Revolution. On the industrial side, I analyzed the organizational changes in domestic and factory industry arising from the introduction of the various inventions--the jenny, the water-frame, the mule, the steam engine, and the power loom.[84]

Whereas Tribe focuses on the spatial and temporal reorganization of the production process as the primary characteristic of the Industrial Revolution in order to supplant the "technicist" reading, Smelser produces just such a reading by focusing on determinism by technology

as the primary cause of the Industrial Revolution in order for the structural-functionalist appropriation of history to prevail.

The immediate purpose served here by contrasting Tribe's reading with Smelser's is to illustrate the kind of difference made for sociological analysis by the application of the spatio-temporal conception of organization thus far advanced here. To focus upon material-technological determinants of organizational processes is to indulge theoretically in what Raymond Williams calls a "technological predestination" whereby technology becomes

> ...either a self-acting force which creates new ways of life, or it is a self-acting force which provides materials for new ways of life.[85]

The vitalization of technology in this way as a "self-acting force" is, in William's estimation, currently hegemonic as an explanation that "accounts" for social development. As Raymond Williams argues, "These positions are so deeply established in modern social thought, that it is very difficult to think beyond them."[86] By focusing on the Industrial Revolution in terms of an historical mode of the patterned reorganization of production, however, Tribe is able to restore a dimension to the notion of order which is masked--if not suppressed--by the "technicist" account.

One repressed dimension of organization which is restored when it is conceived of as the purposive production of order is <u>intention</u>. Thus, the "reorganizations of the productive process" that constitute Tribe's version of the "Industrial Revolution" is, in part, the embodiment (materialization) of a specificable historical intention:

> The shift from manufacture...to factory production, in which the pace and organisation of production shifts

> into the control of the capitalist, is the central feature of the industrial economy at the end of the eighteenth century.[87]

The factory, then, can be read as not merely an additive collection of objects merely there: as the self-evident bringing together of new machines and new techniques. Instead, Tribe reads the factory as an historically specific reorganization of space and time as a mode of production which embodies an intention--that of the class domination of the process of production.

The factory as a spatio-temporal reorganization of production both expresses and implements (institutionalizes) a mode of organization which <u>is</u> an intention. For Tribe, the introduction of machinery is both a subsequent and secondary development to the emergence of factory processes. Its function is to enable the capitalist better to implement an intention, to consolidate further his control over the organized space-time nexus which produces an historically-specific social order and type of wealth. To quote Tribe:

> Machinery is not an index of modernity but rather is introduced to increase the control of the capitalist over the pace and flow of work.[88]

The fact of that control and, indeed, its intention to dominate, are already embodied in and as the changes in the organization of production which enable a different reading of The Industrial Revolution. For Tribe, it is the spatio-temporal embodiment, the organized intention, that would "make the crucial difference."[89]

For our purposes, moreover, an intention must be considered an integral constitutive dimension of that "work"[90] (to recall Commoner's term) which <u>is</u> the production of order. In this way, organization both makes intention possible as a productive force. At the same time,

organization--as the embodiment of intention--is thinkable as productive activity. Simply put, it incorporates, expresses, indeed is human agency.

In both Tribe and Prigogine's reading, organization is always produced and producing spatio-temporally. This adverbial usage of space and time is crucial in these animated accounts because they become thereby specificable moments of a broader ongoing mode of development rather than its empty, static containers, its invariant conditions, its absolute outer limits. Space and time are not given outside and apart from developmental processes, as if they were the external forms that would contain historical development as their material content. Nor, on these readings, is organization a form whose necessary content is matter awaiting--as in Aristotle's account--the superimposition of form. Instead, all organization is both produced and producing spatio-temporally. It is itself a developmental process of matter/energy "engaged" in ongoing qualitative transformation. Space and time are historically-specific modes of the production and producing of and, in turn, by organization. They are not prior to the developmental process which is organization historically produced and producing. Rather, they are either, on a positivist, concrete reading, reifiable, formal abstractions from that material process; or, on a non-formalist reading, they are concrete historical specifications of that material development.

Space and time, then, on this reading are themselves historically-produced. And, as specifications of an organizational mode, are themselves producing: that is, producing as active forces (or agencies) in the ongoing material (not opposed to formal)

development of that historically-specific organizational mode. Again, space and time, as specific moments of an overall, ongoing historical development of matter, are immanent to organizational development--rather than extrinsic to it. In Caudwell's phrase, they are thereby "secreted."[91] As specifications of particular organizational domains, they are themselves historically specific relationships and processes which undergo as well as generate qualitative transformation along with and as moments of the overall development of their domains.

For Giddens, the in-statement of space-time relations at the center of social theory--as opposed to its silently assumed and, thus, hitherto hegemonic, unproblematic, givenness--is long overdue. This once in-stated, would presage a qualitative transformation of theorizing. Indeed, the "history" that is already intrinsic to social scientific theorizing and whose recognition and self-reflexive integration would radically transfigure theorizing is, for Giddens, "appropriately understood" as spatio-temporal development. Here, Giddens indicts prevailing social scientific theory and practice:

> I want to lodge a further claim, which is that most forms of social theory have failed to take seriously enough not only the temporality of social conduct but also its spatial attributes. At first sight, nothing seems more banal and uninstructive than to assert that social activity occurs in time and in space. But neither time nor space have been incorporated into the centre of social theory; rather, they are ordinarily treated more as 'environments' in which social conduct is enacted.[92]

To "see" social conduct within unhistorical, non-developmental space and time, rather than seeing space and time within social development, is already to accept a notion of social development which is outwardly delimited and, thus, inwardly constrained, by whatever is

invoked in the name of space and time. Social development must, then, be grasped from without, as object, given-in-itself, whose correct, discernible, real nature, is thereby "given" to the privileged vantage-point of an outside observer. The extrinsic relationship of space and time to social development, then, is a mainstay of the positivist hegemony which would model "scientific inquiry" on the basis of such an implicit subject-object dichotomy. To "see" space and time from within the process of social development is to instate the possibility of multiple modes of qualitatively different processes of development which produce space and time as so many expressions of their different, respective historical specificities.

One characterization of social analysis that would embrace space-time relations at its "center" (so to speak) is Anthony Giddens' version in Central Problems in Social Theory:

> The extension of social life in time and space has already been mentioned, as an overall characteristic of social development: time-scales of social activity are altered by the transmutation of communication over distance... The interconnection of time and space can be explored in terms of the participation of social actors in cycles of social activity as well as at the level of the transformation of society itself. Time-geography deals with the time-space 'choreography' of individuals' existence over given time periods: the day, week, year or the whole life-time. A person's daily routine of activities, for example, can be charted as a path through time-space. Thus the social transition involved in leaving home to go to work is also a movement through space. Social interaction from this point of view can be understood as the 'coupling' of paths in social encounters, or what Hagerstrand calls 'activity bundles.' . . . The interest of this conception of social activity as 'a weaving dance through time-space' does not depend on Hagerstrand's particular formulation of it, to which various objections can be made; its general importance is that it emphasises the co-ordination of movement in time and space in social activity, as the coupling of a multiplicity of paths or trajectories. [93]

The co-ordination in space-time by which the trajectories of Giddens' and Tribe's reading of social development are "coupled" is not merely formal. Their "coupling" is a shared interest, a problematic, which in its weakest formulation (by Giddens) is social change:

> The same conception can be applied to much broader problems of social change . . . change in society can also be understood in terms of time-space paths. Social development characteristically involves spatial as well as temporal movement . . .[94]

The crossroads of their common analytical trajectories, however, is historically specificable. The locus and object of their readings of social development and interests in social change is globalizing capitalism. Giddens expresses this as an historical specification of the space-time centered social analysis he would perform. Thus, to remember the foregoing text:

> Social development characteristically involves spatial as well as temporal movement: the most significant form of which, in our times, concerns the world-wide expansion of Western industrial capitalism.[95]

In Tribe's reading of capitalist spatialization and temporalization, the emancipatory intention is more clearly pronounced: namely, through his reading of space-time in terms of its being produced to expand and consolidate class-domination. That is, capitalist spatio-temporal development becomes, for Tribe, a process of materialization, seen in terms of an historically-specific mode of organization--i.e., the factory which embodies, is produced by and produces an historical intention, namely, capitalist class hegemony.

To recapitulate, whereas Prigogine enables us to read the spatio-temporal processes of matter/energy in terms of historical development in a formal sense, it is through Tribe that we note the

need and possibility of a content-based reading of that formal silence. Thus, Prigogine's "history" becomes a silence which is suggestive, an invitation for qualitative development. The further development which Tribe accomplishes is the reading of "historical development." This is accomplished first in terms of historically-specific patterns of spatio-temporal social development--the qualitative transformation of producing order through/as the Industrial Revolution. And, second, it is constituted in terms of a qualitative patterning of matter/energy as an historically specifiable intention--class-domination. Tribe's non-technist, anti-positivist, and non-vulgar materialist reading of production is, nonetheless, still materialist and profoundly concerned with production. The "content" of Tribe's reading of history as a material process of producing spatio-temporal order is simply not reducible to the production of tangible, disposable objects or "hard" tools of production. Avoiding both idealist and vulgar materialist accounts of producing, Tribe incorporates and moves beyond Prigogine's suggestive meta-theory of qualitative, historical, (social and natural) development, to a version of such development whose "content" is historically-specific in a way that makes human intention a crucial factor.

The historical time-space of the reading of texts performed by this thesis is shared with and by Tribe and Giddens. The historically-specific activity of this strategic emancipatory, animated reading notices, presupposes, and embodies: first, both a need and intention to instate capitalist spatio-temporal development at the center of its social theorizing; and, from its emancipatory standpoint,

a need and intention to posit and explore the possibility of a mode of social development not dominated by class-hegemony as its pervasive intention. As the chapter headings indicate, the form of this reading is emancipatory animated reading, its content is negentropy.

For the reader to accept the last statement at its face value, to let it stand just as it is, is to be governed by but not notice its silence. It is to read it in a concrete, positivistic way. An animated reading, as we have noted, is not governable by the cultural hegemony of dualism. It develops rather than respects or submits to the silences which dualism customarily imposes upon and within discourse. The dualism at hand, the form-content dichotomy, has been a "time-honored" convention for representing reality, itself anchored in the Western philosophical tradition in Aristotle's doctrine of causes (material, formal, efficient, final), and in the dualizing structure of Indo-European subject-verb-object-languages.

Thus, the cultural hegemony of such dualisms would enable the unproblematic, two-fold presentation of the method of this thesis to follow suit in the dualistic mode of form-content: animated reading simply being the formal strategy, negentropy being its specific content. However, to present the strategy of this reading in "time-honored" form-content terms and let it stand at that would be to endorse the apparent naturalness, givenness, and non-problematic nature of dualistic conventions and the accepting silence they engender. Our method, by contrast, is self-reflexive. In its self-understanding, it "sees" any re-presentation of itself in dualistic terms as a fundamental betrayal of its governing intention: namely, to qualitatively develop texts. Its cardinal tenet is not to abide by

their silences and surface conventions, especially--as we shall note--those constituted by dualisms. As a developmental method, moreover, our strategic reading of texts is inimical to dualism which actively fragments processive development, dichotomizes ongoing transformation, reduces potential multiplicity to a two-fold simplicity, and, thereby, constitutes an outer boundary to any theorizing, speaking, or acting, that would move outside or beyond its bipolar constraints.

The cultural hegemony of dualistic modes of discourse and practice in its apparent naturalness is characterized by physicist David Bohm in the brilliant Wholeness and the Implicate Order:

> . . . this sort of ability of man to separate himself from his environment and to divide and apportion things, ultimately led to a wide range of negative and destructive results, because man lost awareness of what he was doing and thus extended the process of division beyond the limits within which it works properly. In essence, the process of division is a way of thinking about things that is convenient and useful mainly in the domain of practical, technical and functional activities. . . . However when this mode of thought is applied more broadly to man's notion of himself and the whole world in which he lives (i.e., to his self-world view), then man ceases to regard the resulting divisions as merely useful or convenient and begins to see and experience himself and his world as actually constituted of separately existent fragments. Being guided by a fragmentary self-world view, man then acts in such a way as to try to break himself and the world up, so that all seems to correspond to his way of thinking. [96]

Hence, the hypostatization of convenience leads to a vicious circularity which merely discovers as natural just what it itself has produced:

> Man thus obtains an apparent proof of the correctness of his fragmentary self-world view though, of course, he overlooks the fact that it is he himself, acting according to his mode of thought, who has brought about the fragmentation that now seems to have an autonomous existence independent of his will and of his desire. [97]

The "successful" consolidation of a dualistic world-view (to use Feyerabend's "success" notion)[98] bespeaks the tentative fact of its cultural hegemony, but not the de facto ultimacy of its truth-claim. Indeed, our method is strategically to violate that appearance of ultimacy, of eternality, as but a surface convention of positivist texts whose silence invites further discourse and development. That is, our method is processive and developmental and, thereby, subversive of dualistic structures whose apparent givenness strategically aborts further discourse.

Again, Bohm characterizes the processive nature of this method in a way that reads the originally--in his view--heuristic dualistic conventions as so many abstractions from a more primary process of development:

> I regard the essence of the notion of process as given by the statement: Not only is everything changing, but all is flux. That is to say, what is the process of becoming itself, while all objects, events, entities, conditions, structures, etc., are forms that can be abstracted from this process.[99]

The positivist reading of these abstractions, however, takes them as autonomous, self-subsistent entities whose separate existence is primary to the process which, by addition, they comprise. Bohm's rejoinder to the positivist reading remembers the primacy of the process to the abstractions, while granting to the abstractions the relative autonomy of a transitory, tentative subsustence as so many moments of spatio-temporal succession:

> The best image of process is perhaps that of the flowing stream, whose substance is never the same. On this stream, one may see an ever-changing pattern of vortices, ripples, waves, splashes, etc., which evidently have no independent existence as such. Rather, they are abstracted from the flowing movement,

> arising and vanishing in the total process of the flow. Such transitory subsistence as may be possessed by these abstracted forms implies only a relative independence or autonomy of behaviour, rather than absolutely independent existence as ultimate substances.[100]

Indeed, the fragmentation of process has long been the reigning paradigm in theoretical physics (albeit in many variations); but, in Bohm's view, it similarly needs to be read anew as secondary to a deeper, underlying process:

> Of course, modern physics states that actual streams (e.g., of water) are composed of atoms, which in turn are composed of 'elementary particles,' such as electrons, protons, neutrons, etc. For a long time it was thought that these latter are the 'ultimate substance' of the whole of reality, and that all flowing movements, such as those of streams, must reduce to forms abstracted from the motions through space of collections of interacting particles. However, it has been found that even 'the elementary particles' can be created, annihilated, and transformed, and this indicates that not even these can be ultimate substances but, rather, that they too are relatively constant forms, abstracted from some deeper level of movement.[101]

This subordination of division to unitary (though not necessarily homogeneous) process is reiterated as a critique of physical theorizing of the mechanistic/positivistic variety:

> . . . the idea of a separately and independently existent particle is seen to be, at best, an abstraction furnishing a valid approximation only in a certain limited domain. Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its 'particles', including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single, undivided whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status.[102]

The practice of dualism is, on this reading of process, the division of unitary processes constituting dynamic wholes into separate spheres, spheres whose substantive separation is primary to any subsequent kind of (usually external) relationship. The practice of

animated reading, by contrast, involves the re-instatement of process, wherever static division appears primary. And, critically, it is the resumption of development by exploring the procedural grounds, that "deeper level of movement " of which reified, separate parts are but momentary--albeit relatively stable--appearances.

In the domain of textual reading and analysis, the apparent substantiality of a content separable from form, has long been the hegemonic assumption. The animated "violation of surfaces," however, undermines the apparent givenness of the form-content duality and penetrates the dualized appearances of separation. Its strategic intention is to uncover, produce, and explore the grounds whereby the dualism is made possible: that is, the "deeper level of movement" of which the dichotomous hemispheres are moments.

For example, an emancipatory animated reading strategy can be characterized in these terms as the Marxist, Frederick Jameson attests:

> The overall movement of a Marxist criticism is, of course, just such a passage from a surface to an underlying reality, from an apparently autononomous object to a vaster ground of which this object proves a part or articulation.[103]

Jameson's "vaster ground," like Bohm's "deeper level of movement," is the processural time-space that makes the whole text and its reading possible in the first place. The reading that dualizes the text divides it into a reified form and content whose separation and respective apparent autonomy constitute the surface that conceals its grounds. For Jameson, the contrasting notion of form and content grasps them as internally related modalities of a more primary process, the reading of the text.

Form and content in the dualistic mode are, in Jameson's

view, reified abstractions from the process of reading-and-writing--that is, producing the-never-to-be-finished-text. Instead, on this account, form and content are integral aspects of one another's very possibility, even as temporary manifestations of a more primary underlying process. Jameson characterizes his version of form-content with that of the culturally hegemonic dualized account as follows:

> . . . the dialectical notion of the relationship between form and content, which as we noted above is something quite different from the older Aristotelian notion of form and matter. For the essential characteristic of literary raw material or latent content is precisely that it never really is initially formless, never...initially contingent, but is rather already meaningful from the outset . . . [104]

Again, using Jameson's archetypal formulation, the form-content relationship is an internal, dialectical interrelatedness, an enwreathment or mutual enfolding of modes:

> This is, I believe, the "materialistic kernel" of Schiller's remark, which serves as the epigraph of this section: "As far as I am concerned, I am convinced that beauty is only the form of a form, and that what is ordinarily called its content must necessarily be thought of as content already formed." Indeed, the first methodological consequence of the dialectical notion of form and content is that, depending on the progress of the interpretive work and the stage at which it has arrived, either term can be translated into the other: thus every layer of content proves, as Schiller implies, to be but a form in disguise. But we have seen above that it is just as true to say that form is really only the projection of content and of the inner logic of the latter. In fact, this essential distinction is useful only on condition that it ultimately reabolish itself in the ambiguity of the artistic substance itself, which can be seen alternately as either all content or all form. [105]

This already internal relation of form and content is similar to the kind of relationship of mutual enfoldment which characterizes the form-content of the method of this thesis. Indeed, form and

content are not posited here as separate denizens of mutually exclusive domains. Instead, they constitute a relationship akin to the new, non-dualistic mode of order and presentation which Bohm characterizes as "implicate order." To quote:

> We proposed that a new notion of order is involved here, which we called the implicate order (from a Latin root meaning 'to enfold' or 'to fold inward'). In terms of the implicate order one may say that everything is enfolded into everything. This contrasts with the explicate order now dominant in physics in which things are unfolded in the sense that each thing lies only in its own particular region of space (and time) and outside the regions belonging to other things. [106]

Clearly, Bohm's notion is consonant with the notion of "overlapping domains" [107] by which Caudwell and Prigogine read what is real. The point, however, is to notice that for Bohm, implicate order is precisely the "deeper level of movement" that is the primary process out of which apparent self-subsistent entities are generated, to whose underlying primacy they momentarily refer, and from which they are never utterly separate or ontologically different.

Implicate order is the form-content that is the primary process. Form does not stand outside and above primary process as if the latter were utterly alien material or content in search of or awaiting formalization. Similarly, ours and Jameson's notion of form-content is what for him--and for this thesis--is that "primary process" of which internally-related form and content are its modalities. Again, as the following text suggests, form and content are not different or separable from that primary process, nor are they merely homogeneous with it. To quote the full text from Marxism and Form:

> For the essential characteristic of literary raw material or latent content is precisely that it never really is formless, never . . . initially contingent, but is rather already meaningful from the outset, being neither more nor less than the very components of our concrete social life itself: words, thoughts, objects, desires, people, places, activities.[108]

For Jameson, then, literary "raw material" is the form-content that _is_ (like Bohm's implicate order) the primary process. Neither form nor content are more or less than as--"our concrete social life," the primary process, itself. They are but different, albeit inseparable, modalities of that process.

The texts constituted by/as these form-contents are always texts in an adverbial sense: actively being written-and-as-being read in a certain way--concretely, animatedly, _et.al_. That is, as texts, they are always in a process of being produced and, in turn, producing a difference. Furthermore, construed as so many form-contents, texts are no more or less moments of primary social processes than is their reading and writing. Indeed, they are not separable from the activity of their being read and written. Instead, in our version, a text _is_ its reading-and-writing: and so, grasped as activity, a text _is_ primary social process.

As Jameson puts this:

> What we have called interpretation is therefore a misnomer: content does not need to be treated or interpreted, precisely because it is essentially and immediately meaningful in itself, meaningful as gestures in situation are meaningful, or sentences in a conversation. Content is already concrete, in that it is essentially a social and historical experience.[109]

Indeed, the text _is_ its reading and writing, and this text--in all dimensions of its historically-specific, developmental activity--_is_ primary process. The form-content that it is, is, similarly, "primary

process." Its apparent form--emancipatory animated reading--as well as its apparent content--negentropic development--are twin modes of primary process: that is, of a "deeper level of movement" (in Bohm's phrase), or of what Jameson calls "our concrete social life itself." Again, the reading-and-writing that <u>is</u> any text--this thesis as written, the texts it strategically reads--is no more nor less than so many forms of "primary process." On this account, reading-and-writing texts are so many activities and moments of "primary process," and must be apprehended from within and as that process.

In contrast to positivism, there is no absolutely external, privileged vantage point which could ground a reading or stage a writing that was a perfect reflection of any primary process. There is no "outside" to the primary process, outside of which a positivist account would appear to stand on its own. Thus, reading from "within" (so to speak), Jameson refers to a critical reading as an "interpretation out of the social substance."[110] The readings and writings of texts that <u>are</u> the primary process exist, then, in the mode of being constitutive moments within and, thereby, of that primary process.

What characterizes any emancipatory reading and writing or texts is the self-conscious avowal of its transformative intention. Its impact "registers" precisely as a moment of that process of reciprocal constitution. Thus, an animated reading-and-writing of texts is an activity that transforms, not merely reflects, and so produces a difference. It <u>is</u> production. For example, Jameson defines the "work of art" in terms of its transformative impact in and on "our concrete social life":

> The work of art does not confer meaning on these elements, but rather transforms their initial meaning into some new and heightened construction of meaning.[111]

In our view, to develop Jameson's notion, transformative process is the "work" of art,--namely, its producing a difference. Thus, the "work of art" (the product produced and producing), and the "work" of art (producing a difference) are both moments of "primary process."

The "work" of this thesis is also its producing and being produced. Its content-form, negentropy and emancipated animated reading are internally-related moments of a concrete, historically-specific, primary process of development. As internally-related, the content-and-form or method by which this thesis performs its analysis are--to use Bohm's metaphor--mutually enfolded. Stated otherwise, this relationship of form and content follows Jameson's characterization:

> . . . the first methodological consequence of the dialectical notion of form and content is that, depending on the progress of the interpretative work and the stage at which it has arrived, either term can be translated into the other . . . Thus every layer of content proves . . . to be but a form in disguise. But . . . it is just as true to say that form is really only the projection of content and the inner logic of the latter.[112]

To come to the point here, in terms of the content-form of our method, animated reading is negentropic development! Animated reading is at once a concrete kind of negentropic activity, a display and demonstration of the qualitative development of texts. Again, animated reading does the following: it produces meanings and discourse where there was silence; develops qualitatively new meanings by listening to formerly suppressed resonances; and generates new possibilities for theoretical and practical relationships which were formerly not

conceivable because of their inconsistency with what appears to be given, eternal, and invariant. Thus, as an active producing of qualitative transformation in the texts it takes for its objects, animated reading goes beyond any mere mirroring of an alleged textual object-in-itself. It neither reflects nor depletes some finite set of meanings in a text seen just as it is. Rather, it develops them often in unforeseen qualitative dimensions.

Correspondingly, negentropic development is that ongoing production of patterned matter/energy in qualitatively different organizational modes. It is the materialization of qualitative development. Animated reading is at once historically specific and enacts the inner logic of negentropic development. It is its projection in the world, an actual display of negentropic activity. In short, as method and mode of activity, they are mutually translatable, one into the next. As form and content, they are internally related and, perhaps, are better expressed as the nexus "form-content."

Beyond this, moreover, we have noted that dualisms are but divided wholes whose abstracted fragments are moments that display and signify a deeper level of movement, an underlying continuity of process. In a formulation that complements Jameson's on this, Bohm calls this a "higher dimensional ground."[113] The form and content of our method likewise presuppose and signify such a ground--albeit one that is explicitly and thoroughly historical. (Thus, we read Bohm's conception of totality as a fully historical, ongoing qualitative development of modes of producing organization.) Again, Bohm expresses the existential possibility of such a negentropic ground in formalistic terms within the discursive domain of theoretical physics:

> In this higher-dimensional ground the implicate order prevails. Thus, within this ground, what is is movement which is represented in thought as the co-presence of many phases of the implicate order. As happens with the simpler forms of the implicate order considered earlier, the state of movement at one moment unfolds through a more inward force of necessity inherent in this overall state of affairs to give rise to a new state of affairs, in the next moment. The projections of the higher-dimensional ground, as mind and body, will be in the later moment both be different from what they were in the earlier moment, though these differences will of course be related.[114]

The ongoing production of qualitatively different higher dimensional grounds is Bohm's notion of negentropic development in the domain of physical theory.

Correspondingly, our notion of negentropic development is the ongoing production of qualitatively different modes of socially produced and producing historically-specific social organizations. This possibility translates specifically into the historical possibility of producing a post-scarcity mode of producing social organization.

Animated reading and negentropic development as the activity and content of our strategic intention presuppose and enact an underlying process: namely, the possible emergence of a "higher dimensional ground" as a productive process that creates negentropically and multidimensionally. Read as a social and historical process, it embodies the ongoing qualitative transformation of its own principles of social development.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

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91. Caudwell, The Crisis in Physics.

92. Giddens, p. 202.

93. Ibid., p. 205.

94. Ibid., p. 206.

95. Ibid.

96. Bohm, p. 2.

97. Ibid., p. 3.

98. Feyerabend, p. 44.

99. Bohm, p. 48.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., p. 49.

102. Ibid., p. 174.

103. Jameson, p. 402.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., p. 403.

106. Bohm, p. 177.

107. Caudwell, The Crisis in Physics.

108. Jameson, p. 403.

109. Ibid., p. 404.

110. Ibid., p. 402.

111. Ibid., p. 403.

112. Ibid.

113. Bohm, p. 209.

114. Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

OBJECT-IN-BIRTH:
A CATEGORY WITH ABUNDANT INTENTION

Our project is to re-member the problematic of scarcity and abundance for social thought. Re-membering is a present activity which embodies an historically-specific intention which is prospective. As present strategic activity, then, it conserves past development with a view towards producing a different future in a way that is qualitatively different from how the present is produced. In the previous chapter, we noted the preservation of past development as a prospective dimension of negentropic development in Prigogine's non-equilibrium systems. For Prigogine, these systems generated dissipative structures in and as their ongoing mode of qualitative re-organization.

What is needed beyond the specification of structures for change, however, is a category for theorizing whereby negentropic development as a total qualitative transformation of the principles of systemic development--whether social or natural--can be articulated. Moreover, the very production of such a category embodies an

intention to make a future different from what any prevailing present mode of systemic development makes possible. What is needed for theorizing, then, is a category produced both as an articulation of negentropic human development as well as an intention to engender that human development.

In this chapter, we derive and explore the characteristics of such a category. We derive it from our reading of Prigogine's account of non-equilibrium energy systems and sociologist Henri Lefebvre's visionary glimpse of late capitalism as--and we adopt his appellation--"an object-in-birth."[1] We see this, its theoretical formulation as a suggestive, first step towards articulating an epistemology of abundance.

The category, object-in-birth, is neither a purely formal abstraction from Prigogine and Lefebvre, nor sheer intellectual invention, nor is it to be situated for explication in the so-called history of ideas. Rather, as the chapter will display, we derive and ground the category from and upon needs and intentions that are historically-specific to our own setting and--as we define it--its historical crisis. Thus, our category is historical and concrete, rather than formal and abstract. Given the historical situation we would transform, an object-in-birth is self-consciously produced as a political-epistemological tool of strategic practice.

Like all categories for theorizing, an object-in-birth is formed in the midst of discourse. Furthermore, it is produced in terms of its strategic rivalry with contending intentions and their categories. Specifically, an object-in-birth embodies the emergent possibility of a new, negentropic logic of human development; it is

forged in strategic rivalry with the logic that currently prevails: namely, as we characterize it self-repudiating development.

The prevailing mode of development is self-contradictory. It turns on itself, devouring first its own products and then its own possibility. It is entropic development on the basis of a logic of scarcity specified in and as so many social and economic relations of domination, an ethic of mutual distrust and a psychology of self-hatred, and all making for the prospect of perhaps immediate self-destruction. It is self-repudiating because like Midas, it consumes itself in the very enactment of its prodigious capacity to produce wealth. It thereby starves for its sheer plenty.

It is self-consuming because, in its way of meeting needs, it depletes its own resource base and destroys its own biosphere. Blaming it alternatively on an array of scapegoats--a niggardly nature, existential irony, and collective greed--it ensures its own entropic reiteration in a narrowing, vicious circle of self-consumption. It is self-devouring because its devours income and destroys purchasing power in its ruling imperative to realize profit. It is self-sacrificing because it generates cancer as the price for generating its indispensable electric power. It is self-denying because it destroys its produce rather than risks its marketing at a loss in profit. It is self-hating because it gives priority to the repayment of debt over the continuance and expansion of what credit made possible in the first place. It is self-tormenting because it mercilessly makes a problem out of its surplus rather than an occasion for time freed for human development.

Therefore, we call it a logic of self-repudiating

development. In other words, it is institutionalized psychopathy, wantonly destroying what it creates. It romanticizes its artist/suicides. It relegates people to a lifeboat ethic and grim-reaper triage, defining them as excess while expanding idle productive capacity and witholding available investment resources on grounds of inadequate rates of return. It fails to maximize the preconditions or prospects for a happy childhood. It destroys its surpluses before they destroy its profits. It refuses to produce before it would fulfil needs at a loss. It makes the prospect for planetary survival less than a money-back guarantee. It poses scarcity with a vengeance.

A world on the wane, its cardinal virture has become austerity. Its literary conceit is an Odysseus bound by his own command to the mast so he could know the prospect of fulfillment in the Siren song. But Odysseus refuses its possibility, lest he be dashed on the rocks of his own need. In a popular hymn, an ode to self-repudiative development, life's successive stages become, step-by-step, self-sacrifice:

> I'll learn to work the saxophone
> I play just what I feel
> Dring Scotch Whiskey all night long
> And die behind the wheel.[2]

Whereas human development becomes autogestion, the self-destruction of its own not insubstantial competencies, the categorial expression most adequate for its form of life might be a gradually diminishing, object-in depletion.

Against this prospect, what is needed is a genuine difference, a qualitatively different mode of human development, a new history. To valorize the direct fulfillment of needs, a new logic of development is

required, a strategic theorizing engaged to this end, engaged in a praxis that intends abundance requires a category appropriate to the articulation of that intention. Indeed, the category for such an articulation-intention, given the grounding of our theorizing in our present historical crisis as we read it, is a category that envisions and makes possibile development without repudiation, without domination, without vampirism, that is, an historically specific development that exists without being divided against itself--neither self-devouring nor cannibalistic towards its progeny. Such a category is an object-in-birth.

As we have noted in Chapter Three, Prigogine's reading of the Second Law enables us to reconceptualize object-boundary relationships in terms of what I call "thresholds". Taking for our example Prigogine's nonequilibrium model of organizational development, a "threshold" is graspable as a dynamic boundary which has reached a qualitative state of such instability, so that any further development of a system or object past that point would engender its qualitative transformation--that is, a transformation in the very parameters and constitutive principles of the development and immanent process of organization of that system. Thresholds are dynamic preludes to further irreversible qualitative development of objects through time.[3]

The notion of a boundary that continually becomes a "threshold" enables us to grasp systemic development in terms that are qualitatively different from their positivistic versions. For example, when "boundaries" are constituted in terms of "thresholds", it is no longer possible to render an object, boundary or definition of the course and logic in terms that represent its development as

given--whether it be eternally static, or (as in Parsons and, as we shall see, Hegel) a priori self-equilibrating. This of course presupposes a corresponding epistemological reformulation of the relationship and dynamics of objects and boundaries. Indeed, to render the boundaries of bounded objects in terms of thresholds is to reconceptualize objects as always undergoing development. And, for our purposes, French sociologist Henri Lefebvre's elegant conception of the capitalist mode of production as an "object-in-birth"--an object always-already engaged in a continuous development that ongoingly presages and undergoes qualitative transformation--is a salient example.[4]

An object-in-birth whose boundary is a threshold is readily distinguishable from an object-in-itself whose boundary is a static, invariant structure or absolute outer limit. Indeed, like the dynamic self-equilibrating object too, the object-in-birth is not compatible with static iconography and mirror-image representations of reality. Nevertheless, it is also distinguishable from the partially dynamic, self-equilibrating object which maintains the self-identity and constancy of those constitutive principles whereby it undergoes development.

The object-in-birth, then, is neither static nor one-dimensionally dynamic. Thereby this kind of object avoids categorization in terms of the traditional static dynamic dualism. Like the dynamic, self-equilibrating object it is always already engaged in ongoing development. Unlike it, however, it is always already--to use Prigogine's phrase--"far from equilibrium."[5] Thereby, it continuously develops in or on the verge of qualitatively new

developmental modes. We can now summarize this key contrast; the transformation of self-equilibrating dynamic objects is developmental along a single set of continuous, self-consistent, unchanging principles. By contrast, the self-transformation of objects-in-birth entails principles which are themselves engaged in an ongoing process of their own. And that process, too, involves multidimensional, qualitative transformation.

As with Prigogine's energy-systems, the object-in-birth is a mode of processive order, or order constituted by the process of change or growth. But unlike the objects of structural functionalism, it is neither reducible to the dynamics of boundary-maintenance, nor merely to a further differentiation of the selfsame process of development. The object-in-birth, then, develops in terms of a fully dynamic logic. That logic is bound neither to maintaining the self-consistency of the object, nor to the qualitative sameness of its boundaries or of its principles of development.

In this way, the object-in-birth transcends the dualism of static versus dynamic objects. Unlike both of these objects, the third is not bound to the (Aristotelian) "law" of non-contradiction; it does not remain self-consistent, be it finished product or continuous process. Unlike the logic of the dynamic, self-equilibrating object, that of the object-in-birth allows this object to become qualitatively different from what it has been. More than that, it must become--through its relentless, irreversible development--what it is not yet. Constituted in this way, this category makes abundance articulable, notwithstanding the hegemony of objects for theorizing which express and consolidate the prevailing scarcity.

In contrast to positivistic accounts of objects and processes, space and time for objects-in-birth are not empty, unhistorical containers, given in external relationship to developmental process. Space and time do not pre-exist as necessary preconditions that make development possible. Rather, "they" are themselves developing in terms constituted by, and made possible by that process. That is, different processes of development generate different modes of space and time. On this account, then, space and time are produced qualitatively through the selfsame principles of development that constitute objects-in-birth.

Space does not exist between these objects in a way that separates them. Nor does time exist outside them in a way that measures and fragments the ongoing duration of their developing movement. Neither is time a spatialized container within which the development of such objects occurs. Rather, it is itself constituted by the developmental process as its internal history, the history of the "path-making." Its history, then is the internal process of an object-in-birth's development, grasped from an epistemological standpoint within it. Stated otherwise, a specific space-time is now produced as the developing "path" by which historically-specific objects-in-birth undergo and produce processes of continuous development. Most significantly, here, is that it is the possibility of continuous qualitative differences taking place within the very process of ongoing development that in turn makes possible the articulation of abundance as an internal history of object development.

It is important to grasp that thresholds of objects-in-birth are dynamic processes which are not intelligible in formal, reified

abstraction from the overall process of systemic object-development. Indeed, in our notion, there is nothing ontologically invariant about boundaries as such. Further, they cannot be dichotomized with respect to the objects they bound, and then be rendered dualistically as an ontologically different kind of entity from their objects. Nor can they be grasped dichotomously relative to the "outside environment." They do not constitute absolute barriers of a kind that stands in irremediable opposition to anything deemed outside their objects. Indeed, they <u>are</u> the objects, albeit in a different modality. Tresholds are constitutive moments of an overall process of development which they both constitute and, in turn, are constituted by. They are moments always-already constituting and constituted by larger developmental processes. In sum, they neither exist in themselves in ways absolutely different from the processes which they constitute. Nor are they non-specifiable and without differentiation from the overall development processes by which they are constituted.

As pivotal moments within and of developmental process, thresholds presage qualitative transformation. Thus, they exist in dynamic tension as a prelude to change. They are simultaneously harbingers of further development and in-gatherings that consolidate previous development. For an object-in-birth, moreover, this simultaneous prospective and retrospective dynamic is not reducible to a final or stabilized boundary--a static compromise, intractable contradiction, or prefabricated harmony. It is always-already in process, developing as a relative instability, and always potentially undergoing qualitative change.

Thresholds are "horizons" of forthcoming developments and

"departures" from previous consolidations. They make possible, thereby, the articulation of a post-scarcity possibility. They are so many fertilized points of pregnant tension--both recapitulation and prelude. They are neither merely linear extensions of what has already been actual; nor are they pre-fabricated molds that predetermine what is not-yet-actual. In sum, thresholds are "dynamic densities," in-gathering moments of process that presage qualitative transformation. They are moments through which "the actual" and "the possible" converge as inseparable modes of the same ongoing, historically-specific process of object development. Indeed, the object-in-birth must be grasped as an actuality-possibility.

It is possible to formulate such an account of objects from the foregoing considerations regarding "thresholds" as the boundaries of objects-in-birth. Insofar as a "threshold" is present in a way that combines both prospective and retrospective historical development, it enables us to formulate two categories for analysis which are essential both for reading from the standpoint of the problematic of abundance and, correspondingly, for restoring the possibility of a post-scarcity object for theorizing to the sociological agenda. These two categories are "the actual" and "the possible."

As stated above, threshold conditions are non-stable, pregnant moments, at which retrospective development appears to be sufficently de-stabilized to constitute a condition of "crisis"; while prospective development is sufficently under way as to make visible and/or possible emergent tendencies that are qualitatively different from those of the previous mode of development. The emergence of the threshold condition constitutes a moment that combines a "leaving behind" of what has

been the actual mode of development, with a "coming into view" of new qualitatively different, possibilities for development. It is this combination of retrospective and prospective development that enables us to constitute "the actual and the possible" as a categorial nexus, as a unitary yet bimodal category.

The traditional, positivist dichotomization of "the actual" from "the possible" is a dualistic construction which is formulated in strategic rivalry to the dialectical nexus by which they are internally combined here. To dualize the actual and the possible is to stabilize their external separation and to treat each category statically, as a thing or object-in-itself. To treat "the actual" and "the possible" as reified polarities is to ratify their mutual isolation. To do this is to enact a strategic intention that sunders a given moment, and aborts its emergent or simply prospective developmental possibilities. Alternatively, it is possible to strategically conjoin "the actual and the possible" as moments of the development of a unitary object-in-birth. To treat the actual and the possible as so many moments of an object-in-birth is to treat them as internally-related and inextricably intertwined.

Aborting ongoing qualitative development, then, is one strategic function of dualism as it is deployed epistemologically in scarcity-bound political practices. The dualistic fragmentation of development into prevailing actuality and possibility is compounded and specified in a pervasive series of culturally hegemonic dualims which actively re-construct (i.e., dualize) reality. They do so as so many accounts that divide it against itself, and render it stillborn. They channel its ongoing, open-ended possibilities for qualitative

differences into the repetitive closure of eternal existential paradoxes, intractable mind-body problems, solipsism, other theoretical culs-de-sac.

The apparent effect of dualistic practices on objects is to stabilize them as eternal polarities. Dualism treats each of its poles as static objects-in-themselves given in external relationship, as reciprocally divided and mutually negating entities. Dualism produces eternally opposed bipolarities in a seemingly permanent stasis. The poles might compose a static whole whose internal possibilities do not include either the resolution of the internal contradiction or the qualitative transformation of the whole.

Dualistic practices produce fragmented representations of social reality divided between shopworn polarities such as: fact and fiction, reality and fantasy, real and utopian, objective truth and subjective projection, primary and secondary characteristics, reality and appearance, truth and falsehood, form and content, and so forth. Reality, once represented in such accounts, becomes self-divided by these pre-given dualisms. The outcome of present human initiative, is thereby predetermined. Expectation is minimized. Everyday life is lived as a foregone conclusion without imagination or desire. Explanations for daily occurrences are reduced to the language and pervaded by the moods of these irremediable parameters. By subdividing reality, they preclude its negentropic development from expectation, mood, strategic intention, and analytic significance.

Indeed dualism precludes the possibility of a qualitatively different reality, one that is not characterized by these polar oppositions. Instead, the severance of reality from fantasy, fact from

fiction, reality from utopia, et al. is a political/epistemological strategy whereby a prevailing state of affairs--an historically-specific organization of reality or hegemonic mode of development--is immunized from internal tendencies, emergent developments, and anomalous events that threaten to transform prevailing power relationships, including hegemonic discourse and theoretical accounts that anchor them.

Using these dualisms as examples, we can briefly examine how they function by respectively lumping the initial terms and posterior terms and examining the relationship of each set to social development. Thus, fact, truth, reality, et al. posit and naturalize the seeming necessity of what is otherwise an historically-specific mode of social development. Alternately, their counterposed, cognate categories, fiction, fantasy, utopia, et al. are so many residual or pejorative categories that serve as depositories for ideas, practices, tendencies and forces that are deemed impossible or analytically insignificant. These either escape articulation in terms of prevailing categories and meanings, or would force a qualitative re-constitution of prevailing hegemonic accounts of social reality and their modes of discourse. As a result, counter-hegemonic practices--or practices that now or previously constituted alternative hegemonies--are pre-empted from thought, conversation, and active implementation. The model of reality bereft of the possibility of qualitative change is thereby reproduced and rendered stable, eternal, or necessary. The potentially generative internal relatedness of actuality and possibility are thereby set at odds and are mutually depletive. The regime of scarcity is left intact, indeed legitimated.

What is real is what is merely evident. Reality is what is given, just as it is. The real is the actual. Counter-hegemonic tendencies towards qualitative transformation of prevailing social relations are stipulated as unreal. Thus, the possible is the unreal. The actual is rational and/or irrational; the possible is non-rational. Clearly any tendency or possibility towards the emergence of an abundant, post-scarcity mode of social development is, at least partially, occluded by such dualistic practices.

This set of prevailing dualisms clearly provides strategic support for the political status quo. This support is actively performed by the pervasive set of virtually automatic linguistic practices which assume and reproduce these dichotomies (namely, the real/the fantastic, the real/the utopian, present/future, etc.). The proliferation of the dichotomous array serves to reinforce the intention to abort or neutralize any developmental or historical (non-repetitive) conception of what is actual, so as to maximize the extant political interest in its abiding permanence. Alternatively, the possibility of articulating, recognizing or planning for emergent, post-scarcity tendencies can be served only by self-conscious efforts towards the strategic transcendence of dualistic categories. These would take the form of so many epistemological, discursive, political practices.

Focusing again on the "threshold condition" as a dynamic site whereby an object-in-birth both recapitulates previous development and presages future development. By doing so we are able to re-member the actual and the possible as reciprocal, internally-related moments of an historically-specific process of development. The actual and the

possible are now strategically reconstituted in meaning. The actual is reconstituted by generating its at present or potentially new possibilities for further, ongoing development. Correspondingly, the possible is now made genuinely possible by the reconstituted actual. The possible becomes an integral moment of the actual.

In this qualitatively revised account, the actual cannot be apprehended in terms of a bounded object, absolutely closed to further qualitative development by an invariant or static outer limit. Instead, the actual can be viewed as a dynamic foreshadowing of emergent tendencies of overall object development. The possibility of qualitatively different development is grounded, however embryonically, in the actual. The actual, now re-vised, has become the entire historically-specific process of development. It has become an object-in-birth: at once retrospective and prospective in its ongoing, irreversible development.

A self-conscious mode of theorizing does not change the world in and of itself, in an immediate, institutionalized way. Nonetheless, it does make possible a change extant social relationships by introducing new possibilities for thought and action. The entry of new possibilities within and into prevailing social processes makes a qualitative difference in a world. It renders it pregnant with alternatives not hitherto existing. To constitute new possibilities is one moment in a fuller transformative <u>praxis</u> which includes persistent, strategic efforts in their active implementation. Self-consious, self-reflexive theorizing, then, is an historically-specific relationship of reciprocal transformation between subject and world-object. Indeed, by prevailing social relationships, such

theorizing is counter-hegemonic, let alone political in the most-encompassing sense.

In order to read texts with respect to the problematic of scarcity and abundance, it is crucial to produce an account of post-scarcity objects for theorizing.

Thus, to acount for a developing object as an object-in-birth is to theorize in a self-conscious, strategic way that intervenes into the historically-produced appearances of permanence which have been generated by the positivist reading of objects.

Indeed, producing accounts of objects as objects-in-birth developing through historical thresholds, strategically undermines the apparent stability of hegemonic accounts of objects with the intention of regenerating their prospective development in qualitatively new dimensions. By conjoining "the actual and the possible," producing an object-in-birth for theorizing strategically intervenes into an actual (state of affairs), one that re-presents itself as their eternal separation. This strategic practice, in turn, embodies an intention to qualitatively transform the actual to render it thoroughly historical and, thereby, developmental and impermanent.

A strategic epistemological-political intervention into hegemonic accounts of objects and boundaries, then, actively contests and reconstitutes the prevailing historically-specific assumption that defines the actual and the possible only in terms of material scarcity. Indeed, to harken back to Prigogine, once the whole social sphere of social relations is grasped as already far from equilibrium, "the actual" becomes an ongoing, never-finished undertaking. Its re-constitution as an object-in-birth, then, an actuality-possibility

presages the possibility of abundant development for theorizing and practice. Indeed, in our view, strategic interventions like this enable the articulation of post-scarcity intentions and the staging of initiatives to that end.

* * * * * * *

Let us now re-member our developmental reading activity as a prospective gesture towards our reading of Marx to follow. The primary category of our theoretical act in an emancipatory animated reading of the foregoing texts is negentropy. Negentropy embodies abundance in its mood of relentless possibility and in its mode of successive reconstitutions for, as we shall demonstrate, greater relatedness to need and the more resonant organization of need to object. As social development, negentropy is in fact a mood of abundance that is informed and expressed by a strategy towards satisfaction, production, and possibility. As the relation of individual to individual person, of man to group, of the person to self, it is a re-constitution of the category of love. In it, love and productivity are one and the same thing. Similarly, in it the distinction of social needs and the needs of the individual disappears--the need of the one becomes the need of the other, for the individual is seen as a member and history as a moment in the dynamic process of successive reorganization and reconstitution towards satisfaction--towards abundance.

Correspondingly, the form-content of negentropy is the emergent object-in-birth. The object-in-birth then embodies theoretically the drive towards mutual, socializied satisfaction of

need in a historically-constituted process of change. It knows only through activity, and the dominant trajectory of its action is towards higher, that is to say more need-related, organizations and re-constitutions. It theorizes only in the mood of thought-action towards hope. It embodies history in the present only insofar as it moves towards a productively re-constituted future.

Our category of object-in-birth we find in literature, we find in the "far-from-equilibrium" thermodynamic systems of Prigogine. Next, however, we read and re-member the object-in-birth in a tradition in which it has been suppressed. For the object-in-birth exists by necessity in a state of struggle, of rivalry among competing moods and modes of hope and despair. Here, in the domain of social thought, we find the primary voice of the tradition to be Marx's. Indeed, as we shall show, the theorizing and knowing of Marx was characteristically strategic, knowing with the purpose of organizing towards change. Our reading, then, re-members Marx and especially his strategic category of "Rich Totality," as an historical specification of negentropic development. In Rich Totaltiy Marx explored and sought to know and make use of the form-content we have reconstituted for our historcal moment as object-in-birth.

In Section Two of this dissertation we will read Marx and re-member and re-constitute his categories of Rich Totality, mode of production, mode of cooperation. We will listen to--read and emancipate--the silences in Marx which we view as critical for the re-constitution of abundance as the decisive possibility, in and for the social-political-historical moment in which we read and act. For us the critical silence is that posed by our present

setting. In it, we find the need of the individual for productivity and love--a need which is critical to inform social-political theorizing in action in a historical moment when the choice of mankind is no longer the luxury of lifelong hope or despair but, rather, hope or the annihilation of life, thought, and possibility itself. The category of negentropy, its form-content the object-in-birth intends, indeed demands the choice of peace, life, and humanity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Henri Lefebvre, The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production, trans. Frank Bryant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

2. "Deacon Blues" by Walter Becker and Donald Fagen (ABC/Dunhill Music, Inc., 1977).

3. Ilya Prigogine, "Time, Structure and Fluctuations," Science 201 (September 1, 1978).

4. Lefebvre.

5. Prigogine, p. 779.

PART TWO

MARX'S METHODOLOGY OF READING

CHAPTER SIX

GROUNDING STRATEGY IN DEVELOPMENT

Marx's theorizing displays and develops the very categories, intentions, and methodology for reading social theory with which we ourselves read. With this methodology, we can read contemporary texts on the possibility and significance of negative entropy for contemporary theorizing and discourse on social development.

In the Second part of this work, we read Marx both in the way we have just read contemporary social theory and, as will be shown, in the way Marx reads the texts of his contemporaries. This part is thematically wed, and methodologically enwreathed, to the first part. First, all parts of this work share the same problematic: establishing the possibility of post-scarcity, abundant development as the foremost contemporary concern for social theory and social practice. Our reading Marx from this standpoint, moreover, is a kind of retrospective behavior whose intention is prospective--to establish behavior whose intention is prospective as a propulsive force in generating theoretical and practical experiments and analyses oriented toward

really making possibile a new kind of human development. Second, then, we read Marx strategically with the same emancipatory intention as, in our view, Marx strategically read others: namely, to engender a qualitatively different history. As Chapter Five made explicit, the pivotal formal category in use for simultaneously analyzing, articulating, and producing emergent, abundant possibilities is an object-in-birth.

An object-in-birth is an historically-specific object (or totality) developing negentropically--that is, developing in a way whereby the very principles of object-development themselves undergo qualitative development. This object is not a given, an object-in-itself. It is a strategy for reading social theory which we have called emancipatory animated reading. In Part Two, we examine this strategy as Marx's methodology critique, a critique of rival, scarcity-bound methods and modes of theorizing and their objects--principally, those of political economy and Hegelian idealism. Through his methodology critique, Marx reads those social theories in an emancipatory animated way: that is, in terms of their abiding possibilities for further qualitative development.

In so doing, Marx produces, as we shall see, a new object for theorizing, a "rich totality." By this, we mean nothing less than an historically-specific, abundantly developing form-and-content of all social activity. Of course, this mode of reading, sets off Marx no end from other prevailing modes of theorizing, in his time and for now.

Marx, finally, displays the same strategy of emancipatory animated reading as does the rest of this work. In turn, this work, taken in its entirety, links methodological critique to the

content-form of abundance--or, in our sense, negentropy. In so doing, it displays itself as an abundant activity. In the last part, which now follows, then, we give our reading of just how Marx made an abundant activity out of his methodology of reading social theory.

* * * * *

Abundance, for Marx, is not a state to be achieved in the distant future. It is not an object-in-itself, standing above and alien to producing individuals. Abundance is an ongoing process of qualitative historical development. Critique, a strategic emancipatory animated engagement with the texts and with discursive practices of political economy and of Hegel's idealist dialectics, is inseparable from Marx's vision of post-scarcity society. That historical object-in-birth is produced and developing historically through human praxis--including his own theorizing.

In the Third (Paris) Manuscript of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844), Marx says that Hegel could know the alienated activity and self-consciousness of philosophy by doing philosophy.[1] Similarly, as we read his texts, Marx does not know abundance by theorizing about abundance--as if from the outside. Rather, he knows it by self-consciously doing abundant theorizing. Marx self-consciously engages and transforms the scarcity-bound texts and world which he confronts strategically from a self-developing standpoint situated inside them or in internal relationship to them.

Reading Marx through, the way we have staged it, is reading an emancipatory strategist. The emancipatory strategist practices a method which is at once epistemological and political. The self-conscious intention is to transform qualitatively prevailing power relations. Marx self-consciously undertakes a new, historically-specific strategic enterprise for which "a new gathering point" is needed. To quote from his 1843 letter to Ruge, entitled "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing":

> I am delighted that you are resolved and turn your thoughts from backward glances at the past toward a new undertaking. In Paris, then, the old university of philosophy (absit omen!) and the new capital of the new world. What is necessary will arrange itself. I do not doubt, therefore, that all obstacles--whose importance I do not fail to recognize--will be removed.
>
> The undertaking may succeed, however, or not; in any case I will be in Paris at the end of this month, since the air here makes one servile and I see no room at all in Germany for free activity.
>
> In Germany, everything is being forcibly repressed, a true anarchy of the spirit has burst out, stupidity itself reigns supreme, and Zurich obeys commands from Berlin; hence it becomes ever clearer that a new gathering point must be sought for the really thinking and independent minds.[2]

The new gathering point is not reducible to Paris merely as a geographical location for a meeting or reunion. Establishing a new gathering point is an historically specific act of beginning, constituted by and constituted within and, in turn, constituting its own historical situation.

Marx's new gathering point embodies an historical intention, the genuine fulfillment of real needs through strategic practice:

> I am convinced that our plan would meet a real need, and real needs must surely be able to find real fulfillment. I therefore have no doubts about the enterprise if only we undertake it seriously.[3]

The enterprise is to make a different future through remaking the present. The seriousness of the enterprise resides partly in its refusal to adopt a pre-fabricated, purely philosophical model of the future in place of a strategic theorizing open to development--development through the course of practical political struggles to make a different future. To quote again from Marx's letter:

> Now philosophy has become worldly, and the most incontrovertible evidence of this is that the philosophical consciousness has been drawn, not only externally but also internally, into the stress of battle. But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present - I am speaking of a ruthless criticsm of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.[4]

For Marx, the strategy that would make the future cannot be reduced to a ready-made, pre-given extension of the currently hegemonic mode of social development. A strategy that would make a different future must make that future differently. It must be made neither by mere extension of currently prevailing principles of social development nor by their mere logical negation. Either way, the future would become a positivist construction: pre-given, pre-determined, unhistorical. Either way, the standard of what the future could become is still the logic and dynamics of present historical and social development - whether that extant standard for theorizing is simply extended mechanically to define the future or reversed mechanically as in idealist utopiates.

To formulate future possibilties this way collapses the possible into the historically prevailing dynamic of the actual. This reduction of development to prevailing logic aborts the possibility of

a thorough-going, qualitative transformation of social development. On either account, human development remains bound to material scarcity, to the historical parameters and dynamics constituting an existing mode of social development.

A theoretical strategy that would make the future not any different but differently, that would produce a new gathering point, must self-consciously avoid its own reduction to terms that reproduce prevailing historical actualities. Its strategic procedure, then, would be to criticize the standpoint of "the given," without either reifying or forgetting its historical specificity. The critique of givenness that constitutes a new gathering point would neither deny nor eternalize the historical present. Rather, it would refuse to reduce that present to the actuality of admittedly hegemonic patterns of thinking, discourse, production, and social development. Instead, Marx constitutes the historical present by relating what is actual to what is possible--the possible being present as a moment of what is actual.

That strategy would surmount the given without denying its reality. Without equating it with "the historical present," the strategy reconstitutes reality through categories, intentions, conventions, and practices which articulate the historical possibility of its qualitative transcendence. Transcendence in this context is thoroughly this-worldly and historical. It is neither mystical nor independent of human agency. It is defined in terms of an ensemble of historically specific, strategic practices of social transformation that are currently or potentially being deployed within the present context. Transcendence, then, as used here signifies an historical intention

constituting and embodied through a set of political practices that are strategic interventions into prevailing power relationships.

Transcendence, for Marx, is an activity that is immanent or built into the dynamics of present historical development. It is a decidedly this-worldly political practice. The practice of transcendence transforms consciousness and (not to dichotomize the two) the mode of daily activity. As Marx states it:

> Nothing prevents us, then, from tying our criticsm to the criticism of politics and to a definite party position in politics, and hence from identifying our criticsm with real struggles. Then we shall confront the world not as doctrinaires with a new principle: "Here is the truth, bow down before it!" We develop new principles to the world out of its own principles. We do not say to the world: "Stop fighting; your struggle is of no account. We want to shout the true slogan of the struggle at you." We only show the world what it is fighting for, and consciousness is something that the world must acquire, like it or not...The reform of consciousness consists only in enabling the world to clarify its consciounsess, in waking it from its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions.... Then it will transpire that the world has long been dreaming of something that it can acquire if only it becomes conscious of it. It will transpire that it is not a matter of drawing a great dividing line between past and future, but of carrying out the thoughts of the past. And finally, it will transpire that mankind begins no new work, but consciously accomplishes its old work.[5]

Our immediate aim in this chapter is to stage an animated reading of some of Marx's methodological texts. We read these texts as epistemological formulations of his strategic intention to transcend and transform existing socio-historical dynamics. We read them as Marx's attempts at articulating for himself a political/epistemological strategy for intervening into prevailing modes of theoretical discourse.

As we have noted in the previous chapter, Marx intends to de-stabilize accounts of the world in terms of objects-in-themselves so

as to make possible its articulation in developmental terms as a post-scarcity object-in-birth. By reading some of Marx's self-conscious methodological writings, we will be able to specify more adequately how a new kind of theorizing might at once display and make possible proto-abundant historical development.

Here I single out the Introduction to Marx's Grundrisse.[6] It provides an occasion for an animated reading of Marx's methodological writings from the standpoint of our emancipatory intention: an historically-specific remembering of the problematic of scarcity and abundance for the sociological agenda.

The methodological texts of the Introduction to the Grundrisse will not be read with a view toward producing an "authoritative account" of Marx's method. Moreover, Marx's method will not be read operationally as a set of rules, techniques, or formulas that can be mechanically and externally applied to a domain of experience and thereby yield "results." Rather, Marx's methodological writings will be read as a set of guidelines for his "staging" of a strategic intervention. Mainly he intervenes into the empiricist account of objects and the attendant body of economic discourse that constitutes bourgeois political economy. Taken together, these historically specific practices consolidate and partly constitute an ensemble of social and economic practices that are capitalist society.

Finally, to conclude these preferatory remarks, Marx's Introduction provides a critical account that explains the historical and theoretical preconditions for some of the strategic principles deployed by political economy in producing its version of capitalist society. By paying close attention to these critical remarks, then, we

can discern some of the strategic guidelines that constitute and inform Marx's emancipatory animated reading of classical Political Economy. This theoretical moment of departure for his formulation of the historical possibility of a post-scarcity social formation embodies, the reader will see, our own strategy.

The relative sparsity of Marx's methodological writings constitutes a theoretical vacuum. Among other reasons, this vacuum prevents the formulation of an "authoritative account" of the method of Marx's critique. Indeed, Henri Lefebvre acknowledges the relative lack of Marx's texts in this area:

> To the end of his life he intended to write an exposition of the dialectical method, but he died without having carried out this project. Not only is Marx's work unfinished, even its most developed portions are insufficiently elaborated. This has contributed to no small extent to later misunderstandings of it.[7]

The questions are what are we to make of this relative absence, and how are we to read it?

We are left in the position of either saying no more on those subjects on which Marx is relatively silent or of reading that relative silence as constituting an invitation to the interpretive dance. We would hope, naturally, not to contribute yet another inert stone to the rockpile of "later misunderstandings." And yet, the very notion of "misunderstanding" is problematic. Does it presuppose that there <u>is</u> a possible, absolute understanding, an "authoritative reading" to be had, once and for all? Does it presuppose that the presence of a "finished text," rather than its absence, would provide occasion and sufficient grounds for the production of an authoritative reading?

These questions are really statements of methodological

intention at work here. Indeed, in view of my animated reading, an authoritative account is only a more, rather than a less, persuasive claim to "authoritativeness." One reading of special authority, then, becomes the final, absolute, singular, discoverable voice abiding objectively and independently in the text, merely awaiting its faithful reproduction.

Conversely, the forthcoming reading of Marx's methodological ground-plan--the literal meaning of his title, Grundrisse--will be undertaken from an interest-laden point of view. Our standpoint is the same problematic of post-scarcity development that has propelled this inquiry all along. At this point, our strategy for remembering the problematic of scarcity and abundance has been only partially constituted by the foregoing reading of texts. It abides unfinished and actively invites further elaboration. Its further elaboration will be ongoingly displayed through the ensuing emancipatory animated reading of texts selected and illuminated from the standpoint of this problematic.

Marx's circular mode of theorizing intervenes into hegemonic accounts of objects that would stabilize them against qualitative, internal transformation or against external intervention. Thus, Marx intervenes into the produced, hegemonic appearances of stability and permanence that consolidate the positivistic version of the world as an object-in-itself, an object bounded by an unhistorical, invariant outer limit. Consequently, this form of theorizing becomes an integral moment in the historically-specific political struggle to bring about a new kind of historical development and social organization. The strategy de-stabilizes those hegemonic accounts of objects that

actively consolidate and maintain the scarcity-bound social world and its prevailing power relationships.

Producing a new kind of object for theorizing, we said in the last chapter, involves practices and object-constitution which qualitatively differ from principles that produce static versions of objects for theorizing. Marx develops a strategy whereby objects-in-themselves can be de-stabilized, de-constructed and then reconstituted as objects-in-birth. Preliminary to our animated reading of Marx's methodological texts, then, we will examine more closely some of the tactical moves in Marx's overall epistemological strategy to reconstitute objects. These include both his circular mode of theorizing and a process of "grounding" objects which proceeds in that circular course. As we shall see, these are two tactical moments of his strategic theorizing.

Our immediate procedure will be to provide an initial, up-close preview of some of the micro-arenas and interstices of the epistemological conflicts amongst rival modes of theorizing. The up-closeness of such scrutiny is intended partly to display the kinds of critical de-construction of hegemonic theoretical modes that are necessary to reconstitute theorizing so that it may articulate an object that is appropriate to a mode of human development no longer bound to material scarcity. To this end, we look first at Marx's own process of circular theorizing. Next, we look at the pivotal strategy for grounding objects.

Marx's theorizing moves in a trajectory that is circular. It is a process of departure and return. He starts from an initial standpoint to which he comes back in the end. However, its circular

dynamic is not merely a continous circumnavigation of the same, and thereby, vicious circle. Rather, it returns to the point which has been made different from the original one through the very process of the journey itself. This strategic circularity is not a process of mere repetition. Instead, it is a process of developing the starting point. This kind of enrichment process reproduces its own beginning in a way that makes it different. We see this enrichment in the very process whereby Marx's theorizing produces its object for analysis.

We have noted that beginnings are not merely arbitrary or simply given at the outset of theorizing, nor are they of no further substantive consequence for the subsequent process of inquiry. While appearing on positivistic accounts to be inquiries into objects rendered external to themselves, we read them as internally related to (both constituting and constituted by) the ensuing process of inquiry and its intentional object(s) as well.

For Marx, to begin theorizing is to begin a process of remaking that beginning, a specific historical moment, in a qualitatively different way. Allowing theory a self-conscious, transformative intention, its moment of departure becomes its own--but not its sole--intentional object. As we read Marx, beginning becomes an historically-situated activity which intends the transformation of its own situation and thereby accomplishes its self-transformation.

The intention that constitutes and is embodied by the theoretical beginning, is the production of a difference. Theorizing expresses and embodies intentions in serveral dimensions. Situated within a specific historical context, theorizing embodies and specifies intentions through partly constituting its own beginning and its

object(s) for inquiry and through developing its methodological path through which to approach its object. The existing object, of course, is not created ex nihilo by theorizing and is a necessary condition of its possibility. The point of departure and the object for theorizing, then, are internally related. They are neither absolutely separable nor absolutely identical, The one is a necessary condition for the existence and possible development of the other.

A point of departure and its object, a point of return, are constitutive moments of the selfsame process of historical development, a process which in turn constitutes and makes them possible. Their non-identity and non-separability constitute a dynamic, internally-related asymmetry. This asymmetry is essential for the theoretical articulation of ongoing qualitative development. The moment of return is the moment of departure, albeit qualitatively developed.

To begin, on this account, is to intend to renew the standpoint from which theorizing as an activity of producing and exploring its objects, must necessarily ensue. As Edward Said characterizes beginning: "it is both beginning and beginning-again."[8] Insofar as the standpoint is both produced and re-produced, it cannot be regarded as an eternal, changeless, pre-established thing-in-itself. It is not exempted from ongoing development. The openness of the point of departure to the historical prospect of its own reproduction enables us to grasp it as being produced. Its capacity for staging and intiating the activity that intends to produce a difference in the world enables us to grasp it as actively producing, for the difference produced by the act of beginning is itself--that is, its own self-development.

The notion of "beginning and beginning again" which describes Marx's theorizing embodies a methodological strategy which is situated within material scarcity. The strategy is made possible by that scarcity and starts from its historical standpoint. From the outset, the point of departure can be strategically grasped as an object that is bounded by an outer limit, fixed eternally in and by material scarcity. Marx aims to re-produce the starting point in a way that both enables and displays its capacity for further development in qualitatively new ways. Marx's strategy is to re-produce the theoretical point of departure in a way that makes post-scarcity development conceivable and articulatable as an object for theorizing activity.

The Grundrisse is the ground-plan for Marx's post-1857 oeuvre, including the four volumes of Capital, the Anthropological Notebooks, et al. The Introduction to the Grundrisse is the staging area--an historically specific locus. There the grounds for Marx's intervention into hegemonic modes of theorizing are being planned. The aim is to really make an historical difference in the world. This difference is the constitution of a post-scarcity social formation. The crucial moment of Marx's overall methodological strategy is, in my view, the attempt to introduce strategically grounds as being inseparable from any account of objects. Marx's theorizing accomplishes accounts of objects with respect to grounding. Our reading of his re-formulation of the object for theorizing will now be further developed through an analysis of grounding as a strategic politico-epistemological activity.

To establish grounds for theorizing is made possible as an activity. To ground an object is to situate it with respect to the

principles that make that object possible or intelligible or conceivable. We can see grounding, for example, in at least one medieval mode of theorizing. That medieval mode would ground the possibility of theorizing, and that of an object for theorizing, in a set of principles that posited the necessity and ubiquity of a divine creator. This is the sufficient condition for the very possibility of anything at all. A theorizing subject and the object for theorizing alike were made possible on the basis of a divine creator: God grounds all being.

For Marx, the question of grounds for theorizing and its objects is complex and multidimensional. A ground for theorizing entails necessary preconditions, constitutive conditions that make theorizing possible as an activity. Before examining Marx's specific view of the grounds and objects for theorizing, it will be useful to understand Marx's raising of the issue of grounds within the context of an overall strategic intention. Again, Marx intends the theoretical and practical constitution-implementation of a post-scarcity object.

His introducing grounds into theoretical analysis initiates a strategy whose intention is to make an historical difference. The difference made for theorizing is that the decision to ground objects is a decision to account for their possibility, rather than to record passively and to acknowledge their mere actuality. The decision makes it something problematic--an issue requiring explanation.

The object which must be accounted for as being possible does not enjoy the same epistemological status as an object-in-itself whose sheer presence is deemed sufficient reason for its existence. The latter object--considered self-evident, self-contained, and just

there--requires no account of its possibility. It is given. In striking contrast, the strategic decision to ground an object is to make its very possibility problematic. Thus, to introduce grounds is to elevate the question of this very possibility as an object to an epistemological priority once reserved for its seemingly self-evident actuality.

To introduce grounds into any consideration of objects is to entertain the possibility that objects as we "find" them might have been otherwise--or might yet be otherwise. Their actuality, then, is only their present, relative actuality. Any seeming permanence is real but real as a produced present appearance which must be accounted for. The strategic decision to ground an object, even to raise the very question of its grounds, is to respond to a dis-ease. The dis-ease is a sense that the stable appearances presented by objects are, perhaps, more apparent than substantial, perhaps more momentary than eternal. Correspondingly, the decision to ground an object is a strategic response to that uneasy sense that established objects are not merely there, that they are not merely self-equilibrating. Instead, they have become dis-equilibrated or are undergoing a dis-establishment of some sort.

The strategic choice of how to ground an object--to formulate an account of its possibility--might act to re-establish the apparent permanence of that object, or, conversely, it might promote its further de-stabilization. Grounding, then, embodies intention. The tactics of such competing strategies for grounding are formulated with respect to one another's categories, epistemologies, and logics. For example, the intention to stabilize any object might be accomplished by formulating

either a static ground or, more subtly, a dynamic but self-equilibrating, unhistorical ground-work. In any case, all theorizing which grounds objects is strategic. It either initiates or responds to some actual or potential historically specific dis-ease or structural alteration in the seeming stability and givenness of bounded objects, societies, or world-views.

Marx's theroretical strategy can be grasped as a re-membering of objects in relationship to the grounds that make them possible. This rememberance of grounds for theorizing and its objects constitutes an attempt to revise the empiricist rendering of objects, an account which is produced through the forgetting of grounds. This forgetting is the analytical severance of objects from the historical conditions that make them possible.

The forgetting of grounds by positivist theorizing is not merely passive. This forgetting is the <u>active</u> accomplishment of an account of objects. In Marx's terms, such an account can be characterized as a ". . . tearing apart things which belong together."[9] As we shall see, the starting point of Marx's reconstruction of his method is precisely this sundered, apparently groundless object-in-itself of empiricist theorizing. Conversely, re-membering the grounds by which that object is made possible is itself an active process whose consequences--depending on the choice of grounds--make possible the qualitative transformation of that object.

For Marx, the possibility of an object is epistemologically prior to its mere actuality, its "thereness." The "why" of an object takes theroretical precedence over the "what" of that object. Whereas the established object presents itself as if eternal, Marx's strategy

is to inquire into the very historical conditions that make for possibility of just that self-presentation. Again, to make the possibility of an object thematic for analysis, is to make the actuality of the object problematical. In Marx's strategy, the decision to ground any object intends to force or lay bare an account of its possibility in order to relativize and historicize its actuality, its cognitive solidity, its certainty.

By intervening into the accounts of immediately given objects, Marx re-presents their actuality as an historically produced appearance that both might have been and, indeed, may yet be otherwise. Stated differently, the upshot of his strategic move to ground objects is clear: to transform what appears to be an eternal object-in-itself into an historically produced object-in-birth, to reinstate historical possibiltiy as an integral moment of present actuality, to un-bind objects for further, qualitative historical development. To develop beyond material scarcity, most of all, it is necessary to overcome strategic accounts of objects that suppress their ongoing development.

Our prior analysis of circular theorizing can now be usefully linked to this examination of Marx's grounding strategy. Indeed, the formal structure of Marx's active grounding of objects is circular: a departure and return that departs again, a beginning and beginning again. Intertwined as internal relationships, moreover, the historical content of the circle is inextricable from its form. For Marx, form and content are historically inseparable.

Starting from a given, an ungrounded object-in-itself, Marx's theorizing reconstructs it by coming back full circle to it. Marx's theorizing re-produces it as an object-in-birth, qualitatively altering

its incipient standpoint. The difference made is the development of the original standpoint into a qualitatively different kind of object. Once re-membered in relation to its historical preconditions, what started out as a groundless object can be grasped as just an appearance made possible by the active forgetting of its historical grounds. The original object is now reproduced as a grounded object. Its qualitative reconstitution is now made possible by a re-membering of its historical grounds. In sum, we read Marx's theorizing as a circular grounding of objects. In this circular process, the point of departure in the end develops into a new gathering point. With a return, the beginning itself of a new kind of departure can once again ensue. Grounding, then, is a qualitatively deveopmental activity.

Next we will briefly examine the link between methods of inquiry and selected versions of development. To do so, we read two of Marx's theoretical rivals: Aristotle's teleology and Heidegger's phenomenological ontology. Our aim here, still prior to reading Marx's texts, is to further sharpen our understanding of Marx's notion of grounds and development. Our choice of these two as worthy theoretical adversaries brings to the fore a confrontation with two epistemological strategies that abort or bypass self-conscious, qualitative, historical development as a meaningful or desirable activity or category for theorizing and practice.

In this context, Aristotle is significant for his teleological conception of development and in regard to the positivist appropriation of the principles of his logic. In Aristotle's teleological version of an object's development, the pre-fabricated, completed object (fully actualized) already exists (although in embryo potentially) in the

incipient object. Unlike Aristotle, Marx does not conceive of object development as the mere actualization of a pre-existent, predetermined potency. Actualization for him is not the final realisation of a pre-established outcome. Unlike the oak tree that has actualized that potential for becoming an oak tree which constitutes its seed, Marx's end-point is never a point of final return. Rather, what on Aristotle's account would otherwise be the closed end-point of a static or self-equilibrating teleology now becomes pregnant as a new point of departure. Once more Marx's developmental grounding of objects is tantamount to Said's notion of starting out as "a beginning and a beginning again." To return to the starting point, then, is not merely to conclude a linear or merely circular, endless process of repetitive production. It is the beginning of a new kind of production of new kinds of object by new kinds of developmental principles.

In Marx's theorizing, the moment of return does not exist as a mere copy of the point of departure, thereby completing a vicious circle. Rather, it constitutes and signifies its qualitative development. The seemingly retrospective return to the beginning is in fact the continuance of prospective, historical development. Marx's circular mode of theorizing is not the activity of mere repetition but of production and reproduction. And that process entails the historical possibility (although presently dominated by the imagery of assembly line mass production) of both theorizing and its object undergoing qualitative transformation. Indeed, it is just that possibility which the strategic charge of vicious circularity would repress.

Marx intervenes into the conventions of empiricist theorizing and discourse in part through a rival strategic practice that resists by practicing a kind of fertile circularity, the hegemonic sway of vicious circularity. A fertile (hermeneutic) circularity, we just noted, is qualitatively productive of new possibilities for object development. Here, charging vicious circularity is a strategy used against a theoretical constitution of objects which in fact reproduces them as dynamically changing objects-in-birth.

The vicious circle enforces a cardinal principle of Aristotelian logic, the principle of non-contradiction. This principle denies the reality, let alone intelligibility, of any entity that is both itself and its opposite in respect to the same characteristic or quality. Thus, an object that presents itself as red and non-red is understood to be unintelligible and devoid of reality. Any process or practice (or, correspondingly, a developmental logic) whereby an object might be internally transformed in some way into its logical opposite is treated as self-contradictory. The union of anything and its opposite would then be exorcised as a violation of traditional logical canons of intelligibility and ontological standards of reality.

If an object is presented in a way that did not maintain the identity of its supposedly essential defining characteristics, it could no longer be considered the selfsame object and would have to be considered another (kind of) object altogether. In sum, the Aristotelian law of non-contradiction institutionalizes a strategic account of objects whereby they must sustain themselves or be maintained as self-identical in order to be considered real and intelligible.

The objects to which Aristotle's principle grants reality and reserves intelligibility are objects-in-themselves. These objects are de-limited and encapsulated by an essential definition that stipulates and assumes their static, self-identical, simple "thereness." Obviously, this enjoins the attribution of intelligibility from an object undergoing fundamental, internal qualitative transformation. Constituted in this way, the object would lose the status of being the selfsame, self-identical object. Correspondingly, any object that is defined in terms of its ongoing qualitative development, even through the point of its own opposite, from a legitimate epistemological standing is treated as unintelligible, non-rational, and un-real. To state this in the context of our present problematic, the "law" of non-contradiction strategically precludes the object-in-birth from analytic significance and, thereby, from theoretical articulation and empirical/historical specification.

From the vantage point of Aristotelian formal logic, a mode of inquiry that starts with a self-indentical object and develops into its own opposite thereby becomes a contradiction and posits itself as not-itself. Any mode of inquiry that re-produces an object-in-itself in such a way that it is no longer identical to itself must be considered non-rational and unintelligible. It has violated the law of non-contradiction.

The strategic exorcism of such a procedure from the domain of analytic significance is performed through the charge of vicious circularity. Its successful cultural hegemony is expressed by the silence that usually follows when the charge is made. The club of vicious circularity enables positivist theorizing to consolidate a

sense of objects being static, of meanings being stable, and of reality's being a continual repetition of timeless experiences and lessons. The charge of vicious circularity is a constitutive tactic of a larger epistemological strategy whose overall, political intention is to stabilize objects in their present configurations and thereby to suppress development as an integral, dynamic aspect of their abiding reality.

If the whole process of object-development were sub-divided into discrete moments, it would be evident that that object would appear differently from each moment to the next. On a positivist reading, the object is a different one from each moment to the next while being self-identical within each discrete moment. In a non-positivist account of development, the notion of the discrete moment is itself read as an artifice, an object-in-itself. And yet, event if this artifice were accepted as a given, the object in each moment would be grasped not only as what it is, but simultaneously as what it has been and what it might yet become. This object would be apprehended thereby as always developing from what it has been towards what it is not yet. To apprehend such an object "on the wing," so to speak, is to understand it in terms of <u>both</u> what it is and what it is not.

The logic of this process is scandalous to an account of objects based on the Aristotelian laws of identity and non-contradiction. Yet, provided that objects are being consciously accounted for in terms of their historical development and transformation, there is nothing intrinsically non-intelligible about such an object-in-birth. That the objects can be grasped in

relationship to processes of development which make them possible makes for a new standard of intelligibility: the process of grounding itself.

What is scandalous to the empiricist tradition is not simply that the admission of an alternative account of objects as objects-in-birth would undermine the hegemonic standards, in terms of which intelligibility, meaning and truth have been established and maintained in and beyond the domain fo theoretical discourse. The issue in our view has more to do with the fact that these standards successfully consolidate the prevailing account of the world-object, of what is and of what is possible. At stake in these strategic accounts of the real, the intelligible, et al., is the political-epistemological conflict over whether society makes possible or precludes the possibility of fundamental qualitative transformation. The theoretical suppression of qualitative self-development as an intrinsic, constitutive dimension of objects serves an overall strategic intention: a worldly, political intention that would consolidate, ratify, and stabilize a currently hegemonic set of social practices irremediably rooted in material scarcity.

To further sharpen our grasp of Marx's grounding strategy, we will compare and contrast his grounding practice with that of the late contemporary philosopher, Martin Heidegger. Our animated excursion into their relationship results from the fact that both Marx and Heidegger inquire into the grounds that make objects become possible.

Heidegger's project in Being and Time, his early master work, was to formulate a fundamental ontology of Being as his mode of inquiring into the primordial ground of the possibility of all beings.[10] The strategic practice by which Heidegger theorizes is the hermeneutic

circle by which he both performs and justifies his formally circular phenomonological inquiry into grounds. In search of an ultimate, fundamental ground for the possibility of any possibility, Heidegger's project is to make accessible a fundamental ontology of Being. To this end, he makes a circular inquiry into the ground of beings--namely Being itself, that ground which, in a word, makes being-possible possible.

For Heidegger, the inquirer, the process of inquiry itself and the object of inquiry are all mutually embedded, necessarily non-dualized manifestations of the ultimate ground of their possibility--namely, Being. Marx, too, profers a non-dualistic version of these moments of inquiry. In order to inquire into Being, the ground of beings, Heidegger like Marx must de-stabilize the hebemonic, scientistic account of beings (existing objects) which constitutes them as objects-in-themselves. His intervention into empiricist discourse thematizes grounds in a strategic way which challenges the prevailing, ungrounded version of objects. A key target in his critique of positivism is the principle of vicious circularity which, as we noted above, is pervasively deployed as a strategy for stabilizing the empiricist account of objects.

Heidegger deals with the charge of tautology by comparing the formal notion of vicious circle with the developmental notion of the hermeneutic circle of meaning. He strategically contextualizes the principle of vicious circularity within the realm of positivistic reason, where it has its meaning and function. He then valorizes the circular process of hermeneutic theorizing for its developmental capacity for phenomenologically laying bare (making visible) new modes

of knowing beings and their grounds that otherwise are precluded by positivistic practices and accounts. Indeed, the avowedly circular trajectory of Heidegger's phenomenological mode of inquiry demands his formulation of an explicit critique of the culturally hegemonic charge of vicious circularity.

Both Marx and Heidegger theorize through strategic modes of inquiry that ongoingly develop meanings, rather than seek to consolidate their final authority in everyday discourse. For them, meanings and truths are dynamic processes, not static things. Thus, for both, concrete, productive circularity is essential for preserving the ongoing possibility of meaning, knowledge, and practice being considered emergent, developmental processes. Both would strategically resist their premature foreclosure by positivistic definitions. It is this aspect of his theorizing which will be our immediate focus.

Heidegger's strategic rejoinder to the positivistic edict against vicious circularity is an integral feature of his rejection of the positivistic understanding of meaning as a fixed attribute of a static object-in-itself. Instead, meaning is understood as an ongoing emergent process. Again, meaning becomes a developmental process--a process that ongoingly discloses what is always already there at the start of the inquiry. His phenomenological-ontological inquiry into grounds is circular in structure: it is an ongoing uncovering and elaboration of a preliminary sense of the outcome. In an inchoate way, the outcome of the inquiry is always already presupposed by the starting out itself. Thus, the inquiry is informed from the start by a foreglimpse, pre-viewing, or set of fore-meanings whose emergence is but a further elaboration of what is always already there at the outset.

He opens his case for a new, "more primordial" way of knowing than the knowing of objects-in-themselves by eliciting and examining the charge of vicious circularity:

> Is there not, however, a manifest circularity in such an undertaking? If we must first define an entitiy in its Being and if we want to formulate the question of Being only on this basis, what is this but going in a circle? In working out our question, have we not "presupposed" something which only the answer can bring?[11]

The objection of vicious circularity is portrayed as a removable obstacle whose flawed design prevents inquiry from penetrating into the ground of possibility. Heidegger parries the charge in the following way:

> It is quite impossible for there to be any circular argument in formulating the question about the meaning of Being; for in answering this question, the issue is not one of grounding sometning by such a derivation, it is rather one of laying bare the grounds for it and exhibiting them.[12]

The laying bare presupposes a provisional articulation, a glimpse beforehand of the object of inquiry which is then further laid bare in the course of inquiring. A process of immanent reflexivity replaces what, on the empiricist account, constitutes vicious circularity:

> Such presupposing has nothing to do with laying down a axiom from which a sequence of propositions is deductively derived; in the question of the meaning of Being is no 'circular reasoning' but rather a remarkable 'relatedness backward or forward' which what we are asking about (Being) bears to the inquiry itself as a mode of Being of an entity.[13]

The object of any inquiry exists, ultimately, in the selfsame ontological mode as both the subject and the inquiring activity itself. The subject, object, and the inquiry are so mutually embedded, so mutually presupposing of one another, that even to speak of them in "the language of subject-object" is to violate their mutual embeddedness. Again, what is disclosed is already preliminarily grasped as a unitary, unfolding process.

Consequently, the outcome of inquiry is already there all along. Outcomes are never final or finished but are meanings always in the process of their ongoing disclosure. All analysis presupposes and follows from a prefigurative glimpse of the the object disclosed so that developing answers are already prefigured and foreshadowed--although not predetermined--in the very asking of any question. Indeed, the very act of posing questions is tantamount to a preliminary disclosure of their answers.

Consequently, Heidegger rejects the vicious circle charge. Instead, he insists that the circular trajectory of his mode of hermeneutic interpretation enables a more "primordial" kind of knowing than that afforded by positivist science:

> What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way.... It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a possitive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing.[14]

We now return to the question of grounds. To address thoroughly the question of the fundamental differences between Marx and Heidegger's inquiry into grounds, would constitute a major theoretical task in itself. For our immediate purposes, then, we will focus on one relevant difference. While they share a critique of positivistic theorizing, they nonetheless intend a world constituted by fundamentally different practices. These different intentions are embodied in their divergent conceptions of grounds for objects.

For Heidegger, a primordial ground is ontologically prior to history. That primordial ground sustains the existence of objects. For Marx, grounds are necessarily historical. Such grounds transform

rather than sustain objects. Whereas Marx's version of possibility is thoroughly historical, Heidegger's version is ontological and pre-historical. And finally, what makes possibility a transformative force for Marx is that it both has been produced and is producing historically; whereas, for Heidegger, the possibility of any entity abides in its being ontologically sustained.

The key difference can be clarified and elaborated by briefly examining how each formulates the process of departure and return which constitutes the circular trajectory of their respective inquiries into grounds. For Heidegger, the process of departure and return is really a process of disclosure and uncovering of what has always already been there, albeit forgotten or suppressed through the hegemony of scientistic theorizing. What is disclosed is always-already there with the beginning. The re-membering of what is always already there is revealed in the process of re-membering grounds. Re-membering grounds constitutes a recovery of that primordial ground, namely Being, by which all beings are sustained and made possible. The way into the ground of Being is not forcible or manipulative. It is a passive opening up to Being by the listener--a genuine listening or sensitized receptivity to its <u>sustaining</u> presence.

A genuine disclosure of grounds makes possible and constitutes an ongoing development of meanings that abide and are presupposed with and through the point of departure. These meanings are not complete, there at the outset; they are not fully formed and explicit. Rather, while always already "there" at the outset, they unfold and disclose themselves to the proper, non-scientistic approach. There is no qualitative transformation of the standpoint or grounds in the sense of

its structural change. In that sense, Heidegger differs profoundly from Marx. There is only a laying bare of sustained beings, of objects grounded through a strategy of tuning into the process of that grounding and sustaining.

In a sense, there is no genuine departure at all here. Given the mutual embeddedness of all beings by virtue of their all having been made possible by their grounding in Being, there is no possibility of their non-Being. Here, departing neither transforms nor vacates initial conditions or grounds whereby one's being is itself made possible. Instead, it re-members its being always already there. Thus, there is no fundamental transformation or self-conscious re-construction of the point of departure. There is only the unfolding of its ongoing disclosures and elaboration. Unlike Marx, there is not an historically-specific beginning which reproduces itself as a qualitatively different beginning. By contrast with Marx's procedure, there is no qualitatively different opposite or cognate notion which would constitute a point of return that was structurally different from yet internally related to the Being from which inquiry might depart.

Indeed, to speak of the absence of Being is only to suppress the ongoing being of Being, a mode of existing which cannot be reduced to the being of discrete things or negated by their mere absence. For Heidegger, then, the act of starting-out discloses that one has always already been there, sustained by Being--which has always-already made being-there possible. This notion of grounds for possibility is fundamentally different from that producing a qualitative historical difference. For Heidegger, the fundamental ground is neither produced nor historical. Rather, ground makes the historicity of beings

possible in the first place. For Marx, by contrast, grounds themselves are both historical and produced. That is, history is the ground of objects and is itself produced and producing. This production and reproduction of objects for theorizing does not underlie historical activity, but rather it is itself self-conscious, historically specific activity, the activity of historical transformation. His strategy, moreover, would transform the very theoretical principles and historical dynamics whereby objects and their accounts have been historically and socially produced. Like Heidegger, Marx wishes to constitute a qualitatively different kind of being in the world from the presently prevailing mode anchored in non-self-reflexive scientistic thinking and practice. Nevertheless, that historical difference is constituted through self-conscious political-theoretical practices that are fundamentally different from the pre-scientific, non-transformative mode of practices embodied and suggested by Heidegger's theorizing.

Unlike Marx, it is Heidegger's tacit intention and practice to be in the world in a pre-scientistic mode of existence. That mode is sustained and accomplished through the re-membering of Being in its now forgotten relationship to the hitherto existing ensemble of objects thereby sustained. Marx's alternative practice intervenes and intends new structures, internal relations, objects, and practices. Thereby society would begin to develop beyond the previous historical constraints.

In sum, Marx and Heidegger re-member grounds for objects in order to subvert strategically the hegemonic, scientistic modes of theory and practice in favor of alternative non-scientistic ways of

being in the world. Notwithstanding their common adversary and their sharing a formal, circular strategy for theorizing, they re-member the relationship of objects in fundamentally different ways. The mode of re-membering grounds performed by Heidegger differs from that of Marx in that the former's conception of grounds sustains beings (objects) whereas the latter's transforms objects. For Heidegger, the very possibility of beings lies in being ongoingly sustained by their groundedness in Being in the mode of an existential time. For Marx, however, the possibility of objects lies in their being continually produced and reproduced differently. Objects are always already undergoing qualitative development through a kind of producing process which itself undergoes qualitative historical change. Thus, Heidegger's retrospective and meditative remembering stands in marked contrast to Marx's prospective and transforming kind of remembering.

For the Promethian project that would thoroughly transform the historical ensemble of scarcity-bound social relationships and produce new post-scarcity objects in new, post-scarcity ways, Heidegger's non-transformative mode of attending Being--letting being be--is itself a strategic adversary. Marx's sense of human activity, in all its dimensions as historical time, stands in strategic opposition to Heidegger's ontological version of being in the world. It is expressed in a telling, striking epilogue in the very last paragraph of the Introduction to the Grundrisse:

> A man cannot become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child's naivete, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage? Does not the true character of each epoch come alive in the nature of its children? Why should not the historical childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return,

> exercise an eternal charm? There are unruly children and precocious children. Many of the old peoples belong in this category. The Greeks were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the undeveloped stage of society on which it grew. [It] is the result, rather, and is inextricably bound up, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return.[15]

On first reading, the paragraph appears to address the question of how it is possible that contemporary people continue to enjoy Greek art and even valorize it as a classical, authoritative standard for beauty and artistic excellence. As we read it animatedly, however, it also provides an occasion for insight into much more than that. We glimpse Marx's notion of production, development, and the historical constitution of historical grounds for theorizing, its objects, and other transformative activities.

Here, Marx's metaphoric account of human historical development is dinstinctive for its inexorable forward trajectory. Childhood is an integral part of human development, its historical point of departure. But it is <u>not</u> sustainable as childhood, as an object in itself. Development can proceed only prospectively so that the attempt to re-cover childhood <u>as childhood</u>--to go home again, so to speak--still is to move forward, albeit in a self limiting way. It is to develop further degeneratively--becoming not a child once more but childish.

The forward historical movement from childhood to childishness is no mere or literal repetition of the point of departure--that is not possible. Childishness, rather, represents a qualitative decline in the process of human development through which a more qualitatively developed and complex state of existence had been reached before the

degenerative backsliding into childishness. This entropic decadence represents a return to the point of departure in a manner that has failed to develop its negentropic potentialities for qualitatively more complex and fruitful growth.

The moment/point of return in such a developmental course constitutes a qualitative transformation of the moment/point of departure. That transformation, however, is self-limiting or entropic. It is qualitatively depletive and disorganizing relative to a riper, more advanced moment of social development and historical maturation. This historical plunge into childishness is not a failure to sustain childhood as such. This would be impossible. Nor is it a failure to have sustained a radically discontinuous, self-subsistent, self-contained stage of development known as adulthood. Rather, the failure is a failure to persist in an overall historical process of qualitative development, whereby development itself is continued only through the ongoing qualitative transformation of the total ensemble of historical conditions whereby people live--by which life is made possible. Thus it is the historically specific failure to strive persistently which in the ongoing entropic mode of development is childishness.

For Marx, the earlier moment, childhood, cannot return self-identical. Nor could it have stayed the same. It is grounded in the ongoing process of historical development, a process that is relentless and irreversible. Nonetheless, it is possible to sustain childhood. We can sustain it through and as a qualitatively transformed moment of historical development in a more advanced form, or, as Marx puts it, at a higher stage. That mode of childhood, both

partially sustained and partially supplanted in the ongoing course of historically specific human development, is a qualitatively different childhood from the childhood specific to each infant. It is qualitatively different--albeit integrated through human persistence--in ongoing historical development. What is sustained is not a separated or an ungrounded stage, nor a moment consolidated in-itself. Yet the childhood that begins as a stage never to return becomes that qualitatively transformed childhoood whose abiding influence and contribution is re-produced differently at a higher, more complex stage of maturation and development. It becomes a childhood that is, unceasingly, both a beginning and a beginning again--an object-in-birth. The historical conservation of a qualitatively transformed childhood and ongoing refusal of childishness, then, is a paradigmatic metaphor for Marx's notion of human development. It also provides a concise metaphorical glimpse of the workings and intention of his method of critique. Like his account of ancient Greece, the whole metaphor embodies Marx's affirmation of the historical possibility of persistent, negentropic human development as a beginnning and ongoing refusal of senescent decline.

For Marx, then, human historical development is relentless and irreversible. Reproduction on such a version of development is always prospective, never merely repetitive. Moreover, the reproduction of any stage of development, say childhood, is grounded in the context of an ongoing, forward moving social development. Ultimately, this overall movement is the developmental history of the human species. Thus, whereas childhood is recognizable in contrast to adulthood, childhood is epochal and not merely the same regardless of epoch. The

forward motion of historical development continually produces and reproduces childhood as a precondition of further human development. But, given the overall production of qualitative differences from epoch to epoch, it is not the same childhood that is identically produced over and over again. Instead, childhood is an historically specific starting point that is socially produced as an invariant condition of the possibility of further human historical development. It is always produced as a stage never to return in identical form, either in the life of the individual or in the social history of the species.

This extended metaphorical glimpse of human development concludes the Introduction to the Grundrisse. It summarizes well our reconstruction of Marx's critical method as a grounding strategy--and of our own strategy of reading social theory. Indeed, each grounds strategy in development.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," Third Manuscript of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in T.B. Bottomore ed. and trans., Karl Marx: Early Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 203.

2. Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in Robert Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton and Co.: 1978), 2nd ed., p. 12.

3. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

4. Ibid., p. 13.

5. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

6. Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft), trans. Martin Nicolaus (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973).

7. Henri Lefebvre, The Sociology of Marx, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

8. Edward Said, Beginnings: Intention and Method (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. xiii.

9. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 89.

10. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 31.

11. Ibid., p. 27.

12. Ibid., p. 28.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 195.

15. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 111.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRODUCTION AS QUALITATIVE DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will examine the critical relationships in Marx's theorizing between his notion of production and the historical possibility of a basic, qualitative transformation in the ensemble of social relationships through which human development takes place. We start from an examination of what Marx refers to in the Grundrisse as "individuals producing in society," the historical grounds and moment of departure for Marx's theorizing.[1] From there we will analyze the complex nature of Marx's version of producing: its strategic formulation through the methodology, critique and animated reading of Hegelian idealism and political economy. Here we analyze the theoretical and practical meanings for theorizing and political practice of the qualitative development of "individuals producing in society" as that theorizing's moment of return.

In the course of our emancipatory animated reading of Marx's treatment of production, we will closely examine how different theoretical and philosophical treatments of production comprise rival

strategies for severing or linking production to the possibility of qualitative historical change. In this context, we examine philosophical issues like the relationship between the general and the specific, the significance of dualisms for theorizing and other practices, as well as economic issues such as the relationships between production and other economic activities, especially consumption.

In a real sense, this chapter examines what we understand as Marx's struggle to formulate a conception of production which would both articulate and, in part, engender the historical possibility of post-scarcity development.

The Introduction to the Grundrisse begins as follows:

> The object before us, to begin with, material production.[2]

Marx's account of material production begins with an explicit point of departure. In its most fully developed sense, it provides and stipulates the grounds for Marx's understanding of any theorizing and practice--including his own. Thus, we cite the Grundrisse:

> Individuals producing in society--hence socially determined individual production--is, of course, the point of departure.[3]

In my reading, the point of departure stipulated here is a non-dualistic, internally related conception. Production is an historically situated essential activity performed by individuals that are always already socially interrelated. Theorizing is no exception to this. Individuals producing in society is historical process by which Marx's theoretical analysis is made possible.

By making "individuals producing in society" the grounds of his theorizing, Marx is able both to constitute purposiveness in terms

of human agency (rather than as demiurgic creation or natural development), as well as to conceptualize basic human activity as ongoing, irreversible historical production. For Marx, then, a version of activity which is purposive, ongoing, developmental, historical and productive is a necessary precondition for a theorizing which has transformative intentions.

The depth and novelty of Marx's notion of grounds, "individuals producing in society," relative to other rival versions, can be preliminarily discerned against the background of alternative notions of grounds that had once been hegemonic in traditional Western philosophical thought. While any attempt at exhaustiveness would be beyond the task of this work, it is instructive to briefly characterize two such notions for purposes of comparison with Marx's version of grounds.

For instance, Marx's grounds differ from Platonic universals insofar as the latter are immaterial, subsistent, static, unhistorical, eternal verities. There are different versions of the relationship between these grounding universals and the grounded particular entities, whose existence they make possible and sustain through some kind of relationship of participation in the universals. The inter-relationship is always asymetrical, and universals and particulars display fundamentally different kinds of being. Platonic universals are changeless, eternal verities which are ontologically and logically prior to the transitory, changeable particulars whose existence they make possible. The relationship between universals and particulars is dualistic. Marx's contrasting notion of grounding is as we shall see at once general and historically specific. It is also

non-dualistic and rejects an a priori heirarchical division of kinds of being. And finally, it is decidedly material--albeit not in the traditional sense that dualizes matter from spirit.

Aristotle rejected the Platonic notion of an ontologically distinctive mode of being for universals. He denied to universals a self-subsistent, sui generis, logical and ontological status, wholly independent of the material particulars whose existence they made possible. In Aristotle's logic, universals were granted a formal, "mental" existence as abstractions from the material particulars whose fundamental logical and ontological priority they presupposed. Aristotle's were in effect ontologically anchored in the natural world. While functioning formally as a logical category, Aristotle's universals were not granted separate otological existence in a realm divorced from the natural processes that characterized and constituted the being of things. In effect, Aristotle subsumes the formerly self-subsistent Platonic universal in a natural process of teleological development.

The being of natural things in Aristotle's schema is teleological. The matured end-state (or final cause) of a thing emerges through a process of teleological actualization of what is already there at the outset. Thus, as we saw already in Chapter Seven, teleological object development is the activity that grounds Aristotle's theorizing. The end-state, or final cause of the entity, is already there embryonically, as a potentiality which is actualized in the course of its teleological development. The embryonic potentiality of the final cause serves a pre-formed, predetermined process of object development whereby material substance (as material

cause) is informed and thereby fully actualized as an object. The whole course of object development, then, is already implicit there at the outset. It is consolidated and stabilized in the process of actualization, and does not itself undergo qualitative transformation nor give rise to objects that have undergone structural mutations and qualitative deviations from the initial plan.

In Marx, the principles whereby grounding operates are historical rather than natural--that is, if nature is taken in an unhistorical sense. In Marx's theorizing, the theoretical closure against further qualitative changes achieved by Aristotle's natural teleology through its notion of final causality is contravened by a notion of grounding which anchors and posits object development as an open-ended, ongoing, thoroughly historical process. Marx's grounds for theorizing are fully historical and fully developmental. They make possible the qualitative transformation of the principles of production and do not preclude structural mutation or disjunction of the process or its object in order to protect a smooth, self-equilibrated, pre-established form of development. As we read Marx, the structural open-endedness of historical production as a developmental process is insured partly by a grounding notion of production which cannot be reduced once and for all to any historically specific principles of production.

Marx's critique of classical philosophical theorizing, however, does not negate Aristotelian teleology merely through a total rejection of its notion of final causality. Simultaneously, it preserves and appropriates a crucial dimension of Aristotle's teleology, namely its notion of grounds as purposive activity. For

example, Marx defines labor, the activity of "individuals producing in society," in terms of its "simple capacity as purposive productive activity."[4] Whereas the purposeful activity that grounds Aristotle's teleology is the activity of nature itself--or, on a cosmological level, the creative activity of a demiurge--Marx appropriates and reconstitutes this purposive dimension of Aristotle's teleological activity into his humanized notion of grounds as the ongoing, purposive activity of individuals producing in society. This, moreover, is fully historical activity; and it is always the activity of human agency within the context of an historically-specific form of human interdependency.

Let us summarize: Plato grounds theorizing in an unhistorical, static realm of eternal verities. Aristotle subsumes the generative, animating capacities of those Platonic universals into a dynamic system of naturalized teleological development, the ground for his theorizing being a natural teleology that is repeated ad infinitum. In turn, Marx overcomes the theoretical closure of Aristotle's notion of development while appropriating its inherent purposiveness as an integral characteristic of the historical grounds for theorizing.

Let us examine Marx's specific notion of grounds for theorizing, individuals producing in society. There is no question of dualism at the outset, individual versus social, active versus contemplative (passive, etc.). This point of departure is both social and individual. It is an active developmental process which, as a beginning and as production, intends a basic difference in the world. The point of departure is membership, understood as a humanly produced

and producing activity--thus, active member-ing of and by producing individuals. The locus, internal relationship, expression, and dynamics of the interplay of their active membering, "society," is all this.

Society does not exist "out there" as an object-in-itself. Nor is it a passive, empty container for production activities that "take place" within it. Society is the historical activity of members producing. Correspondingly, the individuals that produce (the producing individuals) constitute, by their activity, a social subject. An historically specific social subject is the subject of that kind of producing which constitutes (and is constituted by) their being members. Society is the total active process whereby members ongoingly produce their active membership. Individuals are individual members. An individual's internally related membership is through others. That social link is a precondition of his or her individuality and, thereby, makes it possible.

The activity of membership, a social relationship, is an activity of producing. Individuality so-called is produced as a social activity, the activity of individuation through others' individuating. To quote Marx:

> The human being is in the most literal sense a zoaon politikon animal, not merely a gregarious animal but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society.[5]

From the outset, individuating and membering are inseparable dimensions of the historical process of producing. In turn, production is the activity and ground of the membering by which individuals are constituted and, in turn, consitute their social relationships.

Producing by individuals is made possible as a ground for theorizing through a relationship of belonging, of members producing with respect to a larger, developing social totality. To quote Marx:

> The more deeply we go back into history, the more does the individual, and hence also the producing individual, appear as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole. . . .[6]

This social ground anchors the very possibility of any individuality.

"Individuals producing in society" is the theoretical point of departure which embodies Marx's intention to make an historical difference--to replace scarcity society with a post-scarcity mode of development. In terms of form, the point of departure is produced and re-produced. As an active moment in a strategic methodological intervention into extant theorizing, the point of departure is itself producing. The historical content it embodies is producing also. We enter into a productive circularity. The starting point is made possible only on the basis of the selfsame active historically specific principle, individuals producing in society--which,in turn,it embodies. As a content-form, this moment of departure embodies, develops, indeed, <u>is</u> the overall process of human historical development. It is itself historically produced. Indeed, as we shall note below in our animated reading of Marx's texts, producing is the grounds of theorizing and practical activity alike. It <u>is</u> human social and historical development.

As Marx's point of departure, individuals producing in society is not only produced but re-produced. It begins with and embodies an intention to begin again. The grounding of Marx's theorizing is this beginning and beginning again, the production and reproduction

anew of the point of departure. The starting point, "individuals producing in society," is always a specific moment in the historical process of its own reproduction as a qualitatively different mode of "individuals producing in society." Correspondingly, as the social subject of the process of production, this point of departure initiates and embodies an intention whose aim is transformation and whose object, as a point of return, is itself.

The subject of the transformational process of production is, then, the object of the circular, developmental process. While formally the circularity of a subject that produces itself as its object appears vicious, the process is productive and, thereby, generates a difference: the self-development of the subject whereby it is reproduced as a different kind of object. This transformation, in turn, provides a point of departure for a different kind of producing by different kinds of individuals in a different kind of society. The subject and object (or subject-object) of production, individuals producing in society, is formulated as a unitary process of production. It is not divisible either by dichotomy or otherwise into separate hypostatized entities known as subjects and objects. It transcends the traditional subject-object dualism.

Indeed, the asymmetrical relationship between the qualitatively different moments of departure and return is the heart of this process of production. It formally articulates the possibility of qualitative transformation, new kind of human (or object) development.

Production always embodies more and less conscious intentions of the producing individuals. They constitute their social membership through such processes of producing. The kinds of historically

specific intentions--in their relative degrees of self-consciousness--that inform the activity of producing also undergo qualitative transformation in the process. Thereby, a new kind of object for both theorizing and practical implementation is produced.

A fundamentally different point of departure presents itself as producing without itself being historically produced. That is the individual of classical political economy. In Marx's view, however, both the individual of political economy and the producing individuals of his own critique of political economy are rival strategic standpoints that are both historically produced. The individual of political economy, however, is actively produced by historical amnesia. This activity represses or forgets the overall process of historical development through which the individual is constituted as social category, theoretical standpoint, and historical phenomenon.

Here, historical amnesia signifies the forgetting of grounds for an object or its development. It is a strategic activity that produces appearances--ungrounded objects, not illusions--that suppress their own origins and developmental reality. The individual of classical political economy is just such an historically produced appearance.

Marx's counter-strategy is to re-member the historical origins and appearances of this individual in its deployment by classical political economy:

> 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 one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century--appears as an ideal, whose existence they

> project into the past. Not as an historical result 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.[7]

Further, Marx remembers the historical grounds of this ungrounded appearance in both a retrospective and prospective sense as having been produced and in terms of the on-going development to which it leads--as a Protean force producing in the world. Grounding "the individual" in relationship to the socio-historical conditions that produced it enables Marx to produce an historical account of the producing individual in terms of its ongoing, qualitative, and prospective historical development. Political economy, on the other hand, reads history from the standpoint of just the individual--a self-contained object-in-itself which is allegedly merely "there" all along, as an unhistorical posit of nature. The two strategies conflict: where Marx's critique "historicizes" phenomena, political economy "naturalizes" them. It thereby projects this Natural Individual into historical development as an Origin. Thereby political economy creates a version of history which <u>appears</u> to move forward from that self-subsistent individual as its point of departure.

Thus, as our Marx reads it, classical political economy appropriates history from the standpoint of an historical product to which it assigns strategically an unproduced origin. Fashioning this appearance, it thereby violates the irreversibility of historical development by treating what has developed and is contemporaneous as the absolute origin of what had preceeded it in the actual historical sequence. What exists in the present and has developed that way is treated instead as always already having been there. From this

viewpoint, historical development is read as an ongoing repetition and recapitulation of the selfsame, invariant principles of social life and human nature.

In Marx's view, the real aim of political economy is a strategic one, namely, to eternalize one historical mode of producing--capitalist production. Indeed, capitalist production is the characteristic mode of activity which the individual of political economy necessarily performs. Moreover, this kind of producing presents itself as historically insuperable, to the extent that its principles of development are "made" to appear as if they were always embedded in nature, just as they are. In this re-presentation of history, nature itself is defined as existing as an object-in-itself, fundamentally independent of human social history. Nature might have its own developmental history and engage, perhaps, in evolutionary change. But nature is simply not conceivable as being, even in part, historically constituted through human productive activities. Marx reads this as embodying political economy's strategic intention to stabilize capitalist production:

> But none of all this is the economists' real concern in this general part. The aim rather, is to present production . . . as distinct from distribution, etc., as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history, at which opportunity bourgeois relations are then quietly smuggled in as the inviolable natural laws on which society in the abstract is founded. This is the more or less conscious purpose of the whole proceeding.[8]

By grounding the possibility of any production in natural--rather than historical--development, political economy can then insulate the principles of production from qualitative transformation by human agency. In doing so, it makes the individual a

passive vehicle or mere specification of the natural laws of economic production. Marx views this kind of individual is an historically produced result, not an unhistorical origin. It is produced by the active forgetting of historical grounds, grounds by which producing individuals are made possible. As our Marx reads it, moreover, the active suppression of these historical grounds produces an historically specific appearance. It actively makes the isolated individual appear unhistorically--as part and parcel of an evolutionary natural development of the eternal laws of production.

As we read Marx, the strategic decision to re-cover or re-turn to historical grounds to account for, to ground, the possibility of what appears to be given, is rooted in and expresses present needs, interests, and intentions. This is true of the theoretical appropriations of historical events accomplished both by political economy's "naturalization" strategy, as well as by the "historicization" or grounding strategy by which Marx performs its critique.

For political economy, as Marx reads it, historical and social development proceeds from a pre-established starting point in nature: a pre-historical, pre-social point of departure. The so-called "natural order of things" starts from a nature defined outside and in external relationship to society. First, as an object-in-itself, existing independent and external to historical development. Since nature itself operates in this account, according to principles that establish the individual as a precondition for the possibility of human or social history, the historical present can be explained as merely a linear extension of this natural past of pre-history. Thus, nature is

situated outside of history as its fount and origin. Insofar as the individual is an invariant, natural pre-condition for any human development, the nature which renders it permanent--read immune to qualitative historical change--must also be regarded as an outer limit to any and all human development and historical possibility. Finally, nature is construed in two ways.

In Marx's animated reading of political economy, the historically-specific production of historical dynamics are "naturalized" in order to de-historize the process of social development. Its strategic aim is to re-present it linearly, as merely an elongation or temporal extension of eternal principles of a natural evolution. To "naturalize" history, however, is to appropriate it strategically from the standpoint of present, perhaps prevailing historical interests and political-economic practices. The "naturalization" of history is itself an historically specific strategy for theorizing whereby a politically interested account of historical development is produced. This strategy consolidates present social relationships and practices at the expense of further, ongoing, historical possibilities for their qualitative transformation. Again, the decision to "naturalize" history produces a notion of its origins as simple givens, always just there and, decidedly, <u>not</u> historically produced.

History then develops as if it were merely a linear extension of non-produced, non-transformable principles according to which nature itself must always have operated. This version of history actively consolidates present social practices and modes of social development as always already embedded in the "natural order of things." Here,

what is historically actual is reduced to a permanent,"natural" present. The actual is thereby rendered a "fate": unproblematical, inevitable, and unsurpassable. As a consequence, present actually is strategically severed from the possibility of its being a mode of historical development which undergoes fundamental change. Its brute, irremediable existence is a given, and the rest is silence. From there, social and historical development proceeds according to unproduced principles that remain unchanging and unchangeable.

Political economy's point of departure is a strategic choice: the isolated individual is presented as an unproduced given and decidedly is not grasped in terms of say, some "inner dynamic" whereby it ongoingly undergoes qualitative self-development. This "naturalized" individual is active in accordance with pre-established natural laws which govern its now human nature. While being itself unproduced, one capacity of this individual is its ability to produce. This ability to produce is not accounted for as itself having been historically produced. Furthermore, production is anchored to the standpoint of the self-contained, separate, isolated individual. Therefore, it does not incorporate other people who are also producing as integral, inseparable dimensions of its own possibility. Instead, production is given as an individual and individuated capacity. Active producing, moreover, is not posited as an essential, human characteristic, constitutive of the very possibility of even this isolated individual. Rather, it is given as one amongst other human capacities, an activity in which that individual might freely engage. The individuated producer of political economy, then, is but one

manifestation of the individual as such--the starting point of political economy by means of which individuality is actively severed from sociality. Also, ongoing productive activity is sundered from and made secondary to the capacity for activity--an abiding but not yet activated potential.

One ideological celebration of this individuated capacity for production, production as an abiding passivity, culminates in the Robinsinades of the eighteenth century, its literary reductio ad absurdum. As Marx states it:

> Production by an isolated individual outside society--a rare exception which may well occur when a civilized person in whom the social forces are already dynamically present is cast by accident into the wilderness--is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other. There is no point in dwelling on this any longer.[9]

Marx, as we read him on this, does not treat the Robinson Crusoe mythos as a mere absurdity. Its apparent simplicity is cunningly deceptive. It functions strategically to provide an image of the unhistorical, isolated individual-as-such, existing in some more fundamental, natural mode that is seemingly prior to merely historical individuals. For our Marx, making this kind of individual a natural, primordial starting point is also to make production an individualized, economic capacity--not a social activity or reciprocal constitution. In sum, whereas Marx "historicizes" production as a social activity, the Robinsonade "naturalizes" it as an isolated, individuated capacity.

Production is the economic category of classical political economy which is the focal point of Marx's critique and, in my reading of his texts, the crucial category of his theorizing. As Marx reads

it, political economy represents production as an individuated, "naturalized" category, an object-in-itself. It is represented theoretically in isolation from other economic functions--through external relationships it has with distribution, circulation, exchange, and consumption. In Marx's view, this re-presentation constitutes a "crude tearing apart" of production from its "real relationship" with other economic activities. It accomplishes the abstraction of production from an otherwise organic embeddedness through internal relationship to the rest of economic practices. Production, now individuated, stands outside of the other economic activities in external relationship. In addition, this theorizing works to de-historicize production, removing it from its historically-specific setting. To quote Marx:

> The aim is, rather, to present production--see e.g. Mill--as distinct from distribution etc., as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history . . . .[10]

Political economy re-presents production as an isolated, unhistorical, thing-in-itself--an activity which operates according to eternal principles of natural law. Marx, viewing all re-presentation as strategic intention, reads political economy as engaged in the historically-specific practice of re-producing "production" as an unhistorical <u>appearance</u>. By appearing under the guise of eternity, production as an activity is severed from the possibility of its own qualitative development and historical reformulation.

In Marx's rival reading, the natural laws by which production allegedly operates are themselves historically produced appearances. These appearances mask the fact that the production focal to political economy is that form of production which is historically specific to

the capitalist epoch. This strategic sleight of hand is central to the theoretical strategy of political economy. It takes the deceptive form of general economic laws under whose sway specific historical differences and divergences from those laws become inessential or accidental phenomena. Marx characterizes this "dehistoricizing" strategem as an intention "to confound or to extinguish all historic differences under general human laws."[11]

These general economic laws are then derived from the universal laws of nature, whose unhistorical, eternal modes of existence are prior to and independent of prevailing historical social and economic practices. Producing, thereby, is defined as a strictly economic activity, whose unalterable process is permanently inscribed in nature itself. Historical differences in production are merely particular non-essential variations, instantiations of these universal principles.

The thrust of Marx's critique of political economy is to develop and reformulate qualitatively the category of production--political economy's celebrated centerpiece and bete noir. Political economy aims to eternalize the historical and equilibrate the dynamic. By contrast, Marx's strategy for change is to produce a critique of political economy, designed in part to rehabilitate its conception of production. To practice critique is not merely to interpret or negatively criticize a text or body of theory. Rather, in performing a critique in its initial Hegelian sense is simultaneously to negate the outmoded historical limitations, preserve the partially rational insight, and surpass, by qualitative re-production or reformulation a given account of objects (be they things, society, or

the universe).

Thus, Marx's reading of political economy cannot be reduced to merely an alternative political economy. Instead, Marx's critique must be grasped within the context of his overall strategic reformulation of the political economy as the hitherto prevailing account of the totality of capitalist social practices. Indeed, as we shall note, Marx's critical transformation of the category of production is an integral, vital dimension in carrying out the practical-theoretical, indeed, political intention of formulating and implementing a post-scarcity object.

In order to criticize the prevailing account of capitalism, Marx must demonstrate the limitations of that account and reformulate its terms, categories, logic, methods and grounds. Since a comprehensive analysis of that account is not the task here, we will focus our reading of Marx's project to his strategic account of production and his reformulation of some epistemological and logical relationships by which political economy fashions its theoretical re-presentation of capitalist social relations. We begin with his critique of political economy's version of the general and the specific as they bear on the key issue of production:

> Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development--production by social individuals.[12]

From the outset, Marx re-members production in the context of a specific historical moment situated within a larger course of social development. The historical contextualization of production does not make production an activity of History, the mere effect of an all-determining absolute or universal cause of which production is

merely one of a plethora of manifestations. As is plainly stated in the quote, the historical specification of production does not prevent or negate "individuals producing in society" being considered as a trans-contextual subject of Marx's theorizing. Indeed, for Marx, "individuals producing in society" is at once historically specific and an invariant condition of the possibility of any historical context.

Invariance, as we read and deploy it categorically, signifies an essential, indispensable, or necessary pre-condition of the possibility of some phenomenon existing. Invariance as a category can be grasped either unhistorically as an unchanging, unproduced, outer boundary for human possibilities, or, alternatively, as fully historical, produced, and making possible the emergence of new historical possibilities for human development. Invariance does not necessarily mean unchanging, except on a positivist reading of its meaning whereby it signifies what is static in a world and obdurate to change. An invariance might be a static principle that sets a limit on, or aborts altogether, the further qualitative development of an object beyond its current or eternal state of being, an outer limit to its possibilities. Alternatively, an invariance might be a dynamic principle of qualitative development whereby an object continually (whether actually or potentially) superseded any historically specific limit, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, set on its ongoing development. In this case, an invariance would be expansive and inexhaustible, not restrictive and self-disintegrative once it was reached.

As a dynamic principle of continuous qualitative development, such an invariance would not only be produced historically but also

producing, making new possibilities possible--including that of its own qualitative historical transformation. What is invariant here, then, is the ongoing, qualitative self-development of the historical principle of development itself. For Marx, individuals producing in society, the grounding principle of his theorizing, is this kind of an historical invariance--at once ubiquitous and historically-specific. Whereas the former mode of invariance precludes post-scarcity development, this latter mode embodies and makes it possible.

"Individuals producing in society" does not exist apart from its historical contextualization, nor is it merely reducible to or conceptually exhausted by its relativization to any specific historical setting or organizational process. It is at once historical and transhistorical, historically specific and historically invariant--never one without being the other. Moreover, its historicity is a necessary condition of its possibility, while its fundamental constitutive activity, producing of some (historically-specific) kind, is an invariant, existential pre-condition of the very possibility of human history. "Individuals producing in society" is the constitutive activity of being human, inseparable from human beings understood as an activity. It is the grounding conception of Marx's theorizing, its point of departure and qualitatively transformed point of return. "Individuals producing in society" is the grounding that makes that theorizing possible. At the same time, theorizing is one of its constitutive moments.

From the outset, Marx remembers production as a specific historical moment. However, that moment can be, in turn, situated within a larger course of social and historical development. Thus, to

reiterate from the decisive section of the Introduction to the Grundrisse, already quoted above:

> Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development--production by social individuals.[13]

Again, Marx defines capitalism as one historically determinate form that is grounded in the overall process of historical development of production. To cite Volume III of Capital:

> We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general.[14]

This conception contrasts with political economy's re-presentation of production as an historical specification of unhistorical, general laws of economics. In the first case, Marx's critique of politcal economy, specific production practices as well as social development in general are rendered in historical terms. In the second case, political economy renders relationships between specific production practices and general economic laws as deductive relationships whereby historical phenomena are derived through logically entailment from the unhistorical general axioms. This difference in treatment is not merely theoretical, but strategic. Correspondingly, a fruitful way to read Marx's new kind of politico-epistemological strategy is, in our view, to further explore the logical and epistemological relationships between the general and the specific, specifically as deployed in his critique of the category of production in classical political economy.

The relationship between the general and the specific might be dualized or collapsed in a way that altogether destroys their distinction. One way to obliterate that distinction is to subsume one, say the specific, into the other, say the general. Another way to

extinguish it is to "heirarchize" the two whereby one, say the general, is considered "essential," whereas the other, say the specific, is then deemed "accidental," "secondary," and so, inessential. Political economy, as we read Marx's account of it, utilizes all these formulations of the general-specific relationship to re-present production as a category for theorizing. Combined with the aforementioned "naturalization" of production, these theoretical points constitute a theoretical strategy which renders production incapable of producing or undergoing qualitative historical development and transformation.

The logical relationship between the general (genus) and the specific (differentia) might be posited as a dichotomy. Discourse about production might be conducted, then, either in the general terms of the entirety of human historical development taken as a whole, or, by contrast, in terms that remain strictly relative to a specific historical epoch.

Indeed, the relationship between the generic and the specific in political economy can be read as a dualism. The overall effect of their dualization, then, is to preclude the theoretical constitution of any particular historical epoch or, more precisely mode of production, from formulation as an object-in-birth whose essential characteristic is precisely its qualitative self-development through historical production. In fact, de-historicization of a mode of production--its reduction to a single, historically specific kind of production--is partly accomplished by dichotomizing the generic and the specific determinants of historical production. Once the mutually exclusive polarities are established, political economy re-formulates them

heirarchically whereby, the unchangeable generic becomes primary and essential, and the changeable historical specification is relegated to the secondary or non-essential.

Heirarchization of this sort destroys what for Marx is--as we shall see--their co-essentiality. The strategic heirarchical arrangement is formally achieved through political economy's elevation of the generic to axiomatic status--its being upgraded to the level of natural law. Prevailing economic practices and relationships that are historically specific to the capitalist epoch become "mere" logical derivations--necessary logical entailments in a self-evident deductive procedure. The authority and legitimacy they achieve thereby is derivative: they go unquestioned, a function of the weighty universal status ascribed to the natural laws whose operation they presuppose and embody.

In sum, the strategy that dualizes and heirarchizes general and specific as static characteristics of objects-in-themselves, enables political economy to encase capitalist forms of production in the category of unchanging, essential generality. Capitalist production is thereby immunized from essential, structural alteration from without, as well as from qualitative self-development from within. It is generalized and posited in terms of eternal, natural laws. Specific differences from one instantiation of the selfsame object to the next are defined away or rendered non-essential. Qualitative changes in and through non-substantive attributes are acknowledged but are rendered of secondary concern. They cannot generate a genuine historical difference in human social and historical development.

Marx's theorizing opposes the dichotomization of the general

and the specific, as well as the syllogistic formulation of their logical relationship in terms of linear deduction. His critique of political economy resists the dualistic separation of the general and the specific differentia, as well as the static heirarchy into which they are frozen.

There are several ways in which this strategy stands opposed to a formulation of historical production in terms of the ongoing qualitative development of objects-in-birth. For one, objects-in-birth cannot be formulated when a whole is reduced to the sum product of discrete, general and specific components. Objects-in-themselves, on the other hand, are just such additive combinations of general and differentiating characteristics. In the latter case, these characteristics abide and so, are static. They exist discretely in external relationship to one another. For the object-in-birth, they do not exist discretely, but as internally related, developing moments or dynamic densities of a process of object development.

To dichotomize general from specific characteristics and then set them off in external relationship is to fragment a production process into discrete fragments or self-contained units (qualities, characteristics). These interact in external relationship, but thereby maintain their static, self-identical natures throughout that interaction--along with their, essentially unchanged objects. For production taken as an object-in-itself, general characteristics are deemed essential and constant, whereas specific differences from other objects-in-themselves of the same genus (production) are considered secondary. Any changes they might undergo, or differences they might display, would be considered accidental. Since changes that secondary

characteristics undergo are deemed accidental, meaning non-essential, they do not alter fundamental, generic, or structural properties that constitute the object's (production's) allegedly essential self-identity. Transformation is thereby localized to those secondary characteristics of the object whose changes do not essentially affect its fundamental or structural intactness. The object-as-object maintains its substantial identity permanently through the static or invariant nature attributed to its so-called generic characteristics.

Specific differences that distinguish one object-member of a given genus from another, or which distinguish one state of the object's total disposition from the next, are not considered fundamental to a basic understanding of that object. Specific differences are merely external attributes that either adhere or do not, in external transitory relationship to the true state of the object. They are there or not-there, attached or detached, but always non-essential to any discrete instantiation of the object. Changes among specific differentiae do not qualitatively alter the internal, or structural constitution whereby a generic object maintains its self-abiding identity. Consequently, changes among such qualities are rendered non-essential to a fundamental, qualitative understanding of discrete, self-subsistent objects in themselves and are relegated to secondary status.

In my reading of these texts, Marx posits a notion of production which combine historical specificity and a generality that is irreducible to specific historical context. It constitutes a fundamental, strategic intervention into political's economy's account of production and the logic that establishes and consolidates it. The

cutting edge of that intervention is Marx's bimodal conception of production as simultaneously both production in general and historically specific production.

This notion of production is, in part, strategic. On the one hand, production as a bimodal process strategically undercuts and grounds the re-presentation of the distinction between general and specific as a dualism, as two ontologically distinct kinds of processes or principles of being. From this point of view, then, production is formulated as a unitary process that is, however, internally self-differentiated. Within that unitary conception, its generic and specific determinants exist in an ongoing, internally-related dialectical tension. On the other hand, to grasp production bimodally is to undermine the strategy that would collapse altogether the distinction--and, for Marx, productive tension--between its general and the specific dimensions. Instead, these constitute distinctive yet internally related moments in a unity--an overall process of historical development.

Marx strategically rejects both the dualization and homogenization of the general and the specific as they re-present production. His bimodal conception of production is at once historically-specific and general, so as to be irreducible to any specific historical context. In one mode, production in general (P_1) is an irreducible, invariant condition of the possibility of human history. As such, this notion of production is phenomenological--it is concerned with the historical grounds whereby objects, events, theorizing and practices are made possible. With the second sense of production (P_2), Marx asserts its historical-specificity within a specific social formation, a particular historical epoch.

As we read Marx's texts, production construed in this bimodal sense constitutes the ground for Marx's theorizing activity. Neither sense of production, (P_1) nor (P_2), stands outside the other in external relationship. Nor do they stand, in any other sense, "atop" or "inside" some ontologically different common ground which supports or contains them. Rather, they exist in unison, internally related as the selfsame process of development through and as production, co-essential principles, of Marx's grounding activity. Together they constitute a kind of grounding which is neither dualistic nor hierarchical. Again, his version of grounding is neither historically relative, nor transhistorical, nor is it ahistorical.

In the Grundrisse, Marx characterizes production in general (P_1) as follows:

> It might seem, therefore, that in order to talk about production at all we must either pursue the process of historic development throught its different phases, or declare beforehand that we are dealing with a specific historic epoch such as e.g. modern bourgeois production, which is indeed our particular theme. However, all epochs of production have certain common traits, common characteristics. Production in general is an abstraction, but a rational abstration in so far as it really brings out and fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition.[15]

Production-in-general is not a category that exists in externality to the overall development of any specific historical epoch. It is both formulated as a category and can be grasped as production only from within a specific historical epoch. It has no transhistorical reality. "It" can only be "sifted out" by "rational abstraction" from its real embeddedness in specific production processes through theoretical comparisons of different historical contexts. Further, it is no less ultimately "real" for being

inseparable from historically specific production practice--unless, of course, the category is hypostatized as an ideal being. Indeed, production by human beings in general cannot exist apart from its embeddedness within and in internal relationship to an historically specific mode of production. Historical specification, then, is a necessary principle and condition of the possibility and intelligibility of production in general. Again, in the Grundrisse, we find a characterization of production in the internally related, complementary mode, historically specified production (P_2):

> Production in general is an abstraction, but a rational abstraction in so far as it really brings out and fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition. Still, this general category, this common element sifted out by comparison, is itself segmented many times over and splits into different determinations. Some determinations belong to all epochs, others only to a few. [Some] determinations will be shared by the most modern epoch and the most ancient. No production will be thinkable without them. . . .[16]

Above, Marx's formulation of bimodal production from the standpoint of production-in-general (P_1) led to the "discovery" of its historical specification (P_2) as a necessary condition of the very possibility of production-in-general. Here, given the internal relatedness of the two modalities, it equally clear that just as the general "element" is found in the specific, the specific "element" is always a determination of the general. Thus, the formulation of bimodal production from the standpoint of its historical specification (P_2) leads here to the complementary "discovery" of production in general (P_1), as a thoroughly historical principle of the very possibility of historically specific production and development. This is exemplified in Marx's statement in Capital Volume III of the relationship of capitalist production (P_2) to production in general (P_1):

relationship of capitalist production (P_2) to production in general (P_1):

> We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under specific historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves. . . .[17]

The foregoing comparative analysis of logical and epistemological relationships between the general and the specific was performed from the standpoint of our problematic of scarcity and abundance. The rival versions of this relationship, that of political economy and Marx's critique, are pivotal elements in a more far-reaching contest, the strategic formulation of production, a category of critical political significance for historical and social development. Indeed, what matters here is Marx's protracted struggle to formulate a category of fundamental change: one that could articulate and promote qualitative transformation, for and through political-theoretical <u>praxis</u>. To this end, the internal, dialectical linkage of the-general-and-the-specific as a bimodal conception of production is indispensable.

Production in this bimodal sense must be grasped as an "invariance." As we read and deploy it here, invariance signifies the strategic choice of a reality principal: an essential, indispensable, or necessary pre-condition--i.e., ground--of the very possibility of some phenomenon existing. Further, invariance as a category for theorizing might be grasped either unhistorically as an unchanging, unproduced, outer boundary for human development--like the nature of political economy. Or, alternatively, it might be construed as fully

historical: thereby both produced and making possible the emergence of new historical possibilities for human development. Invariance does not necessarily signify "unchanging"--or, for that matter, "unhistorical"--except on a positivist reading of it, whereby it signifies what is static in the world and obdurate to change--as in the "nature" of political economy. In that case, an invariance signifies a static principle that sets limits on, or altogether aborts, the further qualitative development of an object beyond its current or eternal state of being. This invariance is an outer limit to its possibilities. However, invariance can be a dynamic principle of qualitative development whereby an object might continually supersede any historically specific limit previously set on its ongoing development. In this case, an invariance would be inexhaustible and not restrictive, expansive and self-disintegrative once the previous outer limit had been reached. It is, in short, a dynamic principle of continuous qualitative development.

In Marx--unlike political economy--such an invariance would not only be historically produced but would also be producing and making new possibilities possible. Critically, these possibilities must include that of its own qualitative historical transformation, the qualitative self-development of bimodal production--the historical principle of development itself. For Marx, individuals producing in society, the grounding principle of his theorizing, is precisely this kind an historical invariance. It is bimodal: at once ubiquitous as production-in-general, as well as historically specific. In Marx's theorizing, the irreducible element in production, production-in-general, embodies the historical possibility of emergent kinds of

production beyond the specific one that prevails. As an historical invariance, it harbors the possibility, intention, and expectation of post-scarcity development. Political economy, by contrast, reduces generality--read "production in general"--to specificity--read "capitalist forms". On this basis, it is no longer possible to grasp production transcontextually. That is, production cannot then be construed bimodally as an invariant principle of negentropic change which is irreducible to any historically-specific form of production. To stabilize prevailing production against such qualitative transformation, political economy strategically defines generality in terms of eternal, natural laws. These, in turn, mask the historically specific dynamics of capitalist production from historical analysis and make them appear changeless and eternal.

As a category, in political economy, production loses its boundary-breaking, transcontextual, and, thereby, negentropic dimension. Historically specific relationships of capitalist production get concealed by being raised to the level of abstracted generality. Historical production as a general precondition for the possibility of any history is thereby reduced to the frozen specific limits of the immediate historical context. Correspondingly, the relationship between the general and the specific loses its dialectical tension and is collapsed and appropriated to specific capitalist forms. This makes of historically specific capitalist production an unhistorical, invariant, principle of limitation for human existence. However, from Marx's point of view, historically specific determinations of production are no less crucial determinants of the overall nature and course of historical development than is

production-in-general. Their re-presentation in the general form of unhistorical natural law is a strategy designed to dehistoricize capitalist production, and thereby, to abort its own possibilities for undergoing further qualitative historical transformation.

As we read Marx, the formulation of the specific principles of capitalist production in the general terms of universal laws of nature serves "to extinguish all historic differences under general human laws."[18] Since historically specific differences between forms of production are co-essential in articulating and fostering the possibility of qualitative historical transformation, they need to be rescued from their "de-historicization" by political economy. Thus, in the Grundrisse, Marx asserts the strategic significance of re-membering specific kinds of historical production in terms of their essential differences. To quote:

> . . . however, even though the most developed languages have laws and characteristics in common with the least developed, nevertheless, just those things which determine their development, i.e. the elements which are not general and common, must be separated out from the determinations valid for production as such, so that in their unity--which arises already from the identity of the subject, humanity, and of the object, nature--their essential difference is not forgotten. The whole profoundity of those modern economists who demonstrate the eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relations lies in this forgetting.[19]

For our Marx, re-membering essential, historically specific differences is a retrospective activity that makes the present incomprehensible on any basis other than previous qualitative, historical development. If there was a qualitatively different past, then the present is a result of qualitative transformation and, critically, is capable of grounding a fundamentally different future.

Through historical amnesia, then, political economy suppresses historically specific differentiae outside of the parameters of the prevailing forms and dynamics of production. Specific differences in previous or emergent kinds of production are strategically forgotten--suppressed--in their qualitatively different, pre-capitalist or proto-communist forms. Indeed, by forgetting specific essential differences, political economy forgets the historical grounds whereby capitalism becomes possible as a form of life. Correspondingly political economy is strategically able to erase the historical memory of violent transitions from feudalism, prevent the theoretical articulation of qualitative difference outside the possibilities offered by the prevailing economic system, legitimate profit and class power imperatives by "raising" them from the level of human intention to that of natural law, and produce generally an amnesiac portrait of harmonious socio-economic functioning. Against this kind of strategic forgetting, Marx asserts strategic essentiality of remembering specific differentiae as an essential facet in formulating the future possibility of producing in a qualitatively different way.

Marx formulates his notion of production in part through a process of negation, affirming, preserving, and transcending the body of strategic theoretical discourse called political economy. In addition, his unique notion of production is formulated through his critique--again, affirmation, negation and transcendence--of the alternative version of the nature of the relationships existing between production and the other economic activities--consumption, distribution, circulation, and exchange--produced by Hegel's idealist dialectics. Our Marx's version of production, then, is the outcome of

his critique of these two "one-sided" accounts of production: that is, it is strategically formulated to overcome both economistic materialism and Hegel's speculative idealism.

In Marx's view, both political economy and the idealist reproach to it are one-sided accounts of the totality of economic activity--a reconstruction of the totality which reduces its complexity to a reductionistic standard of what is real, knowable and intelligible. Consequently, for Marx, the strategic need is to formulate a non-partial account of the totality of social and economic processes. That account would surpass the seemingly total, albeit one-sided accounts of economic activity fashioned by each of these two major--and, together, hegemonic--theoretical rivals. For Marx, it is especially necessary to transcend the opposition of these two rivals. For in both cases social reality is formulated in a way that remains confined to material scarcity through extant kinds of producing.

This opposition is expressed in several ways. One is their rival re-presentation of the relationships among the different kinds of economic practices. Political economy re-presents production, consumption, circulation, consumption, exchange, et al. as separable or separate practices, which are analyzable as objects-in-themselves. Political economy becomes the study of an economic system: a sum total of economic practices or combination of interrelationships which are contingent rather than necessary, external rather than organic or internal. This re-presentation of economic categories, as if they were "independent, autonomous neighbours,"[20] is strategically criticized by Hegelian social thought for "barbarically tearing apart things which belong together."[21] In place of a segmented, disjunctive linearity,

these idealist social theorists posit an alternative: an idealized conception of economic activity in which, in the last analysis, "production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical."[22] In sum, whereas political economy renders economic activities in their diverse separateness (in terms of their individualized differences) idealist social thought renders them in terms of their allegedly underlying, ideal identity. Specific empirical differences are considered to be only apparent. Political economy accounts for economic activity as a set of material, externally related, discrete practices. Production here becomes solely the manufacture of material goods. Speculative idealism accounts for economic activity as, in the last analysis, an idea: any internally related, organic unity. Economic production thereby loses its distinctness as it is theoretically melded into ideal homogeneity.

As Marx reads them, these two views are equally partial--and complementary--one-sided accounts. On the one hand, political-economy offers an overspecified, individuated set of separately objectified economic activities which are additively combined to form an object-in-itself: an economy--the economic structure of capitalist society. On the other hand, we see an underspecified, overgeneralized organic totality wherein the actual differences between the diverse economic activites are melded together to form a self-identical, ideal unity.

While differing significantly from one another--especially in terms of internal and external relationships--political economy and speculative idealism nonetheless share the common strategic intention of positing and constituting a stable, self-equilibrating

social-economic object for theorizing. In doing so, they ratify a closed world incapable of undergoing or producing further qualitative development. Indeed, while the empiricist account produces an object whose stability is given, the Hegelian rendition of objects produces an ideal totality whereby an equally final stability is achieved on the basis of a dynamic process of development whose outcome is pre-determined. But what is crucial for Marx's project, as we read it, is to formulate an open-ended, qualitatively developing object for theorizing, one that articulates and embodies the Promethean desire to overcome scarcity. The object appropriate to that strategic intention is neither political economy's object-in-itself nor Hegelian idealism's self-equilibrating ideality. It is, once more, an object-in-birth.

Again, the one-sideness of Marx's theoretical rivals, political economy and Hegelian idealism, is partly demonstrated by their mutually exclusive notions of materiality and ideality. This mutual exclusivity of matter and idea is, however, precisely what joins them: their formation of opposite theoretical poles makes up the culturally hegemonic dualism that dichotomizes matter from consciousness, dualizes body and mind, et al. Together they constitute two sides of a coin; they constitute equally one-sided standpoints which together subdivide reality against itself, reduce what is possible to only two, mutually exclusive states, and they circumscribe developmental processes through internal schism and self-negation, thereby exhausting the actual. They do so by monopolizing and coopting the potential the actual for developing in emergent, qualitatively novel ways. In these ways, then, dualistic theorizing and practices are inimical to abundant modes of activity which undertake the very

transcendence of dualism and engage in on-going, qualitative development.

The theoretical schism of political economy and speculative idealism produce this matter-consciousness duality within the domain of economic discourse and theorizing. Each formulates production in terms that negate one another's underlying ontology; the formulation of the one's notion of matter proceeds in terms of a strategic rivalry with the other's notion of ideality. Their mutual exclusivity by no means denies their internal relatedness as partners to a theoretical discourse conducted within the absolute constraints posed for theory and practice by the material-ideal dualism. Thus, their strategic rivalry merely reproduces again and again the terms of that hegemonic dichotomy. Constrained by such outer limits, these rival theoretical versions of production and economic activity remain bound to historically-specific outer limits posed to theorizing and other activity alike by material scarcity.

The relationships of dualistic theorizing and material scarcity await further elaboration. Nonetheless, at this point, it is possible to read Marx's reformulation of production as a fully material activity in terms that transcend the dualism of matter and consciousness. Transcendence in Marx, however, does not signify an absolute annihilation of the previous state, now allegedly fully transcended. Rather, as previously indicated, it is an activity that preserves and appropriates moments integral to their previous opposition and reconstitutes them in a new way. Thus, Marx's version of matter is material in a way that does not annihilate consciousness or somehow define itself exclusive of ideality. Indeed, through

critique, it becomes possible to read Marx's version of historical production as a material activity in a sense that is replete with--without homogenizing them--activities as diverse as discourse, theorizing, making art, etc. (activities formerly deemed spiritual, ideal or, at least, non-material) among its full--indeed, limitless--range of historically-specific significations. In this, of course, it is crucial to remember that in Marx's bimodal notion of production is the pervasive ground of any activity and, therefore, is an economic practice to boot. Historical development, then, is read and formulated as a material process in the abundant, non-dualized sense of an ever-developing array of internally related, multidimensional kinds of producing.

Our focus, to reiterate, remains production. Thus, to summarize the foregoing in this light, we see that Marx formulates a strategic version of matter which has crucial bearing on his conception of production. Production, here, is always "material"; but signifies a non-one-sided version of matter which transcends the traditional mind-body dualism.

Marx re-asserts the primacy of historical production as a "material" process of development whose materiality trancends idealist theorizing, as well as political economy's reductive version of matter that stands in dualistic opposition to what is ideal. His strategy is not that of a Hegelian idealist, nor that of a reductionist, one vulgar materialist whose theorizing can be summed up as "turning Hegel on his head," mechanically substituting material causes for ideal ones. Marx's strategy is to surmount both vulgar materialism and idealism as inadequate accounts of the possibility of objects; and, thereby to

accomplish a version of production that articulates development beyond the seemingly final constraints of the mind-matter duality.

As we read Marx's theorizing, his strategy is a two-fold critique, an animated reading of rival notions of production. On the one side, Marx takes aim at the economistic reduction of production to the producing of material goods. On the other, his theorizing targets the speculative, mataphorical treatment of production whereby it takes on an ideal existence within a virtually homogeneous, abstracted social-economic totality.

Marx's strategy is to ground all viewpoints, to account for their possibility as one-sided standpoints. Indeed, Marx accounts for the possibility of their one-sidedness in terms of their common grounding within the historically specific, capitalist mode of production. His strategy in relation to political economy is to negate and surpass it both in terms of its theoretical separation of production from other economic activities and its qualitative reduction of the range of significations and practices of production to that of manufacturing "goods"--discrete, quantifiable, tangible objects. His strategy relative to idealist social thought is to negate and surpass its strategic dissolution of the crucial differences between production and other major economic activities; all within a virtually homogeneous, abstracted socio-economic totality. In the case of speculative idealism, Marx appropriates its constitution of production in terms of a logic of internal relationships, while casting aside its one-sided reduction of those relationships to merely ideal status. And, in the case of political-economy, he appropriates its version of production as concrete material activity, while abandoning its

formulation in terms of external relationships, as well as its reduction to only economic terms. The emergence of Marx's full-blown --non-economistic/non-idealist--version of bimodal production can be grasped as the qualitative re-constitution of each partial, one-sided notion of production in a way that both negates them and synthesizes what is preserved in the new form of a new object-in-birth for theorizing and other practical activity. We continue to elaborate this below.

Marx's theorizing posits and deploys a non-one-sided version of production. This version is simultaneously the historical ground for theorizing, and the historical activity by which society, in the open-ended totality of its developing social relations, is historically produced, producing, re-produced, and qualitatively transformed.[23]

For our Marx, production is at once a category of economic activity and, as the historically-produced ground of the historical possibility of any activity, by no means merely economic. His version of production always already escapes economistic reformulation. As we read Marx, then, he reconstitutes the prevailing versions of production and expands its usual, economistic range of applicability to cover and account for the possibility of the social totality in all of its internally-related, developing relationships. Next, we will briefly glimpse his critique of economism.[24]

Marx's stance towards economism is displayed in the following critique of Proudhon's one-sided theorizing:

> M. Proudhon considers economic relations as so many social phases, engendering one another, resulting one from the other like the antithesis from the thesis, and realizing in their logical sequence the impersonal reason of humanity.

> The only drawback to this method is that when he comes to examine a single one of these phases, M. Proudhon cannot explain it without having recourse to all the other relations of society. . . .[25]

As we read Marx, Proudhon's one-sided economism cannot adequately explain the complex dialectical interplay amongst reciprocally developing social processes. Such reductionistic theorizing generates an unhistorical, linear succession of "phases" of social evolution, each one a separate, self-contained sphere of social activity--each an object-in-itself. Marx puts it this way:

> When, after that, M. Proudhon, by means of pure reason, proceeds to give birth to these other phases, he treats them as if they were new-born babes. He forgets that they are the same age as the first . . . . The different limbs of society are converted into so many separate societies, following one upon the other.[26]

By focusing one-sidedly on the economic element as the original determinant of the other phases of a linearized social development, reductionistic theorizing loses the simultaneity of reciprocal, internally-related development among unevenly developing social practices and processes. Marx sums up this critique of one sided, economistic theorizing:

> How, indeed, could the single logical formula of movement, of sequence, of time, explain the structure of society, in which all relations coexist simultaneously and support one another?[27]

For Marx, then, individuals producing in society is a decidely non-economistic, non-one-sided account of production; rather it is constituted as a category through a critique of re-presentations of production. Society as a whole becomes the ongoing, simultaneous, unevenly developing totality of historically produced and producing social relationships both which and through which individuals are

producing. Read non-economistically, producing is the omni-dimensional and specifiable activity by which human beings reciprocally fashion the conditions of one another's lives--their lives being defined as the developing, internally related totality of all life spheres.

Indeed, to speak of separate life spheres at all is already to have reified and abstracted each one from a totality of living, internally related processes of historical development. Economistic readings of historical development dismember the economic "limb" of society from the rest and treat it simultaneously in isolation from the others and as their all-determining cause. Historical development is thereby arrested within the framework of the prevailing economic organization, bound as it is to material scarcity. Non-economistic readings of historical development do not separate out the "economic factor" as an object-in-itself and treat the rest of social reality dualistically as a non-economic residue. Thus, by declining to dualize economic from non-economic, production can remain internally linked to social development and its newly emergent historical possibilities.

We can illustrate non-economistic readings of social development with a recent meta-theoretical account that understands economic moments as both pervading and pervaded by so-called non-economic moments in their ongoing, internal relatedness. Thus, Albert and Hahnel offer a simultaneous, four-dimensional perspective through which to grasp the totality of social development. To analyze any one of those non-isolatable dimensions--economic, kinship, community, and political moments--entails the recognition of the inseparability of the other three as internally related, constitutive factors. We quote from their Marxism and Socialist Theory to display

their approach:

> So in general, though particular human activities are often more consciously oriented toward one of the "spheres" of social life than others, every activity can nonetheless be viewed from each of the four angles to reveal in turn its economic, kinship, community and political attributes. In the factory, for example, activity is usually thought of in terms of its economic features, the workers' personalities are altered, cultural norms are affected on the line, and rules are continually elaborated, obeyed, or broken. In the family, by the same token, activity is usually conceptualized in terms of kinship relations yet goods are consumed and dinners produced, cultural and religious norms obeyed or altered, and political attitudes inculcated. Similar examples of multiple effects could be pointed out within community and political activity, but the essential point is clear: the price of abstracting from the "secondary" moments of activities that are classified to be of "one particular sphere" is too high to endure in all but the most peripheral instances. Each type of activity incorporates all the others--none is isolatable.[28]

For Marx, all life spheres are not only mutually incorporated as a totality of internal relationships. Further still, they develop as so many kinds of historically specific human activities which are at once produced as well as producing. Given our reading of Marx's version of production, an historically specific society--or, rather individuals producing in society--becomes the totality of dynamic, developing and--in our expanded, non-economistic sense--historically produced as well as producing ensemble of internal relationships among producing individuals. Here, we will call this historically specific, qualitatively developing ensemble of internal relationships among the producing individuals, by Marx's term, a <u>mode</u> of production. In our usage, it is an object-in-birth.

This, however, is only a provisional reading of Marx's term. Our immediate aim has been to begin staging a plausible,

non-economistic reading and deployment of this nearly iconic term. Such a reading is, as we shall see, indispensable to the strategic formulation of a post-scarcity object for theorizing and practice. For one thing, mode of production is formulated in a way that transcends the cultural hegemony of traditional dualisms--mind/matter, society/nature, etc. A non-economistic reading of production and mode of production would be unencumbered by such dichotomies. This strategy for reading opens and develops new theoretical possibilities of articulating social development beyond the limitations of the extant form of economic organization.[29] Together, as we shall make clear, these dualisms would enmesh theorizing within the confines of a scarcity-boundedness to the prevailing mode of production. Alternatively, a non-economistic reading would reformulate them--the material and spiritual, human relations and things, production and distribution, economy and society, et al.--as pivotal, internally related moments of a mode of production now reconstituted as an historical object-in-birth capable of post-scarcity developments. Our immediate task here is to develop further the resonances, significations, and densities of this pivotal category of Marx, mode of production.

In Marx's view there is no production outside of a historically specific mode of production. Instead, whether of a specific kind or as production-in-general, production must be grasped and apprehended from within the selfsame historical epoch or mode of production that provides the historically-specific standpoint for theoretical analysis. Again, there can be no privileged epistemological vantage point--as in the neutral ground of an ideal

observer--outside of the mode of production which grounds the theorizing. As for the generic elements of production-in-general, these cannot be determined by or derived from de-contexutalized, de-historicized, universal laws of nature. Nor are they "built up" or generalized from given empirical data since, as was noted above, Marx's theorizing is not empiricist.[30] Instead, as we noted earlier, the generic elements of production are actively established--indeed produced!--through a comparative "sifting-out" process of "rational" abstraction that analytically establishes the determinations of production in common to all historical epochs. Most important, this process and its theoretical product--production-in-general--are inseparable from the real, historically specific location which grounds them and, thereby, makes them possible. Thus, Marx theorizes in a radically immanent way: his theorizing, like that of any other historically specific kind of production, is self-consciously produced and, as a strategy, produces within an historically specific mode of production. Indeed, there is no "outside" to Marx's notion of producing as a bimodal activity. Production as the object for his theorizing, as well as the theorizing activity itself, is grounded and thereby made historically possible by the prevailing mode of production.

Again, the non-possibility of there being a transcendent position object or ground in any sense "outside" the overall historical process of production is implicit in Marx's account of any mode of production as an "historically produced social production process."[31] Indeed, the very notion, "mode of production," is itself formulated self-consciously from within a mode of production. Since it too is

produced bimodally, its production--like that of any object--is formulated through an activity which knows itself to transcend the duality of inside/outside.

The political economists, by contrast, reconstruct production in terms of a model of the economy, an "economic system." This reconstruction--unlike mode of production--appears from the outside as though it were self-contained and self-subsistent--an object-in-itself. Its operations can be articulated as a closed system of logic. Marx likens it to a syllogism which has a certain formal coherence but remains a "flat tautology," a "shallow coherence." As such, this closed model escapes the developmental possibilities of, say, the hermeneutic circle. Marx characterizes the model of the economic system as if it were a syllogism:

> The obvious trite notion: in production, the members of society appropriate (create, shape) the products of nature in accord with human needs; distribution determines the proportion in which the individual shares in the product; exchange delivers the particular products into which the individual desires to convert the portion which distribution has designed to him; and finally, in consumption, the products become objects of gratification, of individual appropriation. . . .Thus, production appears as the point of departure, consumption as the conclusion, distribution and exchange as the middle, which is however itself twofold, since distribution is determined by society and exchange by individuals. . . . Thus production, distribution, exchange and consumption form a regular syllogism; production is the generality, distribution and exchange the particularity, and consumption the singularity in which the whole is joined together. This is admittedly a coherence, but a shallow one.32

First, this model itself is static and requires a source of motion, a dynamic motor which operates within but originates outside of the syllogistic system. This dynamic function is provided first by production in accord with natural law, while terminal stasis is

prevented by consumption. Indeed, in this Aristotelian dramaturgy, consumption acts as a deus ex machina which first actualises the process and then, having terminated it, initiates it anew.

Further, in this syllogistic model, the relationships between the economic functions are formalized and re-presented as a linear sequence of activities which exist outside one another, albeit in external relationship. Taken together, their activities constitute and complete a circular process. This begins with the act of production and concludes in a terminus, an end-in-itself, the act of consumption. Consumption, in Marx's reading of political economy, is rendered as a discrete activity, an object-in-inself which "actually belongs outside economics."[33] Indeed, the act of consumption is "the concluding act in which the product becomes product"; concluding because the product "steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need and satisfies it in being consumed." In Aristotelian terms, this model of the economy is a teleological process whereby consumption actualizes the potential for meeting needs which abides with production. Upon realization, consumption spontaneously and automatically becomes a first cause and magically re-activates the selfsame, repetitive process from a theoretical standpoint that is technically outside the economic process.

What is essential to grasp here, for our strategic purposes, is the strategic account of production entailed by the logic of political economy's model "economic system." The entire system is allegedly grounded in natural laws. Their operations, in the form of say, production, are formalized in terms of Aristotelian, syllogistic logic. Again, specific economic practices, like production, are then

formally derived from those natural laws in a seemingly linear process of deduction. And yet, for all its apparent linearity and protest against vicious circularity, this mode of theorizing "doth protest too much." In fact, as our Marx reads it, the general laws are first abstracted from prevailing specific practices and then re-presented as if they were aboriginal general/universal axioms from which all specific/particular practices are then, in turn, duly "derived." They are thereby rendered necessary, rational, and legitimate.

In sum, the actual deduces itself from itself, the given begets its own givenness. The defender of theorizing against vicious circularity is unmasked as the very practitioner of the cardinal offense against all rationality and intelligibility. In this way, capitalist production is encased in the appearance of axiomatic natural law and begets itself. The apparently general engenders the historically specific as its seemingly necessary derivation.

Production, then, is rendered tautologically--in formal terms, as a vicious circle. As a result, unlike the hermeneutic circle, production cannot undergo further qualitative transformation. It is "naturalized" and, rendered stable for eternity. Production, thereby, is formalized as an integral part of an automatically self-repeating process. Both part and whole here are rendered unproduced, unchanging, and unchangeable. In this way, moreover, economic activity is strategically totalized as a self-enclosed object-in-itself. It is thereby rendered unproduced and incapable of being produced differently. Taken as an economic system, then, economic activity is formally circumscribed by material scarcity and pre-empted from undergoing--or producing--qualitative transformation.

Hegelian idealism produced yet another model of economic activity which, unlike Marx's mode of production, at once denies any basic distinction between economic activities and de-materializes them by dissolving and resolving their differences in an idealized unity.

The Hegelian account of economic process demonstrates the harmonious unity and self-identity of the entire process, thereby "positing production and consumption as identical." That is, in strategic contrast, "autonomous neighbors," discrete entities torn apart by the theorizing of political economy, show that consumption and production are utterly identical as moments of a single activity. The subject of that singular act is society which, in the Hegelian account, is "speculatively" rendered as a "single subject."[34]

In the Grundrisse, Marx recounts the logic which informs the Hegelians' threefold rendition of the identity of production and consumption. These identities run as follows: as an immediate identity; as an identity whereby they mediate each other's existence while still remaining "external" to one another without being totally subsumed into a homogenous singularity; and, finally, as an identity which each counterpart directly creates in completing itself. Marx examines how Hegelian theorizing produces the identification of production and consumption. For example, the third form of their identity, their reciprocal creation through each one's activity of self-completion, is spelled out as follows:

> Not only is production immediately consumption and consumption immediately production, not only is production a means for consumption and and consumption the aim of production, i.e. each supplies the other with its object. . . .but also, each of them, apart from being immediately the other, and apart from mediating the other, in addition to this creates the other in

> completing itself, and creates itself as the other. Consumption accomplishes the act of production only in completing the product as product by dissolving it, by consuming its independently material form, by raising the inclination [to consume] developed in the first act of production, through the need for repetition, to its finished form; it is thus not only the concluding act in which the product becomes product, but also that in which the producer becomes producer.[35]

In yet another characterization of economic activities, production and consumption are equated:

> On the other side, production produces consumption by creating the specific manner of consumption; and, further, by creating the stimulus of consumption, the ability to consume, as a need. This last identity. . . [is] frequently cited in economics in the relation of demand and supply, of objects and needs, of socially created and natural needs.
> Thereupon, nothing simpler for a Hegelian than to posit production and consumption as identical.[36]

As we read it, a strategic intention of Hegelian theorizing is to stabilize the social totality by demonstrating the fundamental and immediate unity of entities and activities which, on other accounts, appear separate and in mutual opposition. As a self-identical unity, production-consumption becomes the non-contradictory, singular act of one self-identical, ultimately harmonious subject, namely society. The assertion of its ideal self-identity functions ultimately to re-present it as always already self-harmonized. Apparent instabilities and contradictions become so many moments of a more fundamental, ideal process of the object's self-equilibration. The idealist account of human activity is achieved by an <u>a priori</u> dialectic of harmony. Its object for theorizing is society rendered as an unhistorical, speculative, merely logical totality. Major constitutive moments of such a speculative whole, economic activities like production and consumption, wind up de-materialized, de-historicized and--through

their predetermined harmony--de-politicized.

In our view, Marx's strategy is to formulate an alternate version of social development whereby economic practices--especially production and consumption--are rendered neither as identical nor as discrete and autonomous. The strategic formulation of mode of production as a new alternative to these two rival constructions of economic activity is accomplished in part as a critique of the rival logics and epistemologies that undergird them. On the one hand, Marx does not formulate mode of production as an addition of economic activities interconnected through external relationships. Nor does he produce mode of production as a set of internal relationships whose ontological status is ideal rather than material.

As we read Marx, he views the one-sided, idealist account of production and consumption that renders them, in terms of their internal relatedness, as a decisive advance over the empiricist account that renders them as always discrete, separate, "autonomous neighbors." That is, speculative idealism fashions an account that permits their totalization. Indeed, the category of totality is essential for a theorizing whose aim is to accomplish a total historical difference--the production of a new mode of production no longer bound to the parameters of material scarcity. Unlike speculative idealism, this difference for Marx is not merely theoretical but rather strategic--historical and material--as opposed to a merely speculative difference.

As we read the logic of Marx's strategizing, then, what the Hegelian account of political economy achieves in surpassing the external separation of objects of the empiricist rendition must be

weighed against what it loses in its de-materialization of the whole within which those formally separated objects become interally interconnected. While it possesses the capacity to conceptualize formally objects in the process of their self-development, it is unable to preclude anything but an idealized, unhistorical account of that process as an *a priori* self-harmonization of the social totality. Thus, while overcoming the empiricist rupture of production and consumption, the Hegelian account achieves merely ". . . the dialectical balancing of concepts, and not the grasping of real relations."[37] The category of a whole composed of and by internal relationships enables theory to advance beyond a conception of the object as an ultimately static and groundless object-in-itself. However, in its Hegelian version, the whole it produces remains speculative. As Marx puts it:

> The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, is a product of a thinking head, which appropriates the world in the only way it can, a way different from the artistic, religious, practical and mental appropriation of this world. The real subject retains its autonomous existence outside the head just as before, namely as long as the head's conduct is merely speculative, merely theoretical.[38]

As Marx reads them, both political economy and the speculative idealist acounts, present production and consumption are presented on the same plane, so to speak. Neither, as an economic practice, is presented as taking theroetical or practical primacy *vis a vis* the other. They are represented as self-identical in the idealist account, and as discrete, externally related economic practices for political economy. Marx's critique of these rival standpoints asserts the unequivocal primacy of production to consumption and, further, to

distribution, exchange and circulaton as well. But again, we read Marx's version of production in a non-economistic way.

Marx does not assert the primacy of a one-sided version of production. Here, Marx's version of production is read neither as a strictly economic activity nor as a non-economic activity. Moreover, unlike its rivals, it is read and formulated from within an historically specific mode of producton. Still more important, historical specification through a concrete mode of production and historical irreducibility to any historically specific mode of production, are the hallmarks of Marx's version of production. Indeed, as we read Marx, it is this version that gives mode of production its primacy as a category for Marx's theorizing. This primacy holds sway over all other economic and non-economic practices and principles.

In the Introduction to the Grundrisse, to return to our primary text, Marx presents an early formulation of his bimodal approach to production. It is an account that categorically encompasses the production of goods as well as the production of and by society as a totality of social relationships:

> If there is no production in general, then there is also no general production. Production is always a particular branch of production--e.g. agriculture, cattle-raising, manufactures, etc.--or it is a totality.[39]

We take totality here to mean mode of production. In addition, we read this passage as signifying that, for Marx, production can be read in two inclusive ways: first, in its particular sense, as a set of economic practices, and then, as a totality, as a deeper process of historical development. This process includes but is not strictly reducible to economic practices and significations only.

Marx asserts the primacy of production in this expanded sense in the following passage from the Grundrisse:

> The important thing to emphasize is only that, whether production or consumption are viewed as the activity of one or of many individuals, they appear in any case as moments of one process, in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment.[40]

Read from within a mode of production, the relationships between economic activities, particularly consumption and production, can not be that of political economy whereby co-equal discrete activites are existing in external separation. They are not co-equal because of the assymetrical predominance of production. Moreover, they are not externally separated, given their being internally related moments of a larger historical development process. Marx states this non-identity of practices as follows:

> The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity.[41]

These economic practices, then, are distinctive yet not discrete. They are internally related yet non-homogeneous. Again, they are constitutive activities of an historically specific mode of production.

The crucial question here is, however, what kind of production is this predominant moment in historical development seen from within a mode of production? For Marx, as we read these texts, the predominant activity is production, albeit construed in our comprehensive, dual sense. First, production both includes and surpasses economic activity. Second, it is bimodal. It is historically specific, yet escaping as production-in-general, total reduction to any historically specific form of production.

Historical production, as we read Marx, must always be analyzed from within a mode of production. It is analyzed both in its generous multidimensional sense, as well as in its one-sided sense as an economic practice, without falling into their dualization from any analytic standpoint. In addition, it is necessary to analyze the dialectical interplay of economic production with the other internally related economic activities, again without falling into their dualization or partial separation through external relationships. For example, production in its economic sense can be analyzed dialectically in terms of its partial determination by the other economic "moments." As Marx states it:

> Admittedly, however, in its one-sided form, production is itself determined by the other moments. For example if the market, i.e. the sphere of exchange, expands, then production grows in quantity and the divisions between its different branches become deeper. A change in distribution changes production, e.g. concentration of capital, different distribution of the population between town and country, etc. Finally, the needs of consumption determine production. Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole.[42]

However, this mutual interaction and reciprocal determination among internally related historically specific economic practices does not change that production in its most expansive sense--economic but non-economistic, historically specific and historically invariant. It still exerts a predominant determinative influence upon the other economic moments in their reciprocal interactions. Again, to quote:

> That exchange and consumption cannot be predominant is self-evident. Likewise, distribution as a distribution of products; while as distribution of the agents of production it is itself a moment of production. A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange, as well as definite relations between these different moments.[43]

Once more, that production in the strictly economistic sense is not considered the predominant moment of historical development or of Marx's theorizing. That is how we read the following citation from the Grundrisse:

> Production predominates not only over itself, in the antithetical definition of production, but over the other moments as well. The process always returns to production to begin anew. That exchange and consumption cannot be predominant is self-evident.[44]

It follows from this that, for example, the key relationship between production and consumption in Marx's critique of political economy entails both their mutual determination as economic practices and the predominant influence exerted by production (taken in our expansive sense) in their reciprocal interplay. Indeed, in Marx's view, this renders consumption itself a moment of production! Consumption is a moment of the expanded sense of production which grounds and informs the process as a whole. To quote from the Grundrisse:

> Consumption as urgency, as need, is itself an intrinsic moment of productive activity.[45]

Let us digress for a moment. Examining the rival versions of the relationship between production and consumption here has key importance for our problematic. For one thing, this relationship decisively embodies human needs and enables us to re-instate them at the center of our analysis: the problematic of scarcity and abundance is a question of the prospects for new modes of need-fulfillment as a new mode of human development. For another, the strategic significance of this relationship is that, depending on which rival version is held, the prospects for post-scarcity historical development are nourished or annihilated.

As we read this text, then, Marx does not merely contextualize consumption as a moment of production. Further still, he introduces human needs as the pivotal category which mediates the two in and as an internal relationship. Indeed, Marx's critique of political economy and speculative idealism alike posits human needs at the heart of its theorizing. Marx formulates production, in all its senses, as internally enwreathed with human needs. Correspondingly, the categorical primacy of bimodal production in Marx's theorizing strategically situates human needs at the center of his Promethean undertaking.

Noting a direct relationship between human needs and production is not unique to Marx. In fact, Marx acknowledges that "even" political economy grasps the connection of the two. Political economy, moreover, finds its making that theoretical connection to be a commonplace, if not virtually self-evident observation. Indeed, as our Marx reads it, the starting point of departure for political economy must be grasped as production-in-relation-to-human-needs. Thus, we quote from the Introduction to the Grundrisse:

> The obvious, trite notion: in production the members of society appropriate (create, shape) the products of nature in accord with human needs. . . .[46]

Again, for both Marx and political economy alike, the historical process which links need and production also entails a definite mode of consumption. In Marx's charcterization of political economy, that linkage of production and consumption is described as internal relationship as follows:

> Production creates the objects which correspond to the given needs;. . . .and finally, in consumption, the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need, and satisfies it in being consumed.[47]

In political economy's version of economic activity, production-consumption determines the overall process; and, most important, in the fashion of a deus ex machina initiates the process anew from a position external to it. To quote:

> . . .and consumption, which is conceived not only as a terminal point but also as an end-in-itself, actually belongs outside economics except in so far as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure and initiates the whole process anew.[48]

The point is important for displaying how the production-consumption relationship in political economy differs from the account produced by Marx's critique of it. It is crucial for understanding the strategic difference made by the rival accounts.

For political economy, as our Marx reads it, consumption is both one component of economic activity and an "end-in-itself" which exists "outside economics." As such, consumption is able--as a kind of deus ex machina or prime mover--to initiate the renewal of the whole economic process. On this account, the renewal of the process is not intrinsic to the process itself but must be engendered from outside it.

The strategic placement of this unhistorical, self-identical origin of its motion outside the process--in external relationship to it--enables the process to be construed as the selfsame repetitive activity. An unchanging source outside of the process is always there, imported arbitrarily and automatically from without to initiate continually the selfsame repetitive cycle. Through this strategy, the economic process remains formally self-contained as an object-in-itself. Its empirical content, of course, is bound for eternity to the limits posed by irremediable material scarcity. Its

predetermined repetition strategically aborts the possibility of that process itself undergoing qualitative historical development. In sum, unhistorical repetition also aborts irreversible historical development and thereby insulates economic activity--and with it human needs--from undergoing qualitative transformation. The formal vicious circularity that underlies this conception of economic activity thereby pre-empts ways of theorizing and articulating emergent possibilities for post-scarcity, historical development.[49]

Needs, production and consumption alike--indeed, economic activity as a sum of these practices--are thereby reified and rendered unhistorical parts of an economic mechanism. Whereas historical development is irreversble and non-repetitive, the model of political economy, as Marx reads it, is construed as unhistorical, cyclical repetition without any prospect of qualitative self-development. Historical prospects for social-economic development beyond the scarcity-bound parameters thereby defy articulation in the hegemonic terms set forth by political economy.

Marx's strategic critique of political economy re-formulates society as an ongoing development process of individuals producing in society. Producing, in its fullest, bimodal sense, is an historically specific and invariant process which both grounds economic activity and makes consumption possible as one of its moments. Indeed, all possible social relations--including consumption, production, and needs--are produced and producing. In the Grundrisse, Marx contravenes political economy's account of production, consumption, and needs as given in external relationship; he reconstitutes them as so many

internally related moments of productive activity. Unlike political economy's notion of consumption as extrinsic to production and need, there is no outside to Marx's bimodal conception of production; the ground for his theorizing:

> Consumption as urgency, as need, is itself an intrinsic moment of productive activity. But the latter is the point of departure for realization and hence also its predominant moment; it is the act through which the whole process again runs its course. The individual produces an object and, by consuming it, returns to himself, but returns as a productive and self-reproducing individual. Consumption thus appears as a moment of production.[50]

This conception of course stands in utter opposition to the political economy's version of a consumption-production relationship whereby ". . . consumption proper. . .is conceived rather as the destructive antithesis to production"[51] owing to its ". . .destruction of the prior product."[52] Indeed, given Marx's dual notion of production--economic and non-economistic, historically specific and irreducible to specific epochs--Marx can speak of a dialectical, internal relationship between production and consumption as diverse moments in a developing totality of economic activities which reciprocally <u>produce</u> one another. Thus, Marx argues that economic consumption must be grasped as <u>producing</u> economic production as follows:

> Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed. For example, a garment becomes a real garment only in the act of being worn; a house where no one lives is in fact not a real house; thus, the product, unlike a mere natural object, proves itself to be, <u>becomes</u>, a product only through consumption. Only by decomposing the product does consumption give the product the finishing touch; . . .(2) because consumption creates the need for <u>new</u> production, that is it creates the ideal, internally compelling cause for production, which is its presupposition. . . Not production without a need. But consumption reproduces the need.[53]

As we read Marx, he asserts that consumption produces production; it is evident to us that Marx's version of production transcends dualistic enmity or even formal opposition of production and consumption as the discrete, externally related categories of political economy.

Production, in turn, through its internal relationship to consumption must be grasped as producing consumption:

> Production, for its part, correspondingly (1) furnishes the material and object for consumption. Consumption without an object is not consumption; therefore, in this respect, production creates, produces consumption. (2) But the object is not the only thing which production creates for consumption. Production also gives consumption its specificity, its character, its finish. Just as consumption gave the product its finish as product, so does production given finish to consumption.[54]

Thus, like all social relationships, production and consumption are "engaged in reciprocally producing one another, each produced and producing." Again, to state that both activities "produce" is neither to render them identical, nor to deny the predominance of production--in its bimodal sense--by reducing it to an economistic sense only. We cite Marx's text for confirmation:

> The important thing to emphasize here is only that, whether production and consumption are viewed as the activity of one or of many individuals, they appear in any case as moments of one process in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment.[55]

Da capo: Historical production, bimodally formulated, is the ongoing producing and produced activity by and of individuals in society which both grounds Marx's self-conscious theorizing and is its predominant category in accounting for the possibility of any product or process.

Individuals producing in society is the point of departure for Marx's critique of political economy. Unlike the extrinsic activity of

consumption in political economy, there can be no activity "outside" this process. As Marx reads it, consumption is a way by which individuals are, then, both the point of departure for his theorizing its point of return. To cite the text:

> The individual produces an object and, by consuming it, returns to himself, but returns as a productive and self-reproducing individual.[56]

This point is re-stated in this way later on in the Introduction: "The process always returns to production to begin anew."[57] Here, producing, in this bimodal sense, as a moment of departure "returns to itself," so to speak, in a qualitatively transformed state as a moment of return. Again, the qualitative self-development of the point of departure stands at irremediable odds with the repetitive cyclicality that characterizes political-economy's version of economic activity. We will now grasp the implications of this for our problematic.

Beginning: The moment of departure is the crucial moment in the staging of the theorizing by which Marx intends to make an historical difference, the formation of a post-scarcity mode of production. There are several internally related threads that together constitute the moment of departure for Marx's theorizing. For one, the point of departure is not a given, but is theoretically and historically produced and producing. Second, unlike the standpoint of isolated individuality that grounds political economy, Marx's moment of departure is production by individuals in and as an historically specific form of social life:

> All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society.[58]

Since production is undertaken in relation to human needs, as Marx

formulates them, these too are integral, constitutive moments of the moment of departure for theorizing. In Marx's reading of it, political economy treats the nexus of needs, production and consumption as a given and renders it unhistorically in terms of their external relationships. Through his critique of the method of political economy, however, Marx produces a point of departure for theorizing which treats them historically and renders them in terms of their internal relationships. Here, all social relationships--including production, consumption, and as we shall see, human needs--are historically produced and producing.

Let us focus briefly on needs. In political economy, needs are like appetitive vacuums which are satisfied only through the decomposition of produced objects. Consumption is construed as the decomposition of objects. It is thereby defined in dualistic opposition to the production of those objects. Needs, once more, require production for their satisfaction, while annihilating the objects it produces. This process appears unhistorical, cyclical, an eternal repetition. Neither needs nor the act of production or consumption are qualitatively transformed or developed through the ongoingly repeated process of need-satiation. The repetition of the process leaves its components intact. The same basic needs always persist; they damand satisfaction, are satisfied, and demand satisfaction again. Needs on this account are given: nonproduced and consuming. They are always already there, just as they are.

For our Marx, needs are social relationships, historically produced and producing, undergoing and spawning the qualitative transformation of the entire ensemble of internal relationships whereby

individuals are producing in society. They are not static, unhistorical givens; nor are they invariant insatiable sources of object-depletion. Needs, on this account, undergo and generate qualitative historical development. As integral, internally related dimensions of production, needs also exist bimodally. That is, developing needs are both a historically specific and also a productive, historically-expansive invariance, such that they defy absolute reduction to any historically-specific kind of producing. As Marx states it:

> Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth.[59]

Da capo: The moment of departure for Marx's theorizing, then, is a set of internally related productive activities which includes human needs. It is formulated through and as a beginning that would begin again; it is produced with the intention that it be reproduced differently as a moment of return. Marx's strategic theorizing then embodies a practical, political intention: the qualitative transformation of the historical relationships among productive activities, including production, consumption, and needs.

The moment of departure is an historically specific ensemble of needs and myriad other productive activities which are socially produced and producing and irreducible to those specific prevailing forms in which production is carried out. As we read Marx, this moment of departure is a mode of production. The moment of return, then is the mode of production historically transformed, qualitatively developed, and

developing further still. Marx's historically specific moment of departure then, is clearly the captitalist mode of production, whereby capitalist society in all its dimensions and internal relationships--and thus regarded as a mode of production--is grasped as completely produced and producing. To use an example, one later version of this can be found in Marx's characterization of capitalist society from Volume III of Capital:

> We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under specific historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves, and thereby also the bearers of this process, their material conditions of existence and their mutual relations, i.e., their particular socio-economic form. For the aggregate of these relations, in which the agents of this production stand with respect to Nature and to one another, and in which they produce, is precisely society, considered from the standpoint of economic structure. Like all its predecessors, the capitalist process of production proceeds under definite material conditions, which are, however, simultaneously the bearers of definite social relations entered into by individuals in the process of reproducing their life.[60]

As we read it, moreover, this later analysis of society as the historical activity whereby individuals produce and reproduce the social relations of production which constitute their everyday existence is a further, non-economistic development of Marx's grounding notion in the Grundrisse, individuals producing in society. Thus,the qualitative transformation of the moment of departure becomes the complete qualitative transformation of individuals producing in capitalist society. It embodies an historically specific intention to fully transform the entire ensemble of scarcity-bound relationships that now constitute the capitalist mode of production into new

relationships that produce post-scarcity paths of non-capitalist historical development. As we read Marx, we cannot underestimate his conviction that this total transformation cannot be accomplished except as a matter of revolutionary theorizing and practice. The predominant theoretical moment of this praxis is, in our view, Marx's producing a new method that both displays and, in turn, constitutes--as we have tried to establish here--a new, protean version of production. The corresponding predominant political moment of this praxis is producing a post-scarcity, revolutionary transformation. To quote:

> In all previous revolutions the mode of activity always remained unchanged and it was only a question of a different redistribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the hitherto existing mode of activity. . . .Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; the revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.[61]

As we read it, then, Marx's theorizing is this revolutionary struggle. It is a theoretical moment of a revolutionary praxis which invites and involves the theorist's active participation in a political struggle for a new "mode of activity." By that mode of activity people would re-make themselves in producing a qualitatively new way for all to engage freely in human development.

All this, then, is entailed by the qualitative development of "individuals producing in society," the moment of departure for this strategic theorizing. Its self-conscious intention is indeed to make possible qualitative social development beyond scarcity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft), trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 83.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 3, ed. Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 825.

5. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, p. 84; transliteration from the Greek my own.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 83.

8. Ibid., p. 87.

9. Ibid., p. 84.

10. Ibid., p. 87.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 85.

13. Ibid.

14. Marx, Capital, vol. 3, p. 818.

15. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 85.

16. Ibid.

17. Marx, Capital, vol. 3, p. 818.

18. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 87.

19. Ibid., p. 85.

20. Ibid., p. 90.

21. Ibid., p. 89.

22. Ibid., p. 93.

23. His account at once encompasses production as economic activity without one-sidedly reducing it to the production of strictly economic goods only. It strategically rejects the economistic formulation of production by political economy and stands in marked contrast to its economistic reconstruction as fashioned by orthodox Marxism. To use a pertinent example from the orthodox literature, let us cite Jacques Camatte's reference to Trotsky's Terrorism and Communism (Paris, 1963) in The Wandering of Humanity (Detroit: Black & Red, 1975), 13n:

> The entire history of humanity is a history of the organization and education of social man for labor, with a view to obtaining from him greater productivity.

24. Economism is a strategic form of one-sided theorizing which remains tied to the historical parameters of presently prevailing kind(s) of producing. It strategically posits present economic practices and relationships as if they were unhistorical givens. And, moreover, it attempts to derive and explain all other "non-economic" social processes and practices as fundamentally or finally determined by economics construed as "motor," "foundation," "base," "law of nature," "first cause," etc.

25. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978), pp. 103-104.

26. Ibid., p. 104.

27. Ibid.

28. Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, Marxism and Socialist Theory: Socialism in Theory and Practice (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 71.

29. Indeed, as Coletti, in From Rousseau to Lenin (London: NLB, 1972), p. 7, views it, the dichotomization of material from the ideal of which, in our view, the economistic division of society into the economic and non-economic is a key specification--ushers in a series of insuperable dualisms:

> If we isolate, that is abstract, either the ideological alone, the material alone, the result as we can see is a dualistic separation between production of things on the one hand and production as production of human relations on the other. Or else a decision of production and distribution (the latter understood here above all as the distribution of human labor power in the various branches and sectors of production). Or else a decision between production and safety. Or finally, the separation of a relation (assumed to be) purely material or natural on the one hand, and a

relation (assumed to be) exclusively human or better still exclusively spiritual on the other. (cited in Albert & Hahnel, p. 131).

30. B. Hindess and P.Q. Hirst elaborate this point in their Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 2-3:

> Empiricism represents knowledge as constructed out of 'given' elements, the elements of experience, the 'facts' of history, etc. Unfortunately for these positions facts are never 'given' to knowledge. They are always the product of definite practices, theoretical or ideological, conducted under real conditions. To pretend otherwise, is to represent certain elements of knowledge as given in the real, is to denegrate the central role of scientific practice, of experimentation and of explicit theoretical construction and argument, in the production of scientific knowledge. Facts are never given; they are alway produced.

31. Marx, Capital, vol. 3, p. 815.

32. Marx, Grundrisse, pp. 88-89.

33. Ibid., p. 89.

34. Ibid., p. 94.

35. Ibid., p. 93.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 90.

38. Ibid., p. 101-102.

39. Ibid., p. 86.

40. Ibid., p. 94.

41. Ibid., p. 99.

42. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

43. Ibid., p. 99.

44. .bid.

45. Ibid., p. 94.

46. Ibid., p. 88.

47. Ibid., p. 89.

48. Ibid.

49. In our Marx's reconstruction of political economy, need-fulfillment of need is reproduced theoretically as a two-stage, sequential process. In stage one, consumption as need, reacts from without upon production; which, in turn, makes the product that satisfies need through its de-composition. And, it is at this point, that the economic cycle of a need's being fulfilled by a product through consumption 1 is completed. Here the process reaches a terminus, a dead end. But the process must be repeated. So, having been completed it requires an extrinsic, externally related source of movement to repeat itself. At this point, consumption 2, the external source of dynamism for the repetition of the entire process--imparts the requisite motion without which repetition cannot ensue. Consumption, on this account, is both the termination and self-renewing origin of need-fulfillment--a subdivided, two-stage process whose two discrete moments exist in external, non-necessary relationship to one another.

This externally-divided process is a set of subcomponents, none of which undergoes qualitative self-development. The process and its components are inured against historical transformation since its source of motion, consumption, is a given: unproduced, unhistorical, non-developmental, and existing outside the repetitive self-contained cycle whereby needs being fulfilled through products produced to fulfill needs. Consumption 1 rendered as an economic activity realizes and terminates the process; whereas Consumption 2 rendered as a non-economic activity automatically sets it in motion again. In this way, neither the need fulfillment process as a whole, nor its external origin undergo qualitative development.

50. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 94.

51. Ibid., p. 90.

52. Ibid., p. 91.

53. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

54. Ibid., p. 92.

55. Ibid., p. 94.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 99.

58. Ibid., p. 87.

59. Ibid., p. 92.

60. Marx, Capital, vol. 3, pp. 818-819.

61. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology: Part One with Selections from Parts Two and Three (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), rev. ed., p. 60.

CHAPTER EIGHT

METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE:
READING HEGELIAN IDEALISM AS AN ABUNDANT ACTIVITY

The next two chapters display emancipatory animated reading as a negentropic developmental activity. It is a retrospective-prospective activity which reads and qualitatively transforms classic texts in social theory. This activity re-members classic texts for present needs, in service to prospective theoretical and political transformations. Our immediate, present intention is to re-member for present sociological discourse a hitherto suppressed (nineteenth century) problematic, the problematic of scarcity and abundance. By enabling the articulation of the historical possibility of a post-scarcity mode of human historical and social development, our theorizing and re-membering constitutes a self-conscious intervention. We intervene into prevailing modes of discourse and practice that assume and actively consolidate material scarcity as an outer limit to human and social development.

Our mode of reading Marx and others here intends to undermine theorizing and related institutional practices that would arrest or

eviscerate any emergent and potential forms of human historical development that threaten to undo and transcend the seemingly eternal limits posed by scarcity. To nourish emergent possibilities for qualitatively different kinds of human development--indeed, the prospect of a new kind of abundant history--is its prospective intention. Correspondingly, our procedure will be to perform our own emancipatory animated reading of Marx's critique of crucial scarcity-bound texts produced in his time. We do this as a present display of negentropic, qualitative transformation. We will focus on Marx's critique of two bodies of theoretical discourse which both presage and then strangle their own theoretical demonstrations of post-scarcity, negentropic development as an historical possibility. Specifically, this chapter refers to Marx's reading of Hegel's idealism,--particularly the monumental theorizing of The Phenomenology of Spirit.[1] The next chapter takes up his critique of the left Ricardians in Part III of Theories of Surplus Value (which in some editions is subtitled) Capital, Volume Four).[2]

In the course of this display, we will examine Marx's strategy for articulating and fostering emergent tendencies towards post-scarcity development that otherwise would be aborted by the self-repudiating theorizing of Hegelian idealism and political economy alike. We accomplish this through an animated reading of his texts. Our reading focuses on his methodological critique of political economy (in the Grundrisse's Introduction) and that of Hegel's idealist dialectic (in the Grundrisse and 1844 Manuscripts.) Inasmuch as both his theoretical rivals respectively reproduce and consolidate the scarcity-bound dynamics of the capitalist economy, Marx's critique of

their methods for producing objects, categories, logic, et al. actively challenges their theoretical and discursive hegemony in a way that makes possible an articulation of post-scarcity development. As we read them, these strategic critiques of hegemonic theoretical rivals which actively consolidate historical/material scarcity, are themselves modes of abundance.

In a word, we read Marx to treat his reading of theory as an abundant activity. His kind of methodological critique is an historically specific activity that embodies a practical-political intention to transform and surpass the entire ensemble of historical constraints upon individuals producing in all dimensions through capitalist modes of producing. As a pivotal moment of an emancipatory strategy, Marx's critique of political economy and speculative idealist methods is designed to undermine the relative capacity of such "ruling ideas"[3] (as he calls them in The German Ideology) to partly consolidate and maintain the hegemony of the capitalist class over social development. Marx targets the theoretical and practical object for this strategic enterprise in 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, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. . . The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.[4]

Marx's Promethean critique of hegemonic theorizing, then, targets "the full extent and compass of the [bourgeois] epoch... in its whole range."[5] He constitutes thereby "a ruthless critique of everything existing."[6]

As we contextualize it, Marx's reading texts is not purely epistemological and thereby non-political. Nor is it merely contemplative, purely theoretical, and thereby a non-active mode of existing without material-historical consequences. Thus, this activity does not stand in external relationship to its (abundant) object for theorizing: neither in contemplation of its objective truth, nor in self-assured expectation of its predetermined, teleological outcome. Instead, critique is a practical activity of strategic thinking, as well as a mode of thinking integral to a strategic, political practice. The active historical intention is to "prove" in-the-making (so to speak) that a qualitatively different course of ongoing social development can be historically accomplished. Marx's critique of hegemonic theorizing, then, is formulated as an ongoing practice engaged in protracted, historically specific class struggle against bourgeois hegemony. Again, to cite The German Ideology:

> Every new class, therefore, achieves domination only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, on the other hand the opposition of the non-ruling class to the new ruling class then develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, has as its aim a more decicive and more radical negation of the previous conditions of society than all previous classes which sought to rule could have.[7]

As we read Marx, this "more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society" than hitherto undertaken is a novel historical development: it intends the historical transcendance of

material scarcity in and beyond its capitalist embodiment, a qualitatively new mode of individuals-producing-abundantly-in-society. A crucial moment of this "more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society" is the formulation of a new mode of thinking in integral relationship to a new mode of practice. New thinking transcends the historical constraints posed by its scarcity-ridden genesis in capitalist society. That new thinking consciously intends to "prove" the historical possibility of a post-scarcity mode of social living and producing. This "proof" is not an a priori matter. It is decidable neither in advance of practice, nor by theoretical reason alone. Indeed, it embodies the spirit and intention of Marx's second "Theses on Feuerbach":

> The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, . . . the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.[8]

For Marx, then, internally related thinking and practice is an historically specific and historically pervaded strategic question. Critique is a strategy for animatedly reading texts that would develop them within the emancipatory intention of producing a qualitatively different mode of production. Again, Marx's critique is internally related to its object, and to the historical possibility of the abundant producing of that object whose would-be development it intends and actively practices.

There must be no mistaking that, for Marx, any theorizing-reading that was isolated from practical, political embodiments was a decidedly insufficient basis for transforming extant

social relationships. Again, his strategic practice of reading cannot be reduced to merely non-intentional, descriptive analysis, nor to utopian model-building whose implementation is left merely to the success of moral exhortation. Rather, theorizing for Marx is always enmeshed in historically-specific transformative practices. It "proves" itself with respect to the bearing out (or not) of its strategic, revolutionary intentions grounded in an ongoing, intimate, self-conscious relationship with the historical development of constraints and possibilities for fundamental, qualitative change.

Marx's strategic theorizing, then, thoroughly enmeshed in its reading of history, never takes for its object an ungrounded, merely morally satisfying, revolutionary utopiate. To quote from The German Ideology:

> These conditions of life, which different generations find in existence, determine also whether or not the revolutionary convulsion periodically recurring in history will be strong enough to overthrow the basis of everything that exists. And if these material elements of a complete revolution are not present--namely, on the one hand the existing productive forces, on the other the formation of a revolutionary mass, which revolts not only against separate conditions of the existing society, but against the existing "production of life" itself, the "total activity" on which it was based--then, it is absolutely immaterial for practical development, whether the idea of this revolution has been expressed a hundred times already, as the history of communism proves.[9]

No ungrounded ideal, Marx's communism is present, strategic historical practice. That activity intends, apprehends, practices, and displays in embryo a new mode of producing social life. This new mode of activity is theoretically constituted and apprehended. Also, it is always practically embodied, materialized, and newly materializing itself through and as ongoing, self-consciously revolutionary practice.

As an animated mode of reading texts, it self-reflexively understands its strategic activity as one that is fully historical. That activity is both produced and producing. It does so through its immediate, active shaping of consciousness and activity through the fully material, historical (not immaterial or merely neutral) medium--whether written or spoken--discourse.

The "complete revolution" Marx intends is a total reconstitution of the capitalist mode of producing social life. There are two inextricable, historically specific moments of this mode of production--interpersonal human development in internal relationship to economic production. Fully formulated revolutionary overthrow of historically prevailing principles of producing comprises their qualitative transformation. Since production, defined in Marx's bimodal, noneconomistic, thoroughly historical sense, allows us to read theorizing too as productive activity, categories for theorizing become strategic, discursive expressions and embodiments of often rival intentions--to consolidate, transform, overthrow, or maintain historically specific modes of social development and productive activity.

Since they are socially produced and producing, categories constituted for and by theorizing are so many, reciprocally-mediating, if not rival social relationships. They are fully historical: produced and producing within and-in-part-of historically-specific modes of production. Marx's meta-theoretical reading of theorizing as both products and sources of productive activity, is displayed in several texts. For example, Marx's sense of categories as <u>products</u> of historical development can be cited in the following text from <u>The</u>

German Ideology:

> Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., that is real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual life-process.[10]

Again, we read the following citation from The Poverty of Philosophy as a display of how Marx deploys a non-economistic sense of production. We see in it his analysis of categories being produced through the course of social development:

> Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. . . .
>
> The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with their social relations.
>
> Thus these ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products.
>
> There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement--mors immortalis.[11]

Historical production is so pervasive in Marx's account of what it is to be human, that it is co-intensive and co-extensive with human activity or tantamount to it. Indeed, it is only "when death the immortal has taken away his mortal life"--the literal translation of Marx's reference to Lucretius--that producing is extinguished along with the human life that is utterly inconceivable without it. As we read Marx, theorizing is understood as an integral dimension of individuals producing in society. In the same way, categories for

thinking are read as social relationships. They are historically specific products, which, in turn, produce historically specific differences in social life. They are not only socially produced, but are producing social life as well.

One example of ideas, categories actively producing social consequences, is our Marx's conception of the active social role of "ruling ideas". He treats them genuinely as active agents in producing and reproducing class domination as a hegemonic social relationship. He shows that in The German Ideology:

> The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are . . . the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.[12]

Again, remembering that ideas, categories in Marx's version are neither formed, empowered, nor transformative in isolation from material conditions, we cite the following analysis of ruling ideas as comprising so many active embodiments of an interest in class domination:

> For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to present its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones.[13]

In sum, as we read Marx, de facto success in accomplishing the categorical representation of a partial class interest as a universal one is a necessary condition for strategically consolidating and reproducing class hegemony. So is achieving the ongoing

internalization of this idea as their own apparent interest by the subordinate classes. Indeed, the silence in everyday discourse that frequently follows the seemingly disinterested invocation of the general interest as it conceals a partial interest in class-domination, attests to the formidable, albeit partial power of ideas and categories in embodying, producing and reproducing prevailing social relationships. Insofar as silences are historically and socially produced as well as producing, it becomes clear that an animated reading of texts in terms of their constitutive silences and sayings alike becomes a strategic matter. Thus, the formulation and deployment of strategic ideas and categories can produce real, albeit partial, material consequences.

Both Hegelian idealism and Marxian materialism perform critical, animated readings of the positivist re-presentation of reality. Both see it as an additive, descriptive accumulation of discrete facts. As a mirror that allegedly fully reflects the social world just as it is, the seemingly intact, unbroken surface finish of the positivist text says there is no more to say there than what the self-contained text displays self-evidently. This text presents itself as a mirror of reality which it merely reflects--never refracts--just as it is. Again, the text is posited as neutral with respect to any changes in a reality it only registers and describes. As a self-proclaimed disinterested account of the self-evident, it stands in passive aggression against illegitimate, interpretive attempts to transform its objectively abiding network of pre-given textual relationships amongst meanings, symbols, intentions and the like. It re-presents the world monologically, just as it is. The rest is silence.

To read animatedly, however, is to develop that silence by violating textual surfaces and to destabilize their apparently self-evident meanings. An animated reading reads texts with the recognition that "the emperor has no clothes." The seemingly finished textual surface is intentionally produced as a gloss: an appearance that glosses or conceals those "underlying" social and historical dynamics which make it possible at all. Thus, animated readings uncover and produce "cracks" in the positivist mirrors that seemingly reflect an empirical world of pre-given facts mandating their merely naive description. As we read it, a positivist treatment of textual silences regards them strategically as absences which either punctuate discourse or which are "left over" as mere residues of having spoken, written, or read. An animated reading of textual silences rejects the former version as active, historically specific repression of further discourse. Indeed, it reads silences as historical occasions for further production, an opportunity to generate something new.

The exemplary animated reader from the standpoint of an emancipatory intention is Karl Marx. Marx's reading of texts displays negentropic development as the ground and substance of all historical development hitherto. And, crucially, Marx articulates its relentless possibility as an abiding, integral dimension of any present historical moment in the course of its ongoing development.

One early example of Marx's reading texts with the intention to develop them abundantly and qualitatively is displayed in texts written in preparation of his doctoral dissertation. Marx notes the widespread activity aimed at dis-membering the Hegelian theoretical corpus by a swarm of philosophical critiques. Each of these one-sided critiques

seizes on a part of the totality as its principal critical focus. Marx, however, reads that corpus as an active totality. To him this corpus is an ongoing fertility, not a sterile, inert husk. Indeed, the very capacity of the Hegelian corpus to spawn and empower the critical storm testifies to its abundant potential as a non-depletable, productive resource for theorizing. As Marx states it:

> But one must not let oneself be misled by this storm which follows a great philosophy, a world philosophy. Ordinary harps play under any fingers, Aeolian harps only when struck by the storm.[14]

For Marx, the Hegelian corpus is hence not moribund. It is not reducible to an antiquarian relic or theoretical dinosaur which precludes further theorizing. Read one-sidedly, Hegelian theorizing accomplishes just an accomodation of thought and pre-emption of critical consciousness to the historical constraints of the political status quo. Marx rails against just this self-serving, one-sided reduction of Hegel's theorizing by his opponents into a moribund received wisdom which they can then repudiate one-sidedly as mere apologetics for the historically and politically given. Instead, Marx reads Hegel developmentally. He re-members Hegel's texts in relation to the historical grounds that make them possible as he strategically appropriates and reconstitutes its insights and method for a new political-theoretical problematic.

Marx lectures the neo-Hegelian critics of Hegel. Their own one-sided polemical reconstructions of Hegel's oeuvre, he holds, abort the possibilities for theoretical development and maturation that would otherwise accrue to non-reductionistic readings. Non-one-sided readings are sensitive to the internal dis-ease, self-contradictoriness

and self-repression of newly emergent possibilities in the Master's ouevre. To cite one such example:

> Also in relation to Hegel it is mere ignorance on the part of his pupils, when they explain one or the other determination of his system by his desire for accomodation and the like, hence in one word, explain it in terms of morality. They forget that only a short time ago they were enthusiastic about all his idiosyncrasies [Einseitigkeiten], as can be clearly demonstrated from their writings.[15]

The critics wind up discerning a singular "hidden intention" behind Hegel's theorizing. Their singular foci then legitimate and are legitimated by the subsequent reconstruction of Hegel's theorizing as a "ready-made science", an object-in-itself. As Marx reads them, these reconstructions of Hegel abort what, in the Master's hands, provided (and still provides) a fecund source of ongoing theoretical development. Settling in their one-sidedness for a "straw man" who can be readily knocked down, these critics can then jettison their sterile reconstructions of Hegel as stagnant bath water and wind up aborting the potentially developing, theoretical baby. To cite Marx's text:

> If they were really so affected by the ready-made science they acquired that they gave themselves up to it in naive uncritical trust, then how unscrupulous is their attempt to reproach the Master for a hidden intention behind his insight! The Master, to whom the science was not something received, but something in the process of becoming, to whose uttermost periphery his own intellectual heart's blood was pulsating! On the contrary, they rendered themselves suspect of not having been serious before. And now they oppose their own former condition, and ascribe it to Hegel, forgetting however that his relation to his system was immediate, substantial, while theirs is only a reflected one.[16]

For Marx, then, Hegel's theorizing becomes an historical occasion for its own further development. Marx would overcome the self-limitation of Hegel's theorizing so that it transcends its

its self-imposed and self-contained speculative boundaries. For example, Marx expresses this intention to develop Hegel's tests by recovering their potentially historically-transformative moments from their speculative, allegorical haze. He does that in the Third Paris Manuscript, his 1844 "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic":

> The Phenomenology is a concealed, unclear and mystifying criticism, but insofar as it grasps the alienation of man (even though man appears only as mind) all the elements of criticism are contained in it, and are often presented and worked out in a manner which goes far beyond Hegel's own point of view.[17]

Thus, Marx raises the issue of silences in the Hegelian corpus. This makes the text problematical and a present historical possibility. As we read Marx, he sees such silences produced partly by Hegel's own self-misunderstanding of the implications of his texts, and partly by his ostensible failure to state and develop elements of his own texts otherwise already "presented and worked out in a manner which goes far beyond Hegel's own point of view."[18] Marx, then, strategically reads Hegel's non-self-conscious moments as so many silences that invite, rather than preclude further theoretical development. He reads the apparently final self-limitations of Hegel's discourse not as outer boundaries, but as thresholds pregnant with possibilities for further qualitative development. He treats Hegel's theorizing as an object-in-birth, a theoretical cornucopia which an produce genuinely different riches for a strategy committed to the historical and material transformation of this world--but not for another one-sided, merely alternative idealist critique of Hegel's idealism.

Crucial to Marx's preparatory dissertation notes is their

embodiment of a positive will to transform the insights and dynamics of a mode of (idealist) theorizing which--albeit brilliantly--"philosophizes" historical reality. Marx intends a strategic theorizing that in part would historically realize dimensions of that philosophy through political-practical initiatives. As Marx reads it, the potentially abundant wealth of Hegel's speculative passion goes unseen by those one-sided readings that attend only to its moment of accommodation to the political status quo. Marx's animated reading of Hegel also apprehends a developmental moment. The critique that reduces Hegel's texts to the former while excluding the latter, "plays" it as but an "ordinary harp", a finished body of theory, an object-in-itself. Marx's strategy for reading intends to produce that emancipatory storm whereby the Hegelian corpus would resonate as an Aeolian harp. That harp produces a divine music on earth which would then develop ongoingly through its human appropriation.

When read merely as divine fire, Hegel's theorizing would burn etherally in a merely speculative conceptual heaven. The mood of Marx's critique, however, is decidely Promethean. Like his chosen hero, Marx steals (through critical appropriation for earthly intentions) the developmental core of Hegelian theorizing. The strategic intention that informs the Marxian critique of the Hegelian corpus is the will to render that fire material and historical, to reconstitute and deploy it as a concrete force fundamental for historical transformation. The idealist philosophizing of historical reality which Marx would strategically transcend gazes backward at the world which it might transcend were it to look forward. Its development in this mode is self-delimiting, bound historically to what has been accomplished

already. Moreover, it remains captive to the image of the prefabricated, ideal world which strategically, it has partly produced.

For Hegel, genuine understanding is contemplative retrospection: "The owl of Minerva sets flight at dusk."[19] By contrast, the theorizing that Marx produces develops historically in a self-conscious, and forward-looking way through practical engagement in present political struggles. Its present-prospective intention would be its own concretization as a new form of life. Its mood is Promethean, its procedure developmental, its wealth abundant, and its activity revolution. Marx says:

> As Deucalion, according to the legend, casts stones behind him in creating human beings, so philosophy casts its regard behind it (the bones of its mother are luminous eyes) when its heart is set on creating a world; but as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and to settle upon the earth, so philosophy, expanded to be the whole world, turns against the world of appearance. The same now with the philosophy of Hegel.[20]

The Promethean mood that permeates Marx's strategy for reading texts is no mere literary conceit. This abundant mood is not accidental. It does not merely "happen" as a whimsical, spontaneous psychological state either forcing itself upon or merely emanating from an isolated subject. As we read Marx, mood is itself a social relationship and, thereby, a material force of production. It is a material force, produced and producing as a decisive movement in an overall emancipatory strategy. The strategy's design is to implement a new mode of social relationship that transcends the historical dynamics of scarcity. The abundant mood is an internal social relationship. Its way of being produced and producing makes possible as well as delimits the kind of historical development that

goes on amongst individuals producing in society. In sum, Marx's critique of hegemonic theorizing is informed by this Promethean mood: an historically specific desire that intends a total transformation of the entire socially produced and producing ensemble of historical relationships. As Marx puts it:

> It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, once liberated in itself, turns into practical energy, and, leaving the shadowy empire of Amenthes as will, turns itself against the reality of the world existing without it.[21]

A truly Promethean theft of the hegemonic fire of prevailing authoritative accounts of social reality for earthly purposes requires a strategy that combines its methodological theft (read critique) with the establishment (read production) of a new historically specific starting point for a new mode of theorizing. Here Marx's heralded "new gathering point" is self-consciously produced. The very process of an emancipatory animated reading of rival texts partly reconstitutes social life in terms of alternative--abundant or scarce--kinds of objects for theorizing.

Marx's critique of rival methodologies, then, starts in the middle of an historically specific discourse. It is produced self-consciously as a rival to two then-prevailing theoretical strategies which have themselves been formulated through their ungrounded object-in-itself. As we explain below, all of these objects are bound to the assumption of material scarcity as an invariant outer limit to human (and natural) possibility. Notwithstanding this, Marx's production of a scarcity-transcending object-in-birth is not possible without the strategic conservation, reconstitution, and appropriation--through critique itself--of pivotal dimensions of the

scarcity-bound objects. Thus, we will display Marx's critique here as a developmental activity. Beginning never takes place outside a realm of reciprocally mediated discourses. It is always strategic activity on a terrain constituted by the rivalry of competing theoretical strategies for reproducing concrete reality. The key players in this rivalry, Hegelian idealism, political economy, and Marxian (methodology) critique share a common touchstone: the critique of vulgar empiricism. Each rival starts theorizing with a different kind of critique of the same object-in-itself: vulgar empiricism's given, self-evident, and immediately knowable object for theorizing. Together they constitute a politics of the starting point, a strategic rivalry to establish theoretical hegemony focused at and through the very outset of theorizing. These rival strategies are also different ways of reading the vulgar empiricist object as a silence. The immediate stakes in this rivalry are establishing a hegemonic account and reproduction of capitalist society as an object for theorizing and other related practices.

Vulgar empiricism presents reality as an immediate, self-subsistent, irreducible, brute datum, for sensation. One example of this was displayed in Roquentin's existential encounter with the tree in Sartre's Nausea.[22] Another, earlier display is Gradgrind's rote definition of "a horse" in Dickens' Hard Times (1854) as a collection of irreducible facts. Bitzer, Gradgrind's prize pupil, defines it to the teacher's approval:

> "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

> "Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, "You know what a horse is."[23]

On this account, the horse appears as a self-subsistent totality. It appears to be given immediately and forever. It presents itself not from any particular point of view, but as a brute, eternal verity, standing self-evident before unbiased, immaculate perception. In principle, however, there is no self-evident reason for any description or definition of this "horse-as-such" to begin or end with any particular configuration or selection of data. "Quadruped" and "marks in mouth" are not essential or necessary as start, finish or even as members of some universal self-evidency we call "horse." Concealing whatever principle of organization or classification that is at work, there is no sufficient reason why this list of characteristics, although appearing self-contained, couldn't be indefinitely addended.

To better grasp Marx's new moment of departure for theorizing, we make the following brief meta-theoretical excursus concerning the "politics of the starting point" to explore the strategic significances of rival points of departure for theorizing. In this context, reading divergent treatments of this starting point for theorizing--like Max Weber's--will help us to clarify the conflictual dynamics that constitute the theoretical-practical terrain within which the strategic rivalry between political economy, idealist dialectics, and Marx's critique is situated. Specifically, it enables us to further develop our reading of Marx's methodological critique of the points of departure of Hegelian idealism and political economy as a display of abundant activity. Strategically, we start our excursus with Max Weber. As a later participant in the discourse at hand, Weber

fashions a methodological critique of vulgar empiricism. His critique, we shall see, poses an epistemological version of abundance that rivals the one produced by Marx's theorizing.

For Weber, albeit differently arrived at, the relevant characterization of reality as an object for analysis is a seemingly abundant, "infinite multiplicity." Thus. we quote from Weber's "'Objectivity' in Social Science amd Social Policy":

> Now, as soon as we attempt to reflect about the way in which life confronts us in immediate concrete situations, it presents an infinite multiplicity of successively and coexistently emerging and disappearing events, both "within" and "outside" ourselves.[24]

Tellingly, for our purposes, Weber characterizes immediate. concrete reality as an "infinite multiplicity" of events. This view is similar to Marx's reading of the vulgar empiricist totality as an undigested, haphazard, chaotic conception of a whole. Like Marx and Hegel, as we shall see, Weber does not treat the reality of the starting point in an immediate, non-self-conscious, pre-reflexive, positivistic sense. That Weber is no mere positivist in this sense is displayed by his explicit linkage of that "infinite multiplicity", whereby immediate concrete situations present themselves for inquiry, to self-reflexive activity of an epistemological subject. Weber, a neo-Kantian, theorizes self-consciously--and not as a positivist--in tying the "infinite multiplicity" to theoretical reflection. That is, Weber's version of reality as "an infinite multiplicity" of immediate, concrete events does not claim <u>ontological</u> givenness. It is grasped self-consciously as conceptually mediated. Reality is not knowable as such.

On the other hand, there is still an implicit positivist strategy covertly at work in Weber's meta-theoretical treatment of the

relationship of reflection to life. He represents it necessarily and unavoidably as a relationship whereby a knowing subject initially "confronts" life, as a patternless, non-organized infinite multiplicity of events.

For Weber, the starting point for theorizing is no longer a positivist reality, construed as an empiricized object-in-itself and knowable outside of theorizing. Instead, Weber's meta-theoretical starting point becomes a theoretically-mediated epistemological relationship between subject and object. Now, what is of interest to us is that within this non-positivist meta-theoretical relationship, the object for theorizing still gets characterized in none other than a (radically) empiricist way--additively, like Gradgrind's horse, as an infinite multiplicity of events. Indeed, in the context of Weber's meta-theoretical account of the nature of any inquiry, the reality that occasions any theorizing necessarily becomes re-presented and knowable as a necessarily infinite concatenation of haphazard events.

For Weber, these events themselves are not knowable outside theorizing (no <u>vulgar</u> positivist he). On the other hand, <u>theorizing</u> cannot escape Weber's meta-theoretical version of reality construed as a non-organized concatenation of events--a necessary pre-condition that occasions any inquiry. In this way Weber strategically restores a radical empiricist version of reality to the center of theoretical activity. In sum, reality no longer is construed as an ontologically given object-in-itself. But now, meta-theoretically, Weber construes reality as an epistemological given--a necessary context/occasion for the very possibility of (social) scientific inquiry.

Weber meta-theoretically construes life-as-it-"confronts"-the-

knowing-subject as an infinite multiplicity of non-organized events. Weber sees any organization and ordering of reality as a subjective, decisionistic initiative of the inquiring subject. Consequently, causality and patterned development are not integral to objects but are subjectively posited through the volitional activity of ungrounded, value-positing subjects. Indeed, the very individuation of objects for theorizing becomes a subjective, decisionistic initiative that heuristically (read strategically) reduces the infinite multiplicity to a finite, analyzable segment (object) for inquiry. As a consequence, by denying any causality and organized patterning as integral to objects, Weber's meta-epistemology becomes strategic: it makes it impossible to articulate dynamic self-development on the part of objects construed as objects-in-birth. Further still, by defining the infinite multiplicity at once as richer than any attempt to conceptualize it as well as devoid of any immanent causality or organized self-development, Weber's re-presentation of what it is to know reality is <u>a priori</u> inimical to all efforts at its totalization. This, of course, strikes a blow at Hegelian and Marxist theorizing alike.

Inimical to totalization, Weber's infinite multiplicity precludes the theoretical articulation of society or history--let alone historical development--as a totality, let alone as an object-in-birth. By doing so, moreover, it pre-empts the theoretical articulation of qualitative transformation as a total reconstitution of the prevailing mode of historical development. Indeed, Weber explicitly rejects the possibility of totalization and, by extension, that of articulating the very notion of a mode of historical development.

Through this strategy, abundance cannot be articulated in its post-capitalist, developmental significance. This is because it is already defined for theorizing as an infinite, intrinsically non-related multiplicity of myriad details, all simultaneously "there" on the same unhistorical, non-developmental plane. Finally, insulated from totalization, qualitative transformation, and reproduction as an object-in-birth, the historically prevailing mode of development remains intact--not qualitatively transformable theorizing.

As we read Weber, then, the strategic outcome of his methodological self-analysis is to further consolidate the historical regime of material scarcity in, ironically, its apparently unhistorical infinite multiplicity. For Weber, a tragic ironist, abundance is merely the assymetry between being, in its manifold richness,--and thought --in its futile attempt to exhaust being via conceptualization. It thereby precludes post-scarcity historical development from analytic significance, theoretical articulation, and historical possibility. At the same time, it precludes theorizing from actively contributing--as praxis--to the historical prospect of a post-scarcity social formation.

Beginning, then, is a strategic matter: it embodies and practices (whether by characterizing, assuming, or concealing) a beginning, whatever its nature, is always to theorize. Thus, any version of reality that characterizes it as an "infinite multiplicity"--whether as a positivist object-in-itself or as Weber's theroetically-mediated reality-confronting--(a knowing subject)--is a theoretical reconstruction. A concatenation of immediate, contingent, random, brute data is no less a theoretical reproduction of reality

than one which re-presents it in terms of some immanent principle(s) of self-organization.

Whether in its Weberian or vulgar positivist version, then, an "undigested" chaos of events, or infinite multiplicity can be read (as we do along with Marx) as an appearance produced in part by theorizing. Indeed, the appearance of an infinite multiplicity as a "non-organization in flux" that defies totalization is, in our view, a decidedly historical appearance which is produced (through abstraction) by the strategic de-construction of some relatively organized socio-historical state of affairs. In our view, the possibility of such a point of departure is made possible historically only by abstraction from an already more complex, more fully organized, developing state of social-and-historical events. Indeed, it is by reduction, fragmentation and simplification of that developing complex that such an appearance can be--as Marx would say--"worked up."

Whereas vulgar empiricism re-presents its object-in-itself as finished and replete with detail, Marx himself reads it as a silence. He does so, however, from within an historical setting whose theoretical discourse is already pervaded by Hegel's brilliant idealist critique of vulgar empiricism. Indeed, as we shall see next, Marx's critique of "population" is both informed by and surmounts the Hegelian critique of such objects-in-themselves. Marx's strategy here is two-fold: he first appropriates Hegel's critique of the immediacy and givenness of the empiricized object; and, in turn, performs an emancipatory animated reading of the idealized totality with which it is replaced. Through his historical and materialist critique, Marx at once preserves the idealist critique in its de-stabilization of the

empiricist object; negates its attendant idealization of the object for theorizing; and in doing so, transcends the Hegelianized totality, whereby he produces "a rich totality", a new kind of object for theorizing and other strategic practices. All this will be more fully displayed against the background of Hegel's critique of vulgar empiricism and its object. We detail that next--not as an end-in-itself--but with a view towards eventually displaying the appropriative, developmental, and emancipatory character of Marx's critique of rival methodologies.

For Hegel, the immediacy of the vulgar empiricist object of sense knowledge provides an occasion for its apprehension--knowing of an object that it is--but, not for its comprehension. That activity consists in a subject's grasping the object's significance in terms of "a complex process of mediation."[25] As we read Hegel's critique of vulgar empiricism, our knowledge of the immediately given object at first appears to yield the truest and richest insight, but then turns out to be "the poorest and most abstract truth." Hegel notes first that the wealth offered by the object as it presents itself in sensation is only apparent:

> Because of its concrete content, sense-certainty immediately appears as the richest kind of knowledge, indeed a knowledge of infinite wealth for which no bounds can be found, either when we reach out into space and time in which it is dispersed, or when we take a bit of this wealth, and by division enter into it. Moreover, sense-certainty appears to be the truest knowledge; for it has not as yet omitted anything from the object, but has the object before it in its perfect entirety.[26]

Appearances notwithstanding, the truths of the immediately given object are tautologous: in Hegel's reading, they signify simply that the

existing object exists. To quote from the Phenomenology of Spirit:

> But in the event, this very certainty proves itself to be the most abstract and poorest truth. All that it says about what it knows is just that it is; and its truth contains nothing but the sheer being of the thing.[27]

The object of vulgar empiricism is immediate. That this object-in-itself simply is renders the object self-identical, self-contained, and self-subsistent. Through this account, any claim--like Weber's or Habermas'--as to the object-constituting activities of the subject are strategically pre-empted and thereby suppressed. The object is thereby precluded from internal relationship with the knowing subject as well as with other objects. This, in turn, prevents any articulation of understanding as a dialectical process of reciprocal mediation of subject and object whereby both undergo qualitative development.

Hegel characterizes this ensemble of consequences by contrasting vulgar empiricism's account of epistemological immediacy with his idealist version of mediated understanding:

> I, this particular I, am certain of this particular thing, not because I, qua consciousness, in knowing it have developed myself or thought about it in various ways; and also not because the thing of which I am certain, in virtue of a host of distinct qualities, would be in its own self a rich complex of connections, or related in various ways to other things. Neither of these has anything to do with the truth of sense-certainty: here neither I nor the thing has the significance of a complex process of mediation; the 'I' does not have the significance of a manifold imagining or thinking, nor does the 'thing' signify something that has a host of qualities. On the contrary, the thing is, and it is, merely because it is. It is; this is the essential point for sense-knowledge, and this pure being, or this simple immediacy, constitutes its truth.[28]

For Hegel, the truth of the empiricist object-in-itself is static. That truth is self-identical, a permanent, eternalized "here and now."

As we read The Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel rehabilitates the embalmed object-in-itself by arguing that self-development is an intrinsic dimension of its dialectical existence. To quote:

> It is, then, sense-certainty, itself that must be asked: 'What is the this?' If we take the 'This' in the twofold shape of its being, as 'Now' and as 'Here,' the dialectic it has in it will receive a form as intelligible as the 'This' itself is. To the question: 'What is now,' let us answer, e.g. 'Now is Night.' In order to test the truth of this sense-certainty a simple experiment will suffice. We write down this truth; a truth cannot lose anything by being written down, any more than it can lose anything through our preserving it. If now, this noon, we look again at the written truth we shall have to say it has become stale.[29]

Hegel strategically re-constitutes the empiricist object-in-itself as an idealized, dynamic, self-equilibrating object. This comprises the strategic transformation of the vulgar empiricist object--immediate, self-identical, and static--into an idealist object--self-mediating, self-differentiating, and dynamic. The former presents itself already self-preserved, as what it is for eternity. The latter presents itself in the process of partially preserving itself through transcending itself; that is, through developing into something that is not what it was initially while preserving something of that initial state:

> The Now that is Night is preserved, i.e., it is treated as what it professes to be, as something that is; but it proves itself to be, on the contrary, something that is not. The Now does indeed preserve itself, but as something that is not Night; equally it preserves itself in face of the Day that it now is, as something that also is not Day, in other words, as a negative in general. This self-preserving Now is, therefore, not immediate but mediated; For it is determined as a permanent and self-preserving Now through the fact that something else, viz. Day and Night, is not.[30]

Furthermore, Hegel argues the epistemological inadequacy of

static reconstructions of objects for perception as objects-in-themselves. This is argued on the basis of an intrinsic dynamism of objects within sensation such that their movement (or development) has always already progessed beyond the activity that would define them there and then in their apparent immediacy:

> The now is pointed to, this Now. 'Now'; it has already ceased to be in the act of pointing to it. The now that is, is another Now than the one pointed to, and we see that the Now is just this: to be no more just when it is. The now, as it is pointed out to us, is Now, that has been, and this is its truth; it has not the truth of being. yet this much is true, that it has been. But what essentially has been is, in fact, not an essence that is; it is not, and it was with being that we were concerned.[31]

The designating of an object is present activity. But the object-designated is no longer the selfsame object which occasioned the designation. On Hegel's account, selfsameness is an insupportable claim. That is, the designated object is grasped retrospectively, and can no longer be the selfsame object in its initial immediacy. Rather, while seemingly immediate and given, the object-designate of sensation is a result of conceptual mediation. Indeed, it is constituted, in part, by the knowing subject.

The immediacy of the object of sensation, its "here and now," is an appearance produced ex post facto. The initial object is what is meant by the designating; but is no longer what was designated initially. To quote from The Phenomenology of Spirit:

> The pointing-out of the Now is thus itself the movement which expresses what the Now is in truth, viz. a result, or a plurality of Nows all taken together; ...32

Hegel greets the 'here' in corresponding fashion:

> The Here pointed out, to which I hold fast, is similarly a This Here which, in fact, is not this Here, but a

> Before and Behind, an Above and Below, a Right and Left. . . The Here that is meant would be the point; but it is not: on the contrary, when it is pointed out as something that is, the pointing-out shows itself to be not an immediate knowing [of the point]. . . [33]

To summarize: on Hegel's account of the object for sensation, its existing here and now cannot be grasped as if it were static and immediate. Nor can it be grasped in self-subsistent isolation from a subject's activities of sensation and perception. An object is always in process of becoming and cannot be reduced to the object meant by an act of designation which regards it as an object-in-itself. In some way, the object always supersedes the moment that designates it, so that it is not equivalent to the object designated. Again: "The here pointed out, to which I hold fast, is similarly a this Here which in fact, is not this here. . . . "

Hegel uses the term supersession to account for the immanent dynamics of object development in sensation. Supersession involves both the preservation of an object and its qualitative transformation through negation:

> The this is, therefore, established as not this, or as something superseded; and hence not as Nothing, but as determinate nothing, the Nothing of a content, viz. of the This. Consequently, this sense element is still present, but not in the way it was supposed to be in [the position of] immediate certainty . . . Supersession exhibits its true twofold meaning which we have seen in the negative: it is at once a negating and a preserving.[34]

Supersession is the self-transcending movement of a 'this' into a 'not-this'. The transformation does not utterly annihilate the former in establishing the latter. Indeed, the latter is partly constituted through the preservation-transformation of the former. Through sensation, understood as a process of development, an initial object is

preserved, albeit in a way that has been qualitatively transformed. Objects, thereby, are no longer reified as obdurate, billiard ball-like monads. They are developing and processive.

What is crucial here, for our purposes, is that Hegel's critique of vulgar empiricism's object for theorizing--an "immediate certainty"--reconstitutes it as a history. The object for sensation develops. It is a becoming. Its history is its self-superseding, dynamic movement. It undergoes qualitative, internal transformation. To cite The Phenomenology of Spirit:

> It is clear that the dialectic of sense-certainty is nothing else but the simple history of its movement or of its experience, and sense-certainty itself is nothing else but just this history.[35]

As we read it, Hegel's version of sensation and its objects, then, is a history, a process constituted by self-transcending objects undergoing qualitative transformation. This version of sense-perception enables Hegel to attribute the "wealth" of sense knowledge to sense-perception in his sense. On the other hand, the vulgar empiricist representation of sense experience as a self-subsistent, self-enclosed, object-in-itself--what Hegel calls an "immediate certainty"--precludes the object's self-differentiation and, thereby, aborts its ongoing development. To quote Hegel:

> The wealth of sense-knowledge belongs to perception not to immediate certainty, for which it was only the source of instances, for only perception contains negation, that is, difference or manifoldness, within its own essence.[36]

Indeed, by embalming the object for sensation in permanent selfsameness, vulgar empiricism strategically aborts the possibility of its qualitative self-differentiation. To extinguish this possibility

is to make impossible the articulation of object development, let alone one that surmounted the entrapment of objects in present, prevailing appearances. As we read Hegel, sensation is self-enriching. Vulgar empiricism's non-developmental, unhistorical version of sensation and its objects simply cannot be articulated as developing "wealth". Indeed, driven by the impulse to "hold fast" to any experience (cf. Faust), vulgar empiricism represses the historicity and developmental character of sensation, its objects, and its own mode of consciousness. Thus, Hegel polemicizes:

> It is therefore astonishing when, in face of this experience, it is asserted as universal experience and put forward, too, as a philosophical proposition . . . That the reality or being of external things taken as thises or sense-objects has absolute truth for consciousness. To make such an assertion is not to know what one is saying, to be unaware that one is saying the opposite of what one wants to say.[37]

The history that is sense experience is both cumulative and ongoing. Its course is constituted by and constitutes both objects and activities by which they are designated objects of a specific kind. It is an ongoing history of objects meant and objects superseding the meanings that designate them. To foreshadow: for Marx, sensation is a process of human enrichment. Indeed, the qualitative transformation of sensation is an integral moment of human history which displays the course of people engaged in negentropic self-development. Indeed, to quote Marx:

> The cultivation of the five senses is the work of all previous history.[38]

For Hegel, however, this history is appropriated as a moment of a larger idealized history by which it is constituted--namely, the self-development of Absolute Spirit. These rival interpretations,

however, must be seen as made possible by their shared--albeit strategically different--criticism of vulgar empiricism's strategic re-presentation of sensation and its object(s) in a way that eviscerates development and renders it mute.

Like the object of sensation, spirit differentiates itself through self-negation and undergoes transformation through self-supersession. Indeed, as Hegel notes, the Spirit's process of self-negation and self-preservation is its own history of self-development:

> But the other side of its Becoming, History, is a conscious, self - mediating process - Spirit emptied out into Time; but this externalization, this Kenosis, is equally an externalization of itself; the negative is the negative of itself.[39]

Further, the history is the history of the Spirit's becoming fully self-conscious and thereby fully "realizing itself." The formal trajectory of that historical movement is circular:

> The movement is the circle that returns into itself, the circle that presupposes its beginning and reaches it only at the end.[40]

This circular process is, however, not vicious, but developmental. Like sensation, Spirit's historical development is a process that is self-enriching. Crucially, its moment of return, the Spirit's achieving full self-consciousness, is its moment of departure qualitatively transformed. This process, of which increasingly "wealthy" sense experience is a modality and a moment, is self-enriching because it not only negates but preserves its anterior moments, albeit at higher levels of qualitative development. Indeed, the fertility of Hegel's metaphors bespeaks that self-qualitative enrichment is the heart of the matter:

> This Becoming presents a slow-moving succession of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance... In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But recollection, the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance. So although the Spirit starts afresh and apparently from its own resources to bring itself to maturity, it is nonetheless on a higher level that it starts.[41]

Again, Hegel's notion of the development of absolute self-consciousness as an enrichment process is more soberly displayed by this description of the process:

> At first, therefore, only the abstract moments of substance belong to self-consciousness, but since these, as pure movements, spontaneously impel themselves onward, self-consciousness enriches itself till it has wrested from consciousness the entire substance and has absorbed into itself the entire structure of the essentialities of substance.[42]

The self-enrichment of and by the Absolute Spirit proceeds, like sensation, in and as a history.

As we read Marx, Hegel's critique of empiricism matters because it rescues the possibility of qualitative historical development from the amnesiac theorizing that would suppress development--let alone qualitative change--and forget history utterly. From the standpoint of our problematic, the crucial moment of Marx's emancipatory animated reading of Hegel is his struggle to preserve and politicize that salutory critical moment of Hegel's theorizing against the formidable array of strategic devices by which Hegel repudiates his own insight into human development. The dual focus of our reading Marx's struggle "to play Hegel as an Aeolian harp" is Marx's

methodological critique of idealist dialectics and, most important, his critique of Hegel's formalization of negentropic development, the Absolute Spirit. Here we display Marx's struggle with Hegelian theorizing in two internally-related, enwreathed, modalities. In the first case, we display Marx's animated reading as an often polemical exploration of the limits of Hegel's theorizing--his identification and characterization of the non-self-conscious and strategic aspects of a theorizing that aborts the possibility of a mode of development that is at once ongoing, qualitative, historical and human. This reading constitutes a critique of limitations: an identification and a polemic which intends to surmount seemingly fixed barriers. In the second display, our reading demonstrates the texture and dynamics of Marx's struggle with the centerpiece of Hegel's oeuvre, Absolute Spirit. We see Marx struggle with its promise and disappointment, its seduction and betrayal, its negentropic suggestiveness and entropic sterility. Together we display two inseparable moments, a negative and positive critique, of a strategy for developing theory and discourse as genuine tools that can produce a new history.

As we just noted, one moment of this reading is a negative critique of limitation. As Marx reads it, Hegel's dialectic does not self-consciously face up to the fact and significance of its own limits: that the immateriality and lack of historical and empirical content of its object are problematic. Marx makes it problematic by criticizing the method by which the social totality is reduced to a non-empirical, speculative ideality as one-sided. To quote from The Poverty of Philosophy:

> Just by dint of abstraction we have transformed

> everything into a logical category, so one has only to make an abstraction of every characteristic distinctive of different movements to obtain movement in its abstract condition--purely formal movement, the purely logical formula of movement. If one finds in logical categories the substance of all things, one imagines one has found in the logical formula of movement the absolute method, which not only explains all things, but also implies the movement of things.
>
> It is of this absolute method that Hegel speaks in these terms:
>
> "Method is the absolute, unique, supreme, infinite force, which no object can resist. It is the tendency of reason to find itself again, to recognize itself in every object." (Logic, Vol. III)
>
> All things being reduced to a logical category, and every movement, every act of production, to method, it follows naturally that every aggregate of products and production, of objects and of movement, can be reduced to applied metaphysics.[43]

As we read his texts, for Marx, Hegel--left to his own strategic devices--fails to adequately appropriate the concrete for theorizing. While Marx validates the upward trajectory taken by Hegel's seeming intention to "rise" from abstract determinations--like the vulgar empiricist object-in-itself--to the concrete totality, Marx avers that Hegel "lost his way" nonetheless:

> In this way Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind.[44]

Again, Marx applauds Hegel's anti-empiricist, theoretical totalization of reality as a developing unity of diverse, albeit internally related moments. The problem, in Marx's view, lies in the foreordained, premature closure of that "development process."

The problem lies, too, in its one-sided, de-materialized, purely speculative totalization of the concrete. For instance, in the Introduction to the Grundrisse, Marx warns against Hegel's idealization of totality as a one-sided, non-empirical conception. To quote:

> . . . this is correct insofar as the concrete totality is a totality of thoughts, concrete in thought, in fact a product of thinking and comprehending; but not in any way a product of the concept which thinks and generates itself outside or above observation and conception; a product rather of the working up of observation and conceptions into concepts.[45]

As we read Marx here, the problem with Hegel's ideal reproduction of the concrete totality is not especially that he comprehends the totality as a totality of thoughts. Indeed, thinking and, more broadly, cognition, are real specifiable processes in and of a real, historical world. As we view it, then, the problem is that Hegel has a completely dematerialized, unhistorical conception of thinking and consciousness. Indeed, Hegel one-sidedly grants full authorship of the concrete totality to idealized consciousness itself: it is the ideal self-development of his Absolute Spirit. For Hegel, the concrete is a self-conscious process by which self-consciousness grounds itself as an ideality. Its self-contained and--in Marx's view--self-containing activity, the activity of its self-production, is its solipsistic thinking of itself by itself. To formulate the concrete totality in this way is to predetermine and foreclose in advance its possible qualitative development. In sum, our Marx reads Hegel's speculative totalization of reality as a solipsism. It is a process whereby ideal concepts logically breed further ideal concepts without a genuinely, self-conscious concrete grounding in the historical-empirical world.

From the standpoint of our reading as a critique of limitations, Hegel's ouevre is seductive: it invites and declines change, sets development in motion and aborts it, and challenges present reality and submits to it. It represents itself as a threshold to a new history and blockades the doorway. It renders experience an irony, a tease, in sum, a scarcity. We find grounds for this reading of seduction and betrayal displayed by Hegel's characterization of the present moment in his Preface to The Phenomenology of Spirit:

> Besides, it is difficult too that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past and the labor of its own transformation. Spirit is indeed never at rest, but always engaged in moving forward. But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of merely quantitative growth--there is a qualitative leap, and the child is born--so likewise the Spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms. The frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change. The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world.[46]

As we read Hegel, the "tease" is endemic to the theorizing. As we read Marx, the problem is Hegel's one-sided formulation of what otherwise might be read as qualitative historical development. That is, by re-presenting reality in purely formal and ideal terms, Hegel condemns its object-product to a de-materialized, de-historicized movement of logical categories, a movement that virtually empties itself of empirical content. Hegel's reconstruction of reality appears to transcend immediate empirical-historical conditions in its fashioning of reality as a dynamic, self-developing totality.

Appearances notwithstanding, however, its one-sided idealization actively suppresses its emancipatory historical potential. In this context, we quote Marx from his 1844 "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic":

> For this reason, despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance, and despite the genuine criticism which it contains and which often anticipates later developments, there is already implicit in The Phenomenology, as a germ, as a potentiality and a secret, the uncritical positivism and uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works--the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world.47

In sum, as we read Marx, Hegel's idealist dialectics do appear to undermine prevailing empirical appearances. But by construing historical change in idealized terms, Hegel ends up affirming them as unsurpassable.

As a critique of limitations, our Marx reads Hegel's method of object-constitution as a process that strategically mystifies the concrete totality. To use Della Volpe's apt phrasing, Marx grasps "the Hegelian, idealistic method as the method which allegorizes the empirical."[48] We can display grounds for such a charge in the following characterization of Absolute Spirit from the Phenomenology:

> But the other side of its Becoming, History, is a conscious, self-mediating process--spirit emptied out into Time; but this externalization, this Kenosis, is equally an externalization of itself, the negative is the negative of itself. This Becoming presents a slow-moving succession of spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance. As its fulfilment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in Knowing its substance, this Knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection. Thus absorbed in itself, it is sunk in the night of its self-consciousness; but in that night its vanished outer existence is preserved, and this transformed existence--the former one, but now reborn of the

> Spirit's Knowledge--is the new existence, a new world and a new shape of Spirit.[49]

In the Third Paris Manuscript (already cited above), we read Marx characterizing Hegel's version of social existence as a pre-harmonized, allegorical (as if Biblical) begetting of consciousness by consciousness:

> For Hegel this movement of <u>self-creation</u> and self-objectification in the form of self-estrangement is the absolute and hence final expression of human life, which has its end in itself, is at peace with itself, and at one with its own nature.[50]

Marx characterizes this abstracted movement of self-developing abstract categories as virtually "theologizing" human development:

> This movement, in its abstract form as dialectic, is regarded therefore as <u>truly human life</u>, and since it is nevertheless an abstraction, an alienation of human life, it is regarded as a <u>divine process</u> and thus as the divine process of mankind; it is a process which man's abstract, pure absolute being, as distinguished from himself, traverses.[51]

Indeed, in our account of Marx's reading as a critique of limitations, Hegel's Absolute Spirit results in the mystification and inversion of human activity:

> ...this process must have a bearer, a subject;...the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness, is therefore God, absolute spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea. Real man and real nature become mere predicates, symbols of this concealed unreal man and unreal nature. Subject and predicate have, therefore, an inverted relation to each other; a mystical subject-object, or a subjectivity reaching beyond the object, as a process of self-alienation and of return from alienation into itself. . .[52]

And again, philosophically, this constitutes a formal solipsism--the vicious circularity of this method of dynamic object self-constitution--which is characterized by Marx as "pure, <u>unceasing</u> revolving within itself."[53]

The non-self-conscious dimension of Hegel's theorizing which Marx places at issue here is his one-sided, idealized attribution of producing to consciousness. Ultimately, all development is construed as consciousness, and all consciousness is construed as an essential manifestation of Absolute Spirit. Through his strategic, idealist inversion of reality, the formal movements of self-developing logical categories appear to be real historical acts of development and producing. Indeed, as we read Marx, Hegel's fundamental error resides in his false equation of the process of category-formation with historical production. Thus, Marx says:

> But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being. ...Therefore, to the kind of consciousness--and this is characteristic of the philosophical consciousness--for which conceptual thinking is the real human being and for which the conceptual world as such is the only reality, the movement of the categories appears as the real act of production--which only, unfortunately, receives a jolt from the outside--whose product is the world.[54]

For Marx, this is insufferably one-sided. Producing cannot be reducible to the interplay of concepts alone. Nor can theorizing be reduced to the unhistorical self-thinking thought process of consciousness as such (let alone that of an Absolute Consciousness). In essence, read through a critique of limitation, it is Hegel's reification and hypostatization of the activity of the Absolute Spirit as the ultimate source, medium, and goal of production and culturo-historical development which makes that theorizing paradigmatic for what Marx defines as alienated activity.

As we read him, Marx earmarks Hegel's theorizing as alienated activity in that (absolute) consciousness produces, but cannot itself be grasped as produced, except through and by itself. In non-alienated,

self-conscious theoretical activity, concepts can be read as products themselves of the theorizing activity of producing individuals. Hegel acts as if his own theoretical product is the sole producing agency that grounds and unfolds not only as theorizing, but as all other activity as well. In this way, the idealist dialectic in Hegel's hands becomes alienated activity par excellence in that it inverts the real order of things, including that of its own production.

Marx summarizes this inverted reproduction of the concrete as follows:

> Real man and real nature become mere predicates, symbols of this concealed unreal man and unreal nature [read Absolute Spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting Idea]. Subject and predicate have, therefore, an inverted relation to each other.[55]

Indeed, we are persuaded finally, that read through Marx's critique of limitations, Hegel's idealist dialectical method is an exemplary alienated activity. Thus, we recall its characterization in the 1844 Manuscripts:

> . . . the worker is related to the product of his labor as to an alien object. . . . The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force.[56]

As we read Marx, then, Hegel's absolute attribution of productive activity to The Concept (Absolute Spirit)--allegedly a totally self-produced (read unproduced by human agency) object--makes his method and its object, virtual paradigms for alienated activity. To let Hegel's theorizing stand uncriticized would be to endorse its version of human experience. This would further alienate human

productive and historical development activity--including self-consciousness--from human agency and control, by rendering them as so many moments of the developing rationality and self-awareness of the Absolute Spirit. Again, to do this equates human self-consciousness with its self-alienated activity, so that the Spirit's increasing self-consciousness becomes increasing human self-division. Human development, thereby, gets divided against itself, it becomes unrecognizable to itself as itself. Indeed, Hegel demonstrates as much in the Phenomenology of Spirit. There he notes that "the existence" of this world

> . . . is the work of self-consciousness, but it also an alien reality already present and given, a reality that has a being of its own and in which it does not recognize itself.[57]

In this way, human development either becomes non-self-conscious self-abnegation, or self-conscious resignation. Thus, while appearing to rise above mere religious consolation, Hegel re-mythologizes the human situation and thereby consolidates and rationalizes its self-alienation as an eternal condition. As Marx reads his texts:

> . . . it implies that self-conscious man, insofar as he has recognized and superseded the spritual world (or the universal spiritual mode of existence of his world) then confirms it again in this alienated form [read, as the Absolute Spirit] and presents it as his true existence, he re-establishes it and claims to be at home in his other being.[58]

At this point we will display Marx's developmental critique of Hegelian theorizing, the other of two internally-related, inseparable moments of his emancipatory animated reading of Hegel's texts. Our animated reading of Marx's critique focuses on what we see as Hegel's formalization of negentropy, namely Absolute Spirit.

Marx's critique of idealist methodology negates its notion of concepts (like Absolute Spirit) being produced in and by consciousness alone; preserves its notion of an active consciousness and its concepts producing; and transcends the immateriality and viciously circular movement of its idealized, self-harmonizing, dynamic objects. Neither endorsing nor rejecting idealism in full, Marx eschews any one-sided rejection of Hegel's potential significance for another theorizing. Indeed, the virtue of Hegelian theorizing from Marx's emancipatory standpoint is that, as an Aeolian harp, its play--while alienated--richly rewards a listening with ears attuned to emancipatory resonances. This, as we note is a two-fold critique. First, it displays the one-sided alienated activity which a new mode of theorizing and practice would have to transcend in order to produce an historical difference in the world. And second, its alienated object for theorizing, Absolute Spirit, constitutes a particularly fertile, vivid, formidable nexus of variegated--albeit formalized--activities--divorced from direct connection to human agency.

The positive, preservative move in Marx's critique of idealist dialectics is his Promethean theft of the divine fire: namely, the strategic re-appropriation of the Absolute Spirit as now quintessentially human activity--historical, developmental, and emancipatory. In this case, stealing the divine fire is Marx strategically re-appropriating the life of the Spirit--Hegel's image of history as the self-development of consciousness--as non-alienated, emancipatory human activity. Indeed, as we read Marx's critique of Hegelian idealist methodology, the re-appropriation of the Absolute Spirit as human historical process, through emancipatory animated

reading, is itself a display and strategy of the de-alienation of human activity.

Marx's emancipatory animated reading of Hegel's method does not terminate one-sidedly in the absolute dismissal of its abstracted, contentless movement as mere mystification. Marx does not read Hegel's dialectic in a one-sided way. Instead, he identifies and strategically appropriates the potential for historical development that abides in Hegel's mode of circular theorizing. Indeed, Marx's strategy as an emancipatory animated reader, is to account for the historical possibility of an object and its method such as Hegel's. This would enable the development of Hegelian idealist theorizing in a way that transcends the immateriality and lack of historical, empirical content which actively aborts the emancipatory historical potential latent in its idealist dialectics.

Animated reading is always developmental activity. In Marx's emancipatory hands, the Hegelian corpus is animatedly played, as we have noted, like an Aeolian harp. The divine music that Marx would wrest from that instrument plays to an animated touch that appropriates textual material for further development. Where positivist readings respect, assume or discover conceptual boundaries as seemingly self-evident outer limits on further interpretation, Marx regards them as thresholds that presage and invite ongoing textual development. Where positivist ears hear textual silences in ways that punctuate and solidify the prevailing social order, Marx listens for textual resonances that vibrate to ears attuned to an emancipatory pitch that would transcend prevailing historical limits. His critique of Hegel, then, is a developmental critique of texts treated as so many

objects-in-birth. It is an animated reading that reconstitutes and develops an emancipatory trajectory that is otherwise repressed by positivist readings--including Hegel's own strategic self-delimitation.

Marx's refusal to treat the Hegelian corpus as an object-in-itself, one finally bounded by its author's avowed and unavowed intentions and self-repression, is made clear by the Third Paris Manuscript:

> The Phenomenology is a concealed, unclear and mystifying criticism, but insofar as it grasps the alienation of man (even though man appears only as mind) all the elements of criticism are contained in it, in a manner which goes beyond Hegel's own point of view.[59]

As we read Marx, especially fertile candidates for developmental critique "in a manner which goes beyond Hegel's own point of view" are those Hegelian texts that provide an allegorical-metaphysical formulation of producing, a human beings's fundamental self-constitutive activity. In our view it is precisely the "mystified" texts which conceal developmental possibilities that transcend Hegel's own self-conscious theorizing. For instance, Hegel attributes the production of the existing world to Absolute Spirit:

> This world is, however, the spiritual entity, it is in itself the interfusion of being and individualty; this its existence is the work of self-consciousness, but it is also an alien reality already present and given, a reality which has a being of its own and in which it does not recognize itself.[60]

Again, the self-development and self-recognition by which Spirit achieves self-harmony are defined as its "labour" which, in turn, is defined as "History." As stated in The Phenomenology of Spirit:

> The movement of carrying forward its self-knowledge is the labour which it accomplishes as actual History.[61]

Marx de-mystifies such texts through his developmental critique.

Reading Hegel from an emancipatory animated standpoint, he characterizes this positive, re-coverable, developmental heart of Hegel's as follows:

> In short, Hegel conceives labor as man's act of self-creation (though in abstract terms); he grasps man's relation to himself as an alien being and the emergence of species-consciousness and species-life as the demonstration of his alien being.[62]

Thus, Marx would re-cover such notions as production and history for human development rather than lose these human attributes to some transhuman force, Absolute Spirit, which remained out of the reach of human intervention. Our aim here, however, is not to establish a mechanical translation and substitution of Hegelian terms into and for Marxian terms. Consequently, we will display how, rather than merely assert that Marx appropriates the emancipatory potential that abides particularly in Hegel's conception of Absolute Spirit. Display, in sum, is not "a linear accomplishment."

We begin, then, with a preliminary animated reading of Hegel's metaphorical conclusion to The Phenomenology of Spirit. Viewing the Spirit's moment of return both retrospectively and prospectively, Hegel concludes with a citation from Schiller:

> The goal, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their (philosophically) comprehended organization it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the inwardizing and the Calvary of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone. Only from the chalice of this realm of spirits foams forth for Him his own infinitude. (Adaptation of Schiller's Die Freundschaft, ad fin.)[62a]

As we read it, The Phenomenology of Spirit does not end in homeostatic repose: it overflows its vessel. Infinity foaming forth, ongoingly, is not merely reducible to teleological stasis. Hegel's deployment of Schiller's metaphor does not merely set development to rest in formal, logical self-reconciliation. As metaphor it is ambigious: it both reveals and conceals. It does not punctuate or resolve, and thereby render further speech and thought mute. Instead, it poses an invitation to the dance of animated reading.

As we read him, Hegel allegorizes negentropic development in a way that subsumes and transcends history, which he reads as a realm of self-alienated activity. Thus, Spirit self-reconciled "foams forth", but it does so transhistorically. Marx, by contrast, de-mystifies such negentropic development and renders it historically-specific and fully immanent to non-alienated human historical development. In our view, then, to hear this, Hegel's finale, merely as an invocation of serenity and repose, is to hear it as an "ordinary harp", its music "Ave Maria." However, to listen to it as an "Aeolian harp", its music decisively this-worldly, is to hear Schiller's "Ode to Joy." As we read him, then, Marx hears its emancipatory strains, and listens to a Hegel whose very own composition is self-superseding--"... presented and worked out in a manner which goes far beyond Hegel's own point of view."[63]

Marx accepts the invitation to the emancipatory interpretive dance by "humanizing" (or de-mystifying) Hegel's mytho-poetic allegory of the Spirit's self-development. The self-development of the Spirit through and beyond history is "read"--negated, preserved and transcended--as human beings fully producing themselves and their own

history through and as historically immanent, human activity--namely, through and as human labor. To quote from Marx's "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic" in the 1844 Manuscripts:

> The outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology--dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle--is, first, that Hegel grasps the self-creation of man as a process...and that he, therefore, grasps the nature of labor, and conceives objective man (true, because real man) as the result of his own labor.[64]

Again, self-enrichment process that is the self-development of Hegel's Spirit becomes humanity understood as "species being", developing by ongoingly producing itself and its products as the cornucopian panoply of human "species powers". To quote:

> The real, active orientation of man to himself as a species-being, or the affirmation of himself as a real species-being (i.e., as a human being) is only possible so far as he really brings forth all his species-powers (which is only possible through the co-operative endeavors of mankind and as an outcome of history) and treats these powers as objects, which can only be done at first in the form of alienation.[65]

The process of self-supersession whereby the Spirit transcends history as its self-alienated activity becomes human beings self-consciously producing themselves in and as their own history:

> And as everything natural must have its origin so man has his process of genesis, history, which is for him, however, a conscious process and thus one which is consciously self-transcending.[66]

What is problematic here for Marx is that the self-transcendence of alienated activity by Hegel's Absolute Spirit never really escapes its self-estrangement. Rather, it displays it in its very movement:

> . . . because the conception is formal and abstract the annulment of alienation becomes a confirmation of alienation... This movement, in its abstract [XXXI] form

> as dialectic, is regarded therefore as truly human life, and since it is nevertheless an abstraction, an alienation of human life, it is regarded as a divine process and thus the divine process of mankind; it is a process which man's abstract, pure, absolute being, as distinguished from himself, traverses.[67]

In its abstract, formal resolution, Hegel's theorizing stands in a fertile tension with its own highly suggestive imagery and dialectical methodology of idealized abundant development. It both presages and suppresses negentropic development as an existential possibility. Making such activity both human as well as an historical possibility requires that critique de-mystifies the mythopoesy and rescues historical content from theoretical formalization and abstraction. To focus for now on Marx's critique of Hegel's mode of abstraction:

> The replete, living, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification is therefore reduced to a mere abstraction, absolute negativity, an abstraction which is then crystallized as such and is conceived as an independent activity, as activity itself.[68]

Thus, the panoply of human self-development through self-objectification is reduced to categorial barrenness. Moreover, since as a category it is abstract and contentless, the supersession whereby Absolute Spirit achieves its formal self-reconciliation remains within the very mode of alienation it deems both possible and necessary to surpass:

> Supersession as an objective movement which reabsorbs alienation into itself. This is the insight, expressed within alienation, into the appropriation of the objective being through the supersession of its alienation. It is the alienated insight into the real objectification of man...[69]

By remaining abstract, the development seemingly accomplished by the departure and return of Hegel's theorizing, the movement of the Absolute Spirit, betrays its claim to genuine self-supersession.

Instead of accomplishing a qualitative transformation of its origin and overall condition, a new basis for a new kind of departure, Spirit and theorizing are actually condemned to the Sisyphusian repetition of a vicious circularity. To quote:

> But what is the absolute idea? It must supersede itself if it does not want to traverse the whole process of abstraction again from the beginning and to rest content with being a totality of abstractions or a self-comprehending abstraction. But the self-comprehending abstraction knows itself to be nothing . . .[70]

Again, while formally self-reconciled Spirit thrives in self-nourishment, Marx tastes a vanilla sameness in Hegel's apparent feast. That is, whereas Hegel presents the Spirit's return as an eternity of self-fulfillment, Marx reads it as the fate of a Tantalus--a permanent self-frustrating yearning for genuine completion. Correspondingly, Marx characterizes the Spirit's process of departure and return as follows:

> . . . a mystical-subject-object, or a subjectivity reaching beyond the object, the absolute subject as a process of self-aliena- tion and of return from alienation into itself, and at the same time of reabsorption of this alienation the subject as this process; pure unceasing revolving within itself.[71]

Thus, in our view, the negative moment of Marx's critique is a reading of Hegel's mythopoesy as a virtual theatre of the absurd: longing is always already unrequitable; alienation is resurrected by the very undertaking that purports to transcend it. The "negativity" or self-negation whereby the Spirit develops from a This to a not this presages non-alienated development but remains empty as "merely the abstract, vacuous form of that real living act." As a "totality of abstractions", moreover, "its content can only be a formal content produced by abstraction from all content."[72] Again, The Phenomenology of Spirit seemingly details a self-enrichment process, namely Spirit

progressively nourishing itself through a plethora of experiences. But for Marx, as we read him, the Spirit's seemingly lustful appetitiveness becomes a theoretical anorexia. The idealization of historical experience renders the Spirit vacuous. Its appetite for self-reconciliation devours historical experience and renders it abstract. And, as we read Marx, prevailing social life abhors an historical vacuum, and rushes in to re-establish itself and reclaim its seemingly bygone prerogatives.

Read by way of negation, then, Hegel's theorizing accomplishes "the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world."[73] For Marx, Hegel's theoretical critique and appropriation of the vacuity of vulgar empiricism's object-in-itself subsumes it into another more suggestive, more systemic, more dynamic process of abstraction from historical experience--a vacuity still, albeit at a higher level of theoretical development. Marx's sensitivity to "the lack" of the stomach of Hegel's theorizing is a sensitivity to its mood: namely, a growing weariness of its own proliferation through and of abstractions, and an increasingly desperate appetite for substantive experience. For Marx, Hegel's abrupt leap toward mysticism and intuition in the form of a philosophy of nature embodies this mood. While the Spirit's theoretical self-reconciliation is presented as an occasion for celebration, its abstract triumph only masks the underlying alienation of the theorist from genuine historical life.

As Marx reads it, there a predominant mood pervades the Hegelian project--its ennui. In his 1844 "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic," Marx cites Hegel's Encyclopedia as a display of the move from abstraction to intuition:

> The absolute idea, the abstract idea which "regarded from the aspect of its unity with itself, is intuition."[74]

Marx performs an animated reading which further illuminates this pervasive, self-alienated mood. To quote Marx:

> The abstract idea, which without mediation becomes intuition, is nothing but abstract thought which abandons itself and decides for intuition. This whole transition from logic to the philosophy of nature is simply the transition from abstracting to intuition, a transaction which is extremely difficult for the abstract thinker to accomplish and which he therefore describes in such strange terms. The mystical feeling which drives the philosopher from abstract thinking to intuition is ennui, the longing for a content.[75]

Hegel's longing for self-fulfillment, for the transcendence of historical alienation, at once takes the form of triumphal "pure" self-consciousness--a conceptual "act of self-reference"--and a desperate flight from the abyss of abstraction:

> Further, insofar as this abstraction conceives itself, and experiences an increasing weariness of itself, there appears in Hegel an abandonment of abstract thought...76

Hegel, however, remains self-imprisoned, hoisted by his own petard, since his flight from abstraction into an intuited nature never relinquished abstraction as its path and mode of self-alienated expression. Thus, Hegel's "abandonment" of abstract thought fails since, to quote Marx, it

> . . . moves solely in the sphere of thought devoid of eyes, ears, teeth, everything, and a resolve to recognize nature as being and to go over to intuition.
>
> But nature too, taken abstractly, for itself, and rigidly separated fom man, is nothing for man. It goes without saying that the abstract thinker who has committed himself to intuition, intuits nature abstractly.[77]

Thus, Hegel's invocation of Schiller at the finale of the symphonic

Phenomenology of Spirit can be grasped in just this way--as, simultaneously, an attempted departure and failure to depart from life and historical development rendered as a transhistorical abstraction. Viewed, then, against the background of Marx's critique, Hegel's choosing to conclude the Phenomenology of Spirit with Schiller's bountiful metaphor--Spirit "foams forth . . . his own infinitude"[78]--can be read as a partial silence. While it presages abundant development, it also conceals--and, in so doing, displays--its own insufficiency, its hunger for historical content. The imagery here is full yet hollow, suggestive yet unspecific, embellished yet insubstantial. It both embellishes and cloaks Hegel's strategic move from philosophical thinking to intuition. It thereby conceals a dearth of specifiable and historical content in an otherwise formally brilliant tour de force of abstraction.

As we read Hegel, the Spirit's self-development is a process of self-genesis--its moment of departure--and self-reconciliation--its moment of return. Hegel's Spirit both enters time and initiates history, as well as sublates--preserves, negates and transcends--time and so, transcends history. Through externalizing itself it posits history as an act of self-alienation. Correspondingly, through recovery itself, it subsumes and devours history as an act of self-reconciliation. Spirit's qualitative self-development culminates in an act whereby it overcomes its self-alienation through an historical development that finally transcends its own historicity. As we read Marx, Hegel's version of development--human, natural, social--is self-repudiating. At once, Hegel's theorizing presages and preempts self-conscious, negentropic development as an historical

possibility. For Marx, the temporal moment of the Spirit's development, its departure through and as deemed history, is progressive and "carried forward" through his critique of Hegelian idealism. He reads that moment as labor, Spirit engaging in production. To quote from Marx's "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic": "In short, Hegel conceives labour as man's act of self-creation (though in abstract terms)"[79] Again, Marx states:

> The outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology . . . is, first, that Hegel grasps the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and transcendence of this alienation, and, that he, therefore, grasps the nature of labour, and conceives objective man (true, because real man) as the result of his own labour.[80]

For Marx, Hegel--albeit allegorically--has grasped that history is produced through and as man's consciously self-transcending developmental activity within time--what we read as labor:

> . . . as everything natural must have its origin so man has his process of genesis, history, which is for him, however, a conscious process and thus one which is consciously self-transcending.[81]

For Hegel, as Marx reads him, historical activity necessarily remains self-alienated, so than overcoming alienation entails the transcendence of history. For Marx, by contrast, de-alienation is an historically immanent process, man's increasingly self-conscious production in and as history. Thus, overcoming alienation is itself an historical process. As Marx reads Hegel, however, his turn to allegory is a turn away from the historicity of this process. Hegel, on his reading, repudiates the real potential of the Spirit's moment of departure into history by rendering it a transhistorical abstraction as a moment or return. Becoming historical through self-differentiation,

Spirit reaches fruition by existing transhistorically through self-identification. In achieving self-identity and, thereby, transcending self-alienation, the Spirit has transcended both history and with it the standpoint of production. Whereas production (or labor) is embodied through Spirit's departure, it is jettisoned upon Spirit's self-reconciled return.

The moment of return is neither an occasion that initiates a new round of self-transformation whereby Spirit undergoes further self-differentiation, nor is its self-development in accord with a new kind of logic. This process of return is the climax of what Marx calls "an abstraction process." Self-reconciled Spirit hereby becomes "a self-comprehending abstraction." Real people are not self-conscious agents of their own practical, historical transformation, but are rendered moments of that universal "self-consciousness." And, finally, overcoming alienation is rendered in a way that is unhistorical as well as vacuous. The foregoing is addressed by Marx's "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic":

> First, the formal and abstract conception of man's act of self-creation or self-objectification.Since Hegel equates man with self-consciousness, the alienated object, the alienated real being of man, is simply consciousness, merely the thought of alienation, its abstract and hence vacuous and unreal expression, the negation. The annulment of alienation is also, therefore, merely an abstract and vacuous annulment of this empty abstraction, the negation of the negation.[82]

Indeed, we read Marx's version of Hegel's self-harmonized moment of return as the utter dissolution of historical content:

> Since this so-called negativity is merely the abstract, vacuous form of that real living act, its content can only be a formal content produced by abstraction from all content. (p. 215)

As we read it, the logic of the Spirit's self-development is first, to posit history through the Spirit's externalization of its own content in time, and, then, to render that history an abstract formalization of activity by re-appropriating the once historical content to de-historicized, vacuous categories--"pure, unceasing revolving within itself."[84] Whereas Spirit's self-externalization of its content posits historical development, its re-appropriation of that seemingly enriched content devours that history by reconstituting it as an empty abstraction. Stated formally, Spirit simultaneously produces and consumes history in traversing its own course from moment of departure to moment of return. And, to state this in the terms of our problematic, the Spirit's course of historical development can be read as the strategic transformation of what initially appears as self-production into an entropic self-consumption, or scarcity.

As we read Hegel, to traverse this course of development is to simultaneously generate and deplete, produce and consume historical development. The moment of return is not a substantive, qualitative transformation of the moment of departure--it is its complete formalization. Their seeming qualitative difference is strictly formal. And yet, read in terms of our problematic, Spirit's "unceasing revolving within itself" is not a merely formal homeostasis. Rather, Spirit's self-development becomes an entropic process which depletes its own history, reduces its own complexity, and homogenizes its diversity through abstraction. All this occurs in the course and name of its overcoming its own self-division. The result is an absurdity: self-negating development. This is suggested by our reading of Marx's characterization:

> But what is the absolute idea? It must supersede itself if it does not want to transverse the whole process of abstraction again from the beginning and to rest content with being a totality of abstractions or a self-comprehending abstraction. But the self-comprehending abstraction knows itself to be nothing.[85]

Again, the absurdity is further compounded in that Hegel produces a self-repudiating version of development which resurrects through abstraction the very historical alienation it would forever inter. As Marx states it:

> ...because the conception is formal and abstract the annulment of alienation becomes a confirmation of alienation. For Hegel, this movement of self-creation and self-objectification in the form of self-estrangement is the absolute and final expression of human life, which has its end in itself, is at peace with itself and at one with its own nature.[86]

Thus, a process develops, but without real qualitative supersession. Development thereby becomes a self-aborting potential, a history that swallows its own tail, a barren fertility. It is at once its own self-production and self-consumption. As self-negating activity, Hegel's theorizing--as we read Marx's version--is simultaneously pervaded by its mood of ennui, "the longing for a content", and, conversely, by its massive self-denial of that content since "its content can only be a formal content produced by abstraction from all content".[87] Hegel's theorizing, thereby, aborts its emancipatory potential. In strategic, political-theoretical terms, it is at once "the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world."[88]

As we read Marx, he de-mystifies Hegel's attribution of this activity to the life of the spirit[89] and, like Prometheus, appropriates it as quintessentially human historical activity:

> And as everything natural must have its origin so man has his process of genesis, history, which is for him, however, a conscious process and thus one which is consciously self-transcending.[90]

That is, for Marx, the self-conscious development that Hegel attributes to the life of the Absolute Spirit becomes this-worldly. It is re-appropriated as ongoing, historical, and potentially non-alienated, self-emancipating human activity--the activity of how it is to be human. To quote from the Third 1844 Manuscript:

> Since...for socialist man, the whole of what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labour, and the emergence of nature for man, he, therefore, has the evident and irrefutable proof of his self-creation, of his own origins.[91]

Unlike Prometheus of the myth who expropriates for a suffering humanity what is originally a divine possession, Marx's "theft" is a restorative gesture which makes present the awareness that it is only they who have made their own history all along. To overcome this forgetting, restoring awareness of their authorship over history by its real authors, becomes on integral dimension of what Marx called "the reform of consciousness":

> The reform of consciousness consists only in enabling the world to clarify its consciousness, in waking it from its dream about itself . . .[92]

Indeed, one strategic dimension of the category, alienated labor, is to help make possible such a re-membering of author to work, and of product and process to producer. But Marx is not Feuerbach and his strategic de-alienation of human activity--its re-covery from Hegelian allegorization--is not simply a matter of consciousess re-forming consciousness, but of historical praxis. De-alienation, one moment of which is critique, is an historically-specific, strategic

activity whereby an intentional consciousness--that is not reducible to merely epistemological status but is appetitive, etc.--which is always enwreathed in the material world--and neither immaterial nor ethereal--ongoingly engages in self-conscious transformative practices. Indeed, it is through praxis--a strategic activity simultaneously constituting and being constituted by a socio-historical setting--that (not just epistemological) self-conscious historical subjects engage in actively specific projects, in an overall strategy for change. Demystified as historically specific, self-conscious human activities, praxis is the producing individuals undergoing and generating qualitative changes in and through their internal relationships to themselves and to each other.

Praxis, then, is the prize garnered by Marx's Promethean theft of Hegel's Absolute Spirit. It is the life of the spirit in the historically specific process of being dealienated. Marx re-appropriates the life of the Spirit as a concrete, emancipatory strategy for radical social and personal historical transformation. It is the life of the Spirit no longer idealized as ultimately a mode of consciousness, which then is grounded in trans-historical, ideal being. It is the life of the Spirit re-appropriated as self-conscious human species activity: the making of a history which, no longer projected on to a trans-human agency intends to transcend its previous scarcity-bound history of internal self-divisions and self-negating modes of development. It is the life of the Spirit re-possessed and transformed into a self-conscious activity of theorizing produced, informed by and situated as an overall strategic intention to make a different history differently. It is the life of the Spirit rendered a

meta-methodological practice, critique, that self-consciously undermines rival practices whose subjects strategically forget their own authorship in their self-alienated reproducing of concrete social life in such terms as "the life of the spirit." As we read Marx, critique is the life of the Spirit self-consciously rendered as self-conscious theoretical practice. As a moment of praxis, critique entails the ongoing qualitative transformation of its objects as well as--and in internal relationship to--the qualitative self-development of those who theorize in this historically-specific mode. As developmental activity, critique appropriates the form-positing-and-transcending activity of the Spirit's profusive self-development. Indeed, critique re-makes it as a self-conscious, historically specific, political practice of a new kind--an embodiment of abundant, post-scarcity development. Reappropriated as praxis, the profuse life of the Spirit's self-development now becomes so many self-conscious, historically specific activities. Thereby producing individuals self-consciously engage in making--producing--a post-scarcity form of social life.

Marx's strategic critique of Hegelian dialectics as self-alienated activity is one moment in the constitution of a new object for theorizing, the rich totality. This object is also partially produced through Marx's emancipated animated reading of political economy as self-estranged activity. The method of political economy reproduces concrete human productive activities as unproduced, pregiven natural laws. Thereby its method severs producing from human agency. The productive activity of individuals is subsumed and subjected to natural laws. Their own producing energies are reified

and set off in external opposition to these producers in the alienated form of necessary laws that must govern their historical activities. Alternatively, the method of idealist dialectics reproduces concrete human productive activities by idealizing them and formally subsuming them under the unfolding, abstracted dialectical movements of (absolute) consciousness knowing itself. Again, human activity is mystified, allegorized, and set off in opposition to its own progenitors--whose producing activities thereby become mere moments in and of the self-development of the Absolute Spirit. In each case, then, the producing activities of individuals are theoretically expropriated--conceptualized and hypostatized--as respectively natural laws or Absolute Consciousness. In this way, they are superimposed upon those very individuals as though autonomous, alien powers stood in external opposition to them.

We have arrived, once more, at production. Understanding the theoretical relationships in Hegel between consumption and production as categories or modalities of historical development--which include, but are not confined to economic practices--is pivotal to our reading of Marx. He notes that Hegel's Spirit achieves self-conscious, self-identity, so that production and consumption are construed as identical moments--albeit appearing differently--of the selfsame, idealized process of development. Thus, Marx says in the Grundrisse:

> . . .nothing simpler for a Hegelian than to posit production and consumption as identical.[93]

Insofar as all development is in Hegel that of a single subject, Absolute Spirit, Marx states:

> With a single subject, production and consumption appear as moments of a single act.[94]

As we read Hegel, moreover, it is possible to situate this underlying identity of economic practices within a larger process of development whose predominant moment is the self-reconciliation of the Spirit, its moment of return. To attribute primacy to this moment is to read its significance in Hegel's theorizing process as its cardinal moment. It is the moment that bestows significance on that otherwise senseless, alienated historical process. Indeed, as we read Hegel, one key significance of the moment of return is to provide consolation for having departed, to offer a redemptory rationale for what otherwise appears as a tragicomic history of senseless anguish and suffering. Hegel's move to redeem history informs and constitutes the entire process in terms of a partly mythopoetic teleology which, as we read it, accomplishes a formalistic self-reconciliation through rendering historical experience an abstraction. Historical alienation is overcome through a mode of abstraction which appears to overcome history through an abstract, transhistorical resolution.

Insofar as Spirit's self-development provides the very historical substance for its own process of self-reappropriation by abstraction, its self-reconciliation can be read as an act of self-consumption. Spirit devours its own historical content. Its autogenesis and its autogestation are twin moments of a self-reconciliation process. Its culmination takes the form of an everlasting self-nourishment. Lacking historical content, however, Spirit's abstract self-reconciliation becomes everlastingly vacuous. It is ongoing self-consumption without self-depletion. It persists as pure, dynamic, abstract homeostasis that no longer undergoes or produces further qualitative difference--of either a formal or

historical variety.

In sum, then, we read Hegel's version of development as a process wherein production and consumption are formally identical moments of still greater development--Spirit's self-harmonization. The predominant moment in this process is its culmination in a state of perpetual self-consumption. As economic practices, production and consumption are subsumed and dissolved in this formal resolution of Spirit's self-estrangement. This mode of self-fulfillment, moreover, is simultaneously a mode of self-containment. As a self-identity that becomes formal and abstract, spirits reconciled telos precludes further qualitative transformation. The process further appropriates history to a transhistorical cul-de-sac. It transcends alienation through an abstraction process that consumes and transcends historical experience. Through this process, moreover, it erases the possibility of a genuine historical difference--a non-alienated history--with an eternal, formal selfsameness.

As we read him, Marx demonstrates striking formal parallels between Hegelian theorizing and its ostensible theoretical rival, political economy. This can be seen in his analysis of their respective treatment of production and consumption. Thus, Marx says in his "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic" (1844): "Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy."[95] In this 1844 formulation, Marx next suggests that both regard labor as humankind's essential characteristic power and focus on its self-alienated state:

> He conceives labour as the essence, the self-confirming essence of man; he observes only the positive side of labour not its negative side. Labour is man's coming to

> be for himself within alienation, or as an alienated man. Labour as Hegel understands and recognizes it is abstract mental labour.[96]

Furthermore, in his 1857 Introduction to the Grundrisse, Marx characterizes political economy's version of consumption in ways that bear a striking parallel to our reading of the Spirit's mode of self-fulfilment. For one thing, whereas the subject of the process is now the economy (or economic system), consumption is still defined as its culminatory act. To quote from the Grundrisse:

> Production is determined by general natural laws, distribution by social accident, and the latter may therefore promote production to a greater or lesser extent; exchange stands between the two as formal social movement; and the concluding act, consumption, which is conceived not only as a terminal point but also as an end in itself. . . .[97]

More strikingly, like Hegel's Absolute Spirit, political economy's consumption bears a relationship to the process at hand. This progress is both immanent and, in a sense, transcendent of that process. To quote:

> ... and the concluding act, consumption, which is conceived not only as a terminal point but also as an end-in-itself, actually belongs outside economies except in so far as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure and initiates the whole process anew.[98]

Thus, for political economy, the immanent-transcendent relationship borne by consumption to economic processes is initiatory as well as culminatory. Consumption is the economy's source of motion, self-renewing dynamism without which the economic process would end in static immobility. In Aristotelian terms, consumption serves as both first and final cause of the economic process taken as a whole. Its transcendent characteristic renders it irreducible to any specific act of object depletion, while serving as a perpetual source for the renewal of economic activity once an object is consumed. In this

sense, consumption serves as a virtual deus ex machina, providing a self-initiating, external stimulus for a process which is not theoretically formulated in terms of any immanent principle that would account for its ongoing persistence.

In Hegel's theorizing too, the course of Spirit's self-development is informed throughout by its telos, its purposive moment of return. Indeed, Spirit's self-development is propelled through by its appetite for self-reconciliation. Its developmental path through time is its history, its self-alienated self-production. Simultaneously, its ongoing production is also its ongoing self-reappropriation, a process whereby it consumes its own historical content along the way and renders itself abstract. Its idealized telos, in its formal existence as a dynamic end-in-itself, is a non-depletable activity of self-consumption. As a final cause--to use Aristotle's term--this telos both energizes and informs the full course of the Spirit's development. It is at once both immanent and transcendent in relation to the process taken as a whole; and, as its culmination, Spirit's ongoing self-consumption is the formal activity of its ongoing persistence.

In Hegelian idealism and political-economy alike, then, historical, economic or "general" development processes are strategically insulated from undergoing real, qualitative or historical transformations. In each case, consumption--in some mode--engenders, maintains or re-instates movement for the process as a whole. At the same time, while consumption is a critical propulsive activity, the movement thereby initiated does not generate qualitative transformations of the process itself. To state this in Hegelian

parlance, whereas consumption engenders and embodies ongoing activity, it does so without qualitative supersession. Here we view Marx's characterization of the Absolute Spirit as particularly germane:

> But what is the absolute idea? It must supersede itself if it does not want to traverse the whole process of abstraction again from the beginning and to rest content with being a totality of abstractions or a self-comprehending abstraction. But the self-comprehending abstraction knows itself to be nothing.[99]

As we read Marx, this is a strategic matter of crucial significance. That is, having achieved self-reconciliation, Absolute Spirit no longer undergoes supersession. Having subsumed history on to a "higher," ontological plane of idealized being, Spirit--and with it history--are inured against further qualitative transformation. As Marx suggests, moreover, the logical expectation--given Hegel's dialectics--would be either for just such a qualitative self-supersession or, in its absence, for a repetition of "the whole process of abstraction again from the beginning." However, the moment of Spirit's return occasions neither historical repetition nor ongoing supersession. Instead, Spirit's development--and with it history--encased for eternity in an idealized, dynamic homeostasis of self-consumption. Ongoing development is no longer, and movement is strategically removed from the realm of history. History, in effect, disappears altogether, no longer and never again a realm of qualitative transformation--ideal or material.

Political economy also reconstructs social development without supersession, re-presenting its movement as repetition. The guarantor of that repetition, its source of renewal is consumption, construed as a spontaneistic <u>deus ex machina</u>. To quote from Marx, consumption

> . . . actually belongs outside economics except insofar as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure and initiates the whole process anew.[100]

Re-presented in this way, economic activity is rendered non-historical and non-developmental. Instead, it becomes a quasi-automatic, mechanistic process whose dynamics are closed off to any qualitative, historical transformation. Again, formulated like this, economic analysis is strategically removed from the realm of history. Like Hegel's reconstruction of development, political economy too idealizes economic activity. Correspondingly, as in Hegel's system, its source of movement and self-renewal is mystified. Indeed, the absolute termination of Spirit's self-supersession in self-consumption cannot be justified in terms of its own dialectical logic. Neither can the automatic renewal of economic activity through trans-economic consumption be explained in terms of political economy's own logic. In both theoretical modes, history is rendered as ultimately secondary or insignificant. Its replacement, de-historicized activity--abstracted and vacuous--is not rendered in terms of an immanent logic of human agency and intention. In sum, activity is finally re-presented independently of history, development, and human intention. In this way, dehistoricized activity is re-presented bereft of any immanent principle of ongoing self-development--thereby immunized against self-supersession--i.e., qualitative transformation, let alone the possibility of negentropic development.

Marx's strategic intervention into both these modes of hegemonic discourse is designed to reinstate historical development in the jaws of a capitalism whose (to use John Berger's chilling formulation) "historic role is to destroy history."[101] As we read

Marx, the strategic outcome of Hegel's theorizing is a timeless present of eternally self-consuming activity. Its strategic impact is "the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world."[102] De-historicizing present activity is a common standpoint and strategic imperative for Hegelian idealism and political economy alike. Marx characterizes the embalment strategy as practiced by political economy in The Poverty of Philosophy:

> When the economists say that present-day relations--the relations of bourgeois production--are natural, they imply that these are the relations in which wealth is created and productive forces developed in conformity with the laws of nature. These relations therefore are themselves natural laws independent of the influence of time. They are eternal laws which must always govern society. Thus there has been history, but there is no longer any. There has been history, since there were the institutions of feudalism, and in these institutions of feudalism we find quite different relations of production from those of bourgeois society, which the economists try to pass off as natural and as such, eternal.[103]

Part of Marx's strategy, then, practiced through critique, is to re-member history where it is forgotten, suppressed, evaded, or "transcended" by hegemonic theorizing. The crucial strategic move in Marx's theorizing, however, is to re-member history in a particular way: of humans producing in the broadest sense, necessarily including but not reduced to economic practices. Further, reconstituting history as producing entails the strategic supplanting of consumption as the predominant moment and categorial expression of activity, process or development. Marx states as much in his Introduction to the Grundrisse:

> The important thing to emphasize here is only that, whether production and consumption are viewed as the activity of one or many individuals, they appear in any case as moments of one process, in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment.[104]

Strategically, consumption is reconstituted as a moment of production:

> Consumption as urgency, as need, is itself an intrinsic moment of productive activity. But the latter is the point of departure for realization and hence also its predominant moment; it is the act through which the whole process again runs its course. The individual produces an object and, by consuming, returns to himself, but returns as a productive and self-reproducing individual. Consumption thus appears as a moment of production.[105]

NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

2. Karl Marx, Theories of Surplus-Value, Part Three (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971).

3. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), rev. ed., p. 67.

4. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

5. Ibid.

6. Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," trans. Ronald Rogowski, in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 13.

7. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 69.

8. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in The Marx-Engels Reader, p. 144.

9. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 62.

10. Ibid., p. 42. Here, we fully agree with Della Volpe's characterization of Marx's reading of the method of political economy:

> It has, in short, as Marx says, smuggled in, or replaced the specific meaning of bourgeois relations of production with the generic and unchanging conception of production, preconceived thus as the natural, eternal law of economic society in the abstract.
>
> Hence, metaphysical smuggling, or a priori replacement, in favour of the generic, or most abstract, against the specific or most concrete in the definition of the latter, indeed shows us clearly the wrong, twisted structure of those arguments about the 'metaphysics of political economy.'

11. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978), p. 103.

12. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 67.

13. Ibid., p. 68.

14. Karl Marx, "To Make the World Philosophical," in The Marx-Engels Reader, p. 11.

15. Ibid., p. 9.

16. Ibid.

17. Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," Third Manuscript of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in Karl Marx: Early Writings, ed. and trans. T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 202.

18. Ibid.

19. G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, trans. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 13.

20. Marx, "To Make the World Philosophical," p. 11.

21. Ibid., p. 9.

22. See discussion above in Chapter Two.

23. Charles Dickens, Hard Times (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 6.

24. Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in The Methodology of the Social Sciences, trans. and ed. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: The Free Press, 1949), p. 72.

25. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 58.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

29. Ibid, p. 59-60.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 63.

32. Ibid., p. 64.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., p. 68.

35. Ibid., p. 64.

36. Ibid., p. 67.

37. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

38. Karl Marx, "Private Property and Communism," Third Manuscript of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, in T.B. Bottomore, ed. and trans., Karl Marx: Early Writings, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 161.

39. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 492.

40. Ibid., p. 488.

41. Ibid., p. 492.

42. Ibid., p. 487.

43. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 100.

44. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 101.

45. Ibid.

46. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, pp. 6-7.

47. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 201.

48. Galvano della Volpe, Rousseau and Marx and Other Writings, trans. John Fraser (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1974), p. 170.

49. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 429.

50. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 214.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft), p. 101.

55. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 214.

56. Karl Marx, "Alienated Labour," in First Manuscript of the Economical and Philosophical Manuscripts in Karl Marx: Early Writings, pp. 122-123.

57. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 294.

58. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 210.

59. Ibid., p. 202.

60. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 294.

61. Ibid., p. 488.

62. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 213-214.

62a. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 493.

63. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 202.

64. Ibid., p. 202.

65. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

66. Ibid., p. 202-203.

67. Ibid., p. 208.

68. Ibid., p. 214.

69. Ibid., p. 215.

70. Ibid., p. 213.

71. Ibid., p. 215.

72. Ibid., p. 214.

73. Ibid., p. 215.

74. Ibid., p. 201.

75. Ibid., p. 216.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., p. 217.

78. Ibid.

79. Hegel, Phenomonology of Spirit, p. 493.

80. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 213.

81. Ibid., p. 202.

82. Ibid., p. 208.

83. Ibid., p. 215.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., p. 214.

86. Ibid., p. 215.

87. Ibid., p. 214.

88. Ibid., p. 215.

89. A recent characterization of the life of the Hegelian spirit as self-conscious self-transformative activity, is offered by G.A. Cohen's reading of Hegel in Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 1-2:

> . . . We put forth Hegel's conception of history, as the life of the world spirit. . . .The world spirit is a person, but it is not a human being. Yet since human beings are the sort of persons most accessible to us, it will be useful to begin by describing one . . . .
>
> Here, then, is a man, moving about the world. As he acts, observes, and suffers, the world reveals itself to him, and he reveals himself to it, imposing his demands on it and pursuing his purposes through it. He spiritualizes nature and it impresses a nature on his spirit. He discovers what stone and flowers and water are like, and how to look up at the stars and down canyons. He learns to change the shapes of nature, to mix and separate its elements. He learns how to live, how to make live, how to let live, and how to kill. He gains understanding of the world's glories, charms, deformities, and dangers. He intervenes in it to secure survival, power and pleasure.

The intensive, self-transformative aspect of this profuse, worldly activity is described as follows:

> But he also experiences a substance of a different order. He is in contact and in dialogue with himself. There is a contrast between his confrontation with the world outside and his encounter with the part of the world he is. In the first exercise he is distinct from what he examines; in the second he is not, and his study must be part of what he studies. He may learn about his surroundings without changing them, but his self-exploration is always also a transformation. It

> must be part of what he studies. He may learn about his surroundings without changing them, but his self-exploration is always also a transformation. It leaves him no longer as he was, investing him with a new self, one more self-aware. And if he would keep hold of his nature he must inspect it afresh; a new nature has supervened on the one he penetrated. His project of self-consciousness is a continual effort which yields continual achievement, a race whose tape is advanced when the finish is reached. It is only possessed by being constantly acquired and only acquired by being constantly developed.

Further, Cohen profers a negentropic--albeit formalistic--reading of the life of the (personified) spirit as ongoing, irreversible qualitative development:

> To come to know oneself has rewards but also pains, both in the process and in the product. For in the change of self, old manners, habits wich give comfort, a residue of much living, is worried out of existence and an undefended character is born. Reorganization occurs, and reorganization means partial disorganization. Each partly new structure must in time in turn be superseded, else thought and feeling lose their spiritual status, and the man recedes into the animal kingdom. Self-development is the only alternative to that recession: it is not possible to stand still.

And, to sum up:

> Hegel's phrase 'the labor of the negative' covers this rending work of self-interrogation and self-alteration. Labor, because it is hard; negative, because it is destructive. And the model of a human being, moving painfully and in stages to self-knowledge, helps us to understand the larger movement of human history as Hegel conceived it. (pp. 1-2)

Thus, as we read Cohen's apt personification of the life of the Spirit, its hallmark is that being human is "a project of self-consciousness": relentless engagement in self-development through self-conscious self-transformation. (Ibid., p. 201)

90. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 208.

91. Marx, "Private Property and Communism," p. 166.

92. Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in The Marx-Engels Reader, p. 15.

93. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 93.

94. Ibid., p. 94.

95. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 203.

96. Ibid.

97. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 89.

98. Ibid.

99. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 215.

100. Ibid.

101. John Berger, Pig Earth (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 213.

102. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy," p. 210.

103. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 115.

104. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 94.

105. Ibid.

CHAPTER NINE

METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE:
READING POLITICAL ECONOMY AS AN ABUNDANT ACTIVITY

In this chapter we will again examine Marx's struggle with a mode of theorizing which both glimpses the historical possibility of abundance and then compromises its own vision. Thus, we perform an emancipatory animated reading that displays Marx reading political economy. Again, we will demonstrate our Marx's strategic deployment of critique in two internally related modalities--as a critique of limitations as well as a developmental critique. This deployment of critique identifies and goes beyond the prohibitions, against emergent possibilities for a post-scarcity, abundant mode of human development as they are embodied and articulated in the theorizing of the political economists.

Our animated display will focus first on Marx's strategic critique of the limitations of the method of political economy. Our approach here will be mainly scholarly and formalist: first, to demonstrate what it is that Marx is doing, and then to examine its formal dynamics and to suggest its implications for <u>praxis</u>. The negentropic, developmental moment of Marx's critique will be

illuminated by our display of Marx's emancipatory animated reading of political economy--particularly Ricardo and the left Ricardians--in The Theories of Surplus Value. As with Hegel's Absolute Spirit, so with the ("left") Ricardians: Marx is at once seduced and betrayed by an analysis that both heralds and annihilates the prospective, historical emergence of post-scarcity human and social development. Here, we show how Marx deploys a critique of limitation to identify the seemingly impregnable boundaries posed to human development by the "eternal" contradiction between capital and labor. Also, we will display his developmental critique at work in qualitatively transforming those obdurate boundaries into historical thresholds that presage a qualitatively different, post-scarcity history.

Grounding capitalist society in negentropic historical development, Marx formulates a revolutionary strategy for transcending scarcity. He thereby reinstates historical development as a strategic intervention into political economy which, as a strategic mode of theorizing, embodies the historical mission of capitalism whereby it eternalizes itself, as John Berger puts it, by destroying history.[1] By strategically grounding political economy, through critique, in overall historical development, Marx identifies and de-stabilizes the mode of production--and its theorizing--which makes possible and consolidates the capital-labor contradiction as an historical possibility in the first place. In sum, we will display how Marx's strategic reading of political economy makes conceivable and articulable--indeed possible--a revolutionary praxis that intends a qualitatively different way of being human--a new, post-scarcity history.

As Marx reads it, political economy starts out as a critique of vulgar empiricism's object-in-itself. That object is the image-basis for an ungrounded conception of society as an eclectic, additive, "undigested" collection of individual, discrete objects-in-themselves, given each separately in external relationship to the other. Taken as a totality, this composite object-in-itself can be apprehended from outside--as by political economy--in external relationship to any (allegedly) disinterested observer. We see this well in Marx's famous words on population. He characterizes political economy as starting out with and then criticizing "population" as seemingly the most concrete, immediately present, and apparently self-evident social fact. This appears to be a self-evident point of departure for "scientific" theorizing, since it seems most real from the standpoint of an outside, neutral, empiricist observer.

This, political economy's point of departure, appears to be a full conception of society, a richly empirical state of affairs. However, Marx--like Hegel--reads that state of affairs as merely an "imagined concrete," a "chaotic conception of the whole." As we shall see, Marx regards the source of the chaos and incoherence as the ahistorical and non-self-reflexive mode by which political economy accounts for objects. Indeed, like the vulgar empiricism it criticizes, it renders extant social life as an object presented without reference to the historical conditions that ground its possibility. We shall note below how Marx strategically produces an alternative, "adequate" starting point through <u>his</u> critique of this "undigested" empiricist totality, political economy's point of departure.

Against this background we begin our reading of Marx's critique of the method of political economy with his characterization of its point of departure. To quote from The Grundrisse:

> When we consider a given country politico-economically, we begin with its population, its distribution among classes, town, country, the coast, the different branches of production, export and import, annual production and consumption, commodity prices, etc.2

As our Marx reads it, however, the self-evident concreteness of this starting point--political economy's initial conception of social totality, is only apparent. It is a produced appearance. The seemingly given elements that compose it are not just there in some necessary or unavoidable way. They are not read as indispensable or invariant features of a natural or existential setting. Its avowed givenness is now animatedly read as a surface appearance that is produced. What appears on this empiricist account to be immediate and concrete is not given but produced. Indeed, through abstraction, read of here as a production process, any appearance is--to use Marx's expression--"worked up." What appears then, is a strategic rendering of concreteness. For vulgar empiricism--and political economy as well--"the concrete" is taken to be what is immediate, self-evident, individuated, self-contained, self-subsistent, specifiable, and "on display." This version of concrete reality results from specific processes of abstraction which segment, reify and reproduce social reality in the form of an object-in-itself.

For Marx and political economy alike, this concrete "as it appears" (whether as a totality or as an immediate datum) is not a "windowless monad" impervious to any further analytic penetration. Thus, "population" can further be analyzed into sub-components--

elements which it masks if simply taken at face value. Thus, Marx challenges any theorizing that begins with population as if it were a self-evident, immediately given point of departure for that theorizing. To quote:

> It seems to be correct to begin with the real and the concrete, with the real precondition, thus to begin, in economics, with e.g. the population, which is the foundation and the subject of the entire social act of production. However, on closer examination this proves false.[3]

Marx's "closer examination" notes that when population is rendered as an object-in-itself, it appears immediate and concrete, but in fact becomes an empty abstraction if its specific determinations are excluded:

> The population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn are an empty phrase if I am not familiar with the elements on which they rest e.g. wage labour, capital, etc. These latter in turn presuppose exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. For example, capital is nothing without wage labour, without value, money, price, etc. Thus, if I were to begin with the population, this would be a chaotic conception [Vorstellung] of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards ever more simple concepts [Begriff], from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations.[4]

Here, as we read it, Marx has described the procedure by which political economy analyzes phenomena and forms its categories. Political economy has a two-fold approach to "population," its point of departure. It begins with population and treats it as a phenomenon that is immediate and given. Beginning is not a problematical activity for it. The epistemological and ontological status of its point of departure is not made a self-conscious, problematic aspect of its theorizing activity. On the other hand, political economy does not

treat its point of departure as completely self-explanatory either. It is not immediately knowable on inspection. It requires explanation. Its "scientific" intention, then, is to explain this pre-given, empirical fullness through the discovery of natural laws as regularities abiding amidst the welter of empirical phenomena.

Noting that something requires theoretical explanation does not deny the possibility of its pre-reflective existence--an existence that is not absolutely dependent on acts of theorizing. Thus, Marx's theorizing self-consciously affirms, while political economy assumes, that the real existence of social reality is a necessary presupposition of each one's kind of explanatory theorizing. Both agree, furthermore, that what appears cannot be immediately known on its face value by mere inspection. Still, they differ significantly. Political economy treats a particular version of what appears unhistorically as an ontological given. Marx, on the contrary, regards it as socially and historically produced, still requiring an account--a phenomenological account--of its very historical possibility as its explanation.

Once theorizing posits or assumes some configuration of reality as "given"--whether by explicit description, implicit assumption, metaphoric symbolization, etc.--it goes beyond merely presupposing that existence of some sort cannot be produced ex nihilo by theorizing. Indeed, to posit (by assumption or explicit fiat) any givenness is already to theorize and, as we read Marx, to produce. Again, any given is given for and through theorizing, always as a partial product of reflective activity. While this is self-consciously grasped by Marx (as we read his texts on method), it is not a self-conscious aspect of the method of political economy (as we read

Marx's reading of it) and constitutes a distinct limitation.

Thus, political economy intends to explain "scientifically" what it posits as given, without self-consciously acknowledging that what it takes as given is also posited. What it does make problematic is the discovery of explanations that systematize and regularize those givens: the observable activities that otherwise, without explanation, "haphazardly" compose its point of departure. The point of departure as such is not problematic for it--it is unproduced and seemingly given, just as it is. An object like "population," assumed to be given, might then be de-composed into a set of general categories that it presupposes and which--depending on the version of causality and explanation at work--are taken to be its abstract determinations.

This penetration by theorizing of surface appearances is already a theoretical advance over the crude givenness granted them by vulgar positivism. Indeed, this kind of abstraction from appearances has characterized the theoretical practice of political economy itself from its seventeenth century origins. To quote Marx:

> The former is the path historically followed by economics at the time of its origins. The economists of the seventeenth century, e.g., always begin with the living whole, with population, nation, state, several states, etc.; but they always conclude by discovering through analysis a small number of determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, money, value, etc.[5]

As we read Marx, he takes the production by abstraction of these basic categories (ostensibly presupposed by merely empirical appearances) as political economy's epistemological virtue relative to that of <u>crude</u> empiricism. On the other hand, Marx's critique would reject and transcend this kind of abstraction process as the hegemonic

mode of category-formation. While the method of political economy systematizes appearances and contributes heuristically to further analysis--including its own critique by Marx--it is, nonetheless, an unhistorical and non-self-reflexive process. As we read Marx's critique of limitation, it de-historicizes empirical reality by its way of abstracting and generalizing from prevailing, historically specific economic practices. Thus, political economy sees itself "explaining" its seemingly concrete starting point through an analysis that reduces the haphazardness of its apparent chaos to a set of generic concepts and categorial determinations. As Marx reads it, however, political economy forgets its own historical genesis. It fails thereby to account for the historical possibility of its own categories and treats them instead as unhistorical givens. Whereas some kind of descriptive systematization seems a heuristic--if not necessary--precondition and advance for explaining complex phenomena, it does not itself constitute an explanation in Marx's sense of providing an adequate account of their historical possibility.

Indeed, the strategic theorizing of political economy actively aborts further explanatory analysis beyond the level of the generic categories which it produces. It produces this silence as an outer limit for theoretical discourse through an abstraction process that generalizes from the "concrete as it appears." Moreover, its production of abstract generic categories in this way posits and reproduces another culturally hegemonic, dualistic opposition, that of the abstract and the concrete.

It is through this kind of abstraction process that the "natural laws" that govern society are produced. These appear to hold

sway as final "determinants" of the "concrete as it appears." These categories are then treated as givens, now having been legitimated "scientifically" by the hegemonic mode of generalization from given "empirical reality." Marx's critical reading of the limits of political economy de-mystifies this "scientific" procedure in The Poverty of Philosophy. Bourgeois economists, writes Marx,

> . . . have a singular method of procedure. . . .The institutions of feudalism [for them] are artificial institutions, those of the bourgeoisie are natural institutions. . . . When the economists say that present-day relations--the relations of bourgeois production--are natural, they imply that these are the relations in which wealth is created and productive forces developed in conformity with the [rational] laws of nature. These relations therefore are themselves natural laws independent of the influence of time. They are eternal laws which must always govern society. There has been history, but there is no longer any . . . .in these institutions of feudalism we find quite different relations of production from those of bourgeois society, which the economists try to pass off as natural and as such, eternal.[6]

Political economy, now beyond historical distortion, presents itself as a "scientific" body of necessary theoretical deductions and derivations from the general system of universally applicable natural laws. Political economy then "logically" deduces from the body of natural laws the selfsame specific practices that comprise the empirical reality from which these natural laws were abstracted in the first place! This is its vicious circularity. It strategically aborts the formal possibility of qualitative development. In its political consequences, it hinders further historical-political transformation:

> Political economy's critique of vulgar empiricism is a de-construction process. First, the immediate, "undigested" concrete is broken down into generic

> components. It then re-constructs these elements which are recombined in external relationship. Together these categories are used to describe and thereby seemingly correctly explain the ensemble of prevailing economic practices that make up "the economic system." Marx writes:
> As soon as these individual moments had been more or less firmly established and abstracted, there began the economic systems, which ascended from the simple relations, such as labour, division of labour, need, exchange value, to the level of the state, exchange between nations and the world market.[7]

Here, what Marx calls the "path of abstract thought" now rises from "the simple to the combined." Ascending from the simplest components, this now recombinatory mode of theorizing reproduces the social totality as an object of and for its "scientific" theorizing. Marx summarizes the two-step process by which this is accomplished by political economy as follows:

> Along the first path the full conception was evaporated to yield an abstract determination; along the second, the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought.[8]

As Marx reads political economy, the first phase of the process is the analysis of "the-concrete-as-it-appears" into simpler, generic, abstract categories. The second phase is the re-ascent back to the level of the concrete through an additive re-combination of just those generic determinations accomplished by the previous analysis. The result of this ascent is to yield the concrete--as-it-has-been-re-produced. For political economy, society now exists as "an economic system"--a set of categorially systematized, basic phenomena given in external relationship.

Marx characterizes the ascension from the generic categories to the level of the re-produced concrete as "obviously the scientifically correct method." Originally "the population" or the

concrete as it appears, the starting point for analysis by political economy, is a chaotic conception of society. It is composed of an addition of haphazardly selected objects-in-themselves for which it served categorically as a mere catch-all container. Both the method of political economy and Marx's critique aim at reproducing this concrete as a social whole, a totalized object for theorizing. However, this would be accomplished through fundamentally different modes of abstraction. Thus, they "rise to the concrete" in fundamentally different ways, and produce fundamentally different objects as a result.

As Marx reads political economy, its rising to the concrete is a return to the point of departure in a way that does not entail its qualitative transformation. An initially undigested empiricized whole, (e.g. "the population"), is now described in terms of specific, logical derivations from the previously abstracted generic categories. In turn, these categories are now more "scientifically" expressed in the form of so-called natural laws. This two-stage circular movement--first the departure from the concrete miscellany to the abstract generic (natural laws), and then the return, its rising back to the (now categorially rationalized) concrete--does not produce or entail any fundamental transformation of the starting point or of the components and the relationships which comprise it. It is a vicious circularity that tautologically describes itself while purporting to account for itself. Its purported explanation remains within the circumference of its self-identity, rendered viciously circular in its own monologic terms.

For Marx, the method of political economy takes for its object a haphazard miscellany of undigested empirical elements. That object starts and remains an object-in-itself. It remains so throughout the abstraction process by which political economy sets forth from this false concrete and then rises back to it from a bedrock of generic categories that purport to explain it. The formal, vicious circularity of this process does not utterly annihilate the empirical content of the object it produces. As we read Marx, the thrust of his critique of limitations of political economy--this empirical object-in-itself--as an economic system--is that its empirical content is reproduced as an abstracted empiricism. Articulated in the discourse of "natural law," it is no longer historical. The method of political economy "takes up" a haphazard empirical amalgam and, to state it strategically, de-historicizes it. Indeed, as Marx reads it, the method of political economy generalizes from this miscellany of historically specific social practices and in doing so, suppresses their historical specificity. It does this re-presenting them unhistorically, as if they were fully determined by universal, generic determinations (i.e., its basic categories) from the outset. By doing so, political economy de-limits production to its present, historically specific form.

By re-producing the empirical object-in-itself in and as the categories and discourse of natural law, political economy strategically aborts its ongoing possibilities for qualitative historical development: "Thus there has been history, but there is no longer any..."[9] Again, read from the standpoint of a critique of limitation, this method of object-constitution strategically reproduces social life as an object with fixed boundaries. Here, social life

is empirical without being historical, dynamic without being developmental, repetitive without undergoing qualitative transformation. In this way, the possibility of an abundant or negentropic mode of development is rendered inarticulable, unintelligible, irrational, and non-significant for analysis and practice. It is silenced.

Marx cites its version of an unproduced production as one example of this de-historicizing strategy:

> Economists explain how production takes place in the above-mentioned relations, but what they do not explain is how these relations themselves are produced, that is, the historical movement which gave them birth.[10]

In sum, as we read Marx, the method of political economy winds up re-placing a totality which might be understood in a way that was both empirical and historical, by an unhistorical totality rendered in terms of an abstracted-empiricist metaphysics.[11]

For Marx, to return from the abstracted generic to the reproduced concrete calls for a new kind of object for theorizing, a "rich totality":

> From there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again, but this time not as the chaotic conception of a whole, but as a rich totality of many determinations and relations.[12]

This "rich totality" is fundamentally different from the reproduced totality of the method of political economy. The pivotal difference is once more between an object-in-birth, at once empirical and fully historical, and an object-in-itself, empiricist and seemingly eternal. Whereas the former sings the prospect of a post-scarcity mode of development, the latter renders it mute.

Marx criticizes the one-sided method of object-constitution practiced by the political economists:

> In bringing things which are organically related into an accidental relation, into a merely reflective connection, they display their crudity and lack of conceptual understanding.[13]

The accidental relationships which Marx belittles here are the non-necessary, external relationships that obtain amongst discrete objects-in-themselves. Together, an empirical totality composed of such objects could be characterized as a merely additive, dis-unity of diverse, haphazardly--read externally--related components. As Marx reads this version of totality, its discrete components appear concrete--and, taken together, appear to constitute a concrete totality. However, they only add up to a totalization of separate, reified fragments, each artificially abstracted from the genuinely concrete totality of historical process which grounds them. What makes these components <u>appear</u> concrete is their being specified from without as discrete, individuated, self-contained objects-in-themselves. By contrast, Marx's critique of the objects-in-themselves of political economy for their pseudo-concreteness, strategically produces the "rich totality" as an alternative, rival version of concreteness:

> The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse.[14]

Thus, whereas political economy reconstructs the concrete totality as a multiplicity of externally related objects-in-themselves, Marx's "rich" concrete totality becomes an object-in-birth constituted by and as a conceptually unified ensemble of diverse, yet internally related "determinations."

As we read Marx's texts, the Hegelian totalization of social-historical life de-historicizes reality in a way that is the converse of that of political economy, its rival for theoretical hegemony. The reconstructed totality of political economy is a discrete set of externally related objects-in-themselves endowed with empirical content but incapable of qualitative development. With idealist dialectics, the reconstruction of the totality produces an ideally unified set of internally-related moments that do undergo qualitative development of a sort. Yet that qualitative development is of a formal kind only and lacks empirical content. What both share is a version of society as a totality that strategically excludes a history that might otherwise be construed as both empirical (aborted by Hegelian dialectics) and developmental (aborted by the method of political economy).

Denying history as an ongoing, empirical process of qualitative development, both hegemonic constructions of social reality posit and maintain prevailing historical conditions and their eternal anchorage in an all-pervasive dynamics of material scarcity. As a strategic critique, Marx's constitution of the concrete totality as an object-in-birth, "the rich totality," preserves both the developmental moment of Hegelian theorizing and the empirical content of political economy, respectively, in a new, concrete synthesis.

The "rich totality" is reducible neither to the unhistorical terms of a reified historical present, nor to those of an equally unhistorical Utopian condition to be achieved in the distant future. Marx's critique of present empirical actuality, represented by the object-in-itself of empiricist theorizing and of Utopian

ideality represented by Hegelian idealism's speculative totality, is self-conscious strategic political activity. As we read it, a "rich totality" is historically produced and producing as a category of self-conscious revolutionary praxis. The self-conscious activity that produces the rich totality displays, conceptualizes, and enacts abundant development.

Marx's critique of rival methods is of course inseparable from Marx's vision of post-scarcity society. However, we would stress, Marx did not know abundance by theorizing about abundance--as if from the outside. Rather, he knows abundance as a praxis. He knows it by self-consciously doing abundant theorizing, theorizing about the "rich totality."

That is how we see Marx struggle, most immediately, with the theorizing whereby selected political economists, especially Ricardo and the so-called "left" Ricardians, ratify scarcity as an invariant limit to human development. The "left" Ricardians do so in their very opposition to the depredations of the capitalist mode of production. Indeed, Marx's developmental critique of these texts sharpens the formulation and re-membering of our problematic in that it faces squarely the consolidation of a seemingly eternal scarcity by a theoretical discourse whose strategic intention differs overtly from those of capitalist apologetics. Through our emancipatory animated reading of these texts, then, we will display Marx producing a category of abundant development in strategic conflict with a rival revolutionary praxis. This rival left praxis intends to overthrow the dominion of capital, but despairs of the possibility of transcending material scarcity.

Marx's intervention, however, is not launched from outside political economy. Rather, his intervention emerges from an internal critique thereof. Critique, as we have seen, is in part, preservative of its object. Here Marx notes that in its latter phases, as in the work of Ricardo and especially Richard Jones, political economy itself admits of, for example, the historical constitution of its own categories and conceptions. In other words, he sees that there is a tendential convergence in the later phases of political economy with Marx's historical materialism in its historicization of matter and wealth.

From the side of political economy, the extent of this partial convergence is exemplified by the "crisis" in matter that results when left Ricardians account for the historical breakdown of the capitalist mode of production. Marx indicates that his analysis dovetails with that of a left Ricardian, Richard Jones:

> This analysis (even in Ricardo's works) goes so far that:
> (1) The independent, material form of wealth disappears and wealth is shown to be simply the activity of men. Everything which is not the result of human activity, of labour, is nature and, as such, is not social wealth. The phantom of the world of goods as such, is not social wealth. The phantom of the world of goods fades away and it is seen to be a continually disappearing and continually reproduced objectivisation of human labour. All solid material wealth is only transitory materialisation of social labour crystallisation of the production process is measure is time, the measure of a movement itself. [15]

For Marx, wealth is not reducible to solid matter--i.e., goods. Nor is historicized matter itself reducible to the historically specific form of bourgeois wealth. For all its apparent material solidity, such wealth is no more than the transitory, historically

specific materialization of wealth relative to a specific mode of production. Indeed, insofar as matter is rendered as a dynamic, qualitatively developing continuum, it is not fully reducible to any of its specific historical organizational forms. It cannot be rendered, therefore, in a final version as an object-in-itself. To do so would eternalize the developmental dynamics of any historically-specific mode of production.

Matter is always-already a developmental process, always-already produced and producing in terms of characteristic principles of development which themselves predominate in the prevailing mode of production. As we read Marx, matter is always grasped as developing historically in relation to--but is never exhaustible by--a specific mode of production. Thus, matter, like production in Marx, must be grasped bimodally.

What is crucial here is that for Marx matter, as historical developmental process, develops negentropically: it is organizable in ways which articulate the possibility of surpassing material scarcity as a mode of development. On this account, material development is possible as a post-scarcity, indeed abundant mode of self-development. Stated otherwise, matter is capable of negentropic constitution through a mode of production which enables the ongoing development of its continually emergent possibilities. The historically specific reduction of those possibilities is accomplished by matter's historical limitation through the social relationships of the capitalist mode of production.

For Marx, by contrast, unfettered historical production and the limitless development of emergent material possibilities become the

ground for post-scarcity human development: the intended historical difference that really makes a difference. Indeed, the aim of production in general, as an invariant, purposive activity that is not reducible to its specific capitalist institutionalization, how becomes explicit: producing abundantly.

This can be seen in Marx's critique of Ricardo in The Theories of Surplus Value:

> Ricardo regards bourgeois, or more precisely, capitalist production as the absolute form of production, whose specific forms of production relations can therefore never enter into contradiction with, or enfetter, the aim of production--abundance--which includes both mass and variety of use-values, and which in turn implies a profuse development of man as producer, an all-round development of his productive capacities.[16]

The dualistic theorizing by which scarcity society understands itself tends to reduce matter either to solid matter or to an etherealized matter--i.e., to tangible goods or to spiritual goods. They appear however, by virtue of political economy and Hegelian idealism respectively, as tantamount to wealth as such. For Marx, by contrast, wealth and matter are inseparable from the historical production and social relations by which they are produced and, in turn, producing. As against Ricardo and his more radical disciples, a post-scarcity mode of production would, in principle and in practice, produce wealth and organize matter in ways that were qualitatively irreducible to the historical dynamics of scarcity.

To take leave of the Ricardians for a moment, we have noted already that with respect to the non-productive economic functions--distribution, exchange, consumption, and circulation--Marx grants production both a theoretical and practical primacy. Also, we

have noted that owing to its bimodal character in Marx's theorizing, production is not reducible to a merely economic function, to the production of solid material objects or goods. Consequently, a mode of production encompasses multiple kinds of production, qualitatively diverse activities whereby "individuals producing in society" ongoingly organize matter with respect to different historical purposes and intentions. Amongst the diverse kinds of material production, economic and non-economic alike, there is another kind of primacy that extends to all other kinds of productive activity and, disproportionately, exerts its influence over them. As Marx states as much in the Introduction to the Grundrisse:

> In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others.[17]

As we read it, this kind of production does not exert mechanically determinative force and thereby generates all other kinds of production as if they were merely the secondary effects of a singular, all-determinative, absolute cause. Indeed, the kind of influence exerted by this hegemonic kind of producing over the other kinds is not unidirectional. Nor is it, like the Christian deity, an unmoved mover, unaffected by any reciprocal interplay with the denizens of Creation. Marx expresses the relationships amongst the varieties of production in the following metaphoric formulation:

> It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.[18]

The production that has primacy--for our own, the bourgeois epoch--is the production of capital. Like all production, the

production of capital is a material process, but it is not, in Marx's conception, merely material. That is, capital is not the production of a solid, tangible thing, nor can it be reduced to the production of goods. Instead, as Marx states it in Volume III of Capital:

> However, capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character.[19]

Furthermore, not only is capital not formulated as a singular thing but, further, it is not rendered as a collection either--an additive, aggregate summation of discrete things. Marx says:

> Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production. Capital is rather the means of production transformed into capital, which in themselves are no more capital than gold or silver in itself is money.[20]

Capital, then, is no mere thing or set of things. It is neither a version of matter reduced to solidity or mere tangibility, nor an idealized form of wealth. To use a contemporary example, the French Situationist Guy Debord is able to conceptualize capital outside of these dualisms altogether. For Debord, capital is the total "look of things", the total ensemble of produced social appearances which he terms "the spectacle." To quote from The Society of the Spectacle:

> The spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image.[21]

Manifested as thing and image, yet reducible to neither, capital is materialized as a set of dynamic social relationships. It is a socially produced and producing social relationship, the predominant relationship produced in and as the capitalist mode of production. Thus, Marx deploys language to express a materiality that is neither

merely material nor merely immaterial. Thus, capital can be read as a socially produced appearance:

> . . . a definite and, at first glance, very mystical, social form of one of the factors in a historically produced social production process.[22]

As our Marx reads it, capital, like matter and production, cannot be adequately grasped in the dualistic re-presentation produced by bourgeois theorizing.

As a social relationship, moreover, the producing of capital is an historically specific form of material development which simultaneously unleashes and represses its own ongoing, emergent tendencies for producing both an abundance of use-values and a profuse development of man's productive capacities. As we read Marx, the producing of capital is an historical development which at once makes abundance historically possible and, in order to realize its own expansion, must repress its emergent development beyond the historical limits of material scarcity. One reason for the self-delimitation of its own developmental tendencies is that the production of capital entails and embodies a social relationship of domination whereby the producers of use-values are forced to relinquish a significant portion of their production to a group of private expropriators. Capital then can be characterized as a social relationship of class domination through the monopolization by one social group of the means of production--that special kind of property which is also capital--through which use-values are generated. For Marx, his characterization of capital develops as follows:

> It is the means of production monopolized by a certain section of society, confronting living labor-power as products and working conditions rendered independent of

> this very labor-power which are personified through this antithesis in capital.[23]

Thus, capital is defined as both the product of this forcible monopolization of the means of production through class domination and as the social relationship which is that domination.

Insofar as the capitalist mode of production is an "historically produced social production process,"[24] its major production, capital, must itself be considered as a socially produced social relationship of production. Indeed, it is the general, irreducible bimodality of production in general that makes possible the historically specific production of productive social relations such as capital. Thus, Marx states the historicity of capital:

> We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under special historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves and, thereby also the bearers of this process (their material conditions of existence and their mutual relations, i.e., their particular socio-economic form.... [25]

As we read Marx, re-producing capitalism as a mode of production entails understanding capital as both produced--in the sense of historically produced social relations of production which institutionalize class domination--and producing, in the sense of constituting those means of production whereby use-values are generated. Post-scarcity, abundant development, then, which the producing of capital both makes possible and represses, signifies both new kinds of social relationships and new kinds of means and goals of production. It transcends the traditional dichotomy between human (or social) development and economic development. Thus, the full emergence

of abundance qualitatively transcends the producing of capital, and with it, a self-negating mode of development.

To come back to his critique of Ricardo's theorizing, Marx discerns the latter's recognition of the abundant potential for producing use-values which the producing of capital makes possible. Marx also discerns a crucial silence in Ricardo's text: Ricardo represses his own insight in the service of the ongoing realization of exchange-value. Marx's reading of Ricardo is two-sided and, so, developmental. Thus, we find Marx praising Ricardo for his recognition that capitalist production necessarily suppresses abundance by maintaining the social relations of class domination whereby capital, as exchange value, is made possible:

> At any rate nobody has better and more precisely than Ricardo elaborated the point that bourgeois production is not production of wealth for the producers (as he repeatedly calls the workers) and that therefore the production of bourgeois wealth is something quite different from the production of "abundance", of "necessaries and luxuries" for the men who produce them, as this would have to be the case if production were only a means for satisfying the needs of the producers through production dominated by use-value alone.[26]

For Marx, emergent abundance is the profusion of use-values as well as the profusion of the capacities of producers in an "all-around" human development, and constitutes a single, internally related --although not necessarily even or simultaneous--developmental tendency. For Marx, as we read this, Ricardo too arrives at the threshold of that perception: that the wealth made possible by capitalist production is not merely economic, the profusion of goods, but also , a qualitatively broadened and deepened mode of development that encompasses and nurtures the development of the producers

themselves, albeit as people developing differently, not as owners of goods. This, indeed, would constitute a root and branch, qualitative transformation of the very principles by which development had been produced.

Having glimpsed this possibility, however, Ricardo retreats from its counter-hegemonic political implications. At the threshold of a different political partnership, Ricardo beats a strategic return to the apologetic mode of theorizing. Thereby he moves to re-consolidate the prevailing mode of development delimited by material scarcity--namely, the producing of capital.

Indeed, Marx quotes Ricardo to the effect that the production that would generate abundance and make possible, say, an Owenite communism, would in fact be inimical to the producers under the prevailing mode of production.

> Nevertheless the same Ricardo says:
>
> If we lived in one of Mr. Owen's parallelograms, and enjoyed all our productions in common, then no one could suffer in consequence of abundance, but as long as society is constituted as it now is, abundance will often be injurious to producers, and scarcity beneficial to them.[27]

In my view, the silence expressed in the underscored portion can be read two-sidedly. On the one hand, it displays Ricardo's repression of his full awareness that capital is a social relationship of domination and, as a social relationship, must constrain the very developmental tendencies--economic and non-economic--alike that it spawns as a mode of production. On the other hand, as we read Marx, Ricardo and his school represent the most advanced development of political economy. That holds precisely because they bring into view

the contradictory nature of a mode of development, an historically-specific form of production which enforces as a social relationship what it renders obsolete as a form of wealth.

As we read it, then, in the face of recognizing abundance as a qualitatively different form of wealth, Ricardo strategically aborts the categorial development within his own theorizing, and with it its historical and political potential for qualititative transformation. He does this by de-historicizing theoretical discourse, and, abandoning emergent, historically-specific categories of a new kind of wealth, he speaks of "wealth as such." Wealth as such, then, becomes the product of an "economic system" which allegedly rests on the now eternal contradiction of interests of capital and labor. To quote Marx's reading of Ricardo on this point:

> In actual fact, what he admires most about bourgeois production is that its definite forms--compared with previous forms of production--provide scope for the boundless development of the productive forces. When they cease to do this, or when contradictions appear within which they do this, he denies the contradictions, or rather, expresses the contradiction in another form by representing wealth as such--the mass of use-values in itself--without regard to the producers, as the ultima Thule.[29]

In Marx's view, Sismondi's appreciation of the productive potential in the capitalist development of productive forces generates an acute awareness and even trenchant criticism of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. Just this, as we have seen, is partly repressed in Ricardo's account. To quote from Theories of Surplus Value:

> Sismondi is profoundly conscious of the contradictions in capitalist production; he is aware that, on the one hand, its forms--its production relations--stimulate unrestrained development of the productive forces and of wealth; and that, on the other hand, these relations are

> conditional, that their contradictions of use-value and exchange-value, commodity and money, purchase and sale, production and consumption, capital and wage-labor, etc., assume ever greater dimensions as productive power develops.[29]

In our view, what especially captures Marx's eye in reading Sismondi's oeuvre is the latter's sensitivity to the potential for an "unrestricted development of wealth." Such development is reduced by a commodity form which is relentless in requiring the continual conversion of what is produced into cash, that is, in realizing capital:

> He is particularly aware of the fundamental contradiction: on the one hand, unrestricted development of the productive forces and increase of wealth which, at the same time, consists of commodities and must be turned into cash . . . .[30]

And further, Sismondi notes how even within the plethora of commodities, an ocean of individual products--each of which both satisfies need and does so on condition of its conversion into cash--the contradiction between capital and labor still re-emerges at the level of distribution:

> The system is based on the fact that the mass of producers is restricted to the necessaries.[31]

Thus, the "wealth" that burgeons, wealth in the form of commodities, is a conditional wealth which incorporates class domination as an invariant condition of its historical possibility. Wealth, then, in its historically-specific manifestation as capital, as a temporary materialization of an historically- specific mode of production, is a <u>one-sided</u> wealth. It necessarily presupposes impoverishment as the <u>sine qua non</u> of its burgeoning expansion:

> The bourgeois forms are only transitory and contradictory forms, in which wealth attains only an antithetical existence and appears everywhere simultaneously as its opposite. It is wealth which

> always has poverty as its prerequisite and only develops by developing poverty as well.[32]

But Marx does not read Sismondi only to praise him. His reading is once more two-sided and, thereby, developmental. On the one hand, Marx notes, Sismondi criticizes this one-sidedness for its inequality. But, on the other hand, he fails, in Marx's view, to understand the grounds whereby inequality is made possible: the very historical development itself of the capitalist mode of production. As Marx states it:

> He forcefully criticizes the contradictions of bourgeois production but does not understand them, and consequently does not understand the process whereby they can be resolved.[33]

That is, for Marx, the contradiction between wealth and poverty is itself historical--that is, produced and producing. As produced, it is itself capital, a one-sided form of wealth which presupposes poverty, the accomplishment of class domination. As producing, the contradictory dynamic that is capital gives rise to emergent tendencies that could surpass capital itself as a form of wealth. The contradiction itself develops and makes possible the conditions of its own supersession. It is characteristic of Marx's developmental critique to heed the combined sensitivity and silence regarding contradiction displayed by Sismondi's account of political economy. It is not to be read just polemically and one-sidedly, but can be heard abundantly, indeed, strategically, for the post-scarcity possibility with which it resonates. To quote:

> However, at the bottom of his argument is indeed the inkling that new forms of the appropriation of wealth must correspond to productive forces and the material and social conditions for the production of wealth which have developed within capitalist society... [34]

As we have noted, the theorizing that is itself a display of abundance must surmount dualism. It must rehabilitate contradictions by grounding them historically, not eternalize them by presupposing their existential invariance. Thus, to posit abundance as an object for theorizing, it is necessary to surmount that notion of wealth which presupposes the eternality of the contradiction between capital and labor as the sole ground for production as such. For Marx, this need is especially acute in the face of the condemnation of capitalist production by those left Ricardians, like Hodgskin and Ravenstone, who forever institutionalize the contradiction precisely by taking labor's side against capital. For Marx, this partisanship, however welcome it might seem at first blush, does not systematically address the ground of historical development whereby the class antagonism is made possible in the first place. The upshot of this failure is that while siding with the proletariat, the practitioners of the Ricardian mode of theorizing, albeit from the left, are guilty nonetheless of suppressing abundance. As we read him, it is Marx's strategic intention to properly ground abundance as an historical possibility in part by performing a reading of the left Ricardian tendency which displays its simultaneous dis-ease with and resignation to the dynamics of material scarcity.

In Marx's view, the Ricardians' sensitivity to the capitalist form of scarcity as a mode of development enables them to give "a theoretically compelling if unconscious expression"[35] to the central contradiction that both generates and delimits that kind of development. As our Marx reads it, the Ricardian theorizing is both symptomatic of and reproduces the contradictions of its object, the

capitalist mode of production. It does so by simultaneously affirming both labor and capital as the sole source of wealth and thereby theoretically performing--albeit unconsciously--a shotgun marriage of inimical parties that exist--albeit necessarily--in endemic divorce. To quote from Theories of Surplus Value:

> Their thoughts being entirely confined within the bounds of capitalist production, they assert that the contradictory form in which social labor manifests itself there, is just as necessary as labor itself freed from this contradiction. Since in the selfsame breath they proclaim on the one hand, labor as such...and on the other, capital as such--that is the poverty of the workers and the wealth of the idlers--to be the sole source of wealth, they are perpetually involved in absolute contradictions without being in the slightest degree aware of them. . . . Ricardo's phrase "labor or capital" reveals in a most striking fashion both the contradiction inherent in the terms and the naivety with which they are stated to be identical.[36]

Those thinkers who defend the proletariat from the left Ricardian standpoint are able to seize upon this contradiction as part of a strategic political practice which advances the proletariat at the expense of capital. On the other hand, they do so without overcoming the historical grounds whereby the opposition is made possible in the first place. Again, on one side, they articulate the contradiction, whereby:

> . . . the same real development which provided bourgeois political economy with this striking theoretical expression, unfolded the real contradictions contained in it, especially the contradiction between the growing wealth of the English "nation" and the growing misery of the workers.[37]

On the other side, the contradiction is never supplanted, nor regarded as supplantable, but only minimized in its ravages. Indeed, in our Marx's reading, the strategic practice that flows from a theorizing that remains confined to the dynamics of capitalist development can

only be ameliorative, never radically transformative. At most, Ricardo's theorizing would lessen the extent of the contradiction without overcoming the social relationship of domination that both maintains and manifests the capitalist mode of development. Marx summarizes the case:

> In Ricardo's work the contradiction between riches and value later appears in the form that the net product should be as large as possible in relation to the gross product, which again, in this contradictory form, amounts to saying that those classes in society whose time is only partly or not at all absorbed in material production although they enjoy its fruits, should be as numerous as possible in comparison with those classes whose time is totally absorbed in material production and whose consumption is, as a consequence, a mere item in production costs, a mere condition for their existence as beasts of burden. There is always the wish that the smallest possible portion of society should be doomed to the slavery of labor, to forced labor. This is the utmost that can can be accomplished from the capitalist standpoint.[38]

Remaining within the contradiction between capital and labor, then, the left Ricardians theorize one-sidedly, albeit from the standpoint of the proletariat. They wish to eliminate capital and emancipate labor, thereby destroying the dualism. But they are unable to mount a strategic critique of the mode of production and, thereby, of the kind of producing whereby both capital and proletariat are made possible. While their aim is to enhance the class position of the proletariat relative to that of capital, they do not seek or deploy a theoretical strategy for undermining the ground that makes that position both necessary and possible. One root of the problem is that their theorizing is trapped in an historically-bound conception of matter and production which represses or overlooks the capacity that

abides in each for ongoing, qualitative self-transformation. As Marx indicates:

> . . . the most important among them . . . accept all the economic pre-conditions of capitalist production as eternal forms and only desire to eliminate capital, which is both the basis and necessary consequence [of these preconditions].[39]

An example of this theorizing is displayed by Ravenstone who first reduces production to the economic production of goods; and, then, strategically subdivides this production process dualistically into productive and unproductive industry. The former produces necessaries, the necessaries of the workers which, were it not for the imperatives of capital, would be produced in abundance. The latter, in contrast, "the industry of consumption," is relegated to producing luxuries as "a consequence of the development of capital, or property."[40] The former is the ground of the possibility of the latter. Ravenstone's strategy is to eliminate the production of luxuries by eliminating capital. Then there would only be production of use-values, necessaries for the workers could then be produced in abundance. In this view, the elimination of capital as one pole of the contradiction with labor necessarily entails the elimination of the production of so-called luxury goods. Indeed, on this account, abundance is only conceivable with respect to the production of necessaries, use-values, so that its emergence is necessarily predicated on an ascetic program. As Marx puts it:

> Without capital, without property, the necessaries of the workers would be produced in abundance, but there would be no luxury industry.[41]

Insofar as luxuries, and for that matter science and culture and leisure, are made possible by capital, the elimination of capital must entail the elimination of all non-necessities since necessarily

they have been produced at the workers' expense. The elimination of capitalism as a social relationship of exploitation and domination entails, in this view, the elimination of a qualitative range of products which capital as a means of production makes possible. In turn, the elimination of the contradiction between labor and capital is then replaced by the emergence within production, now seemingly freed, of yet a new contradiction, between objects of necessity and luxuries.

In our Marx's view, however, trumpeting the abundance of necessaries that would become producible on the basis of the elimination of so-called luxuries is celebrating a merely one-sided semblance of a genuine, many-sided abundance. Social life is still lived as an apology. For what is accomplished is still an abundance which has not yet overcome the historical limitations grounded and constrained by capital. Theoretically, moreover, Ravenstone's strategy for abundance is crippled by its failure to transcend its internal dualism. This program remains enmeshed in the dynamics of scarcity.

The aim of an abundant, "unfettered production" is not, in Marx's view, the replacement of parasitism--or one-sided class domination--by asceticism, a social mode of shared deprivation and renunciation. Nor is it the replacement of a kind of production of goods for one dominant class--namely scarce luxuries, by a production of goods now "freed" for use by the newly dominant class--namely, abundant necessaries. Indeed, as we read this, to produce in either manner only is to leave intact the dualism between scarcity and abundance. Whereas Ravenstone's strategy might achieve an early day equivalent of an affluence of use-values, affluence--even for workers--is still not abundance. Indeed, abundance in the sense we

have been developing here is a mode of development beyond the dualistic opposition between scarcity and abundance (read affluence) grasped as relative deprivations. Correspondingly, theorizing which would strategically make abundant development possible would itself have to overcome the grounds that made dualism itself possible. Neither in theoretical nor practical terms, then, does Ravenstone's strategy for (a scarce version of) abundance pose the genuine possibility of qualitatively transforming the very historical grounds whereby scarcity--in both theoretical and institutionalized modes--has been made possible and enforced.

Our point, in part, is that the producing of capital is not adequately grasped only as the one-sided production of an economic relationship of class domination. The production of economic necessaries at the cost of annihilating non-necessaries, even were it to result in working class domination, does not constitute abundance. For one thing, it does not eliminate the class structure. For another, it is an economist "resolution" to scarcity, a problem that is far more pervasive than economic changes alone. That is, along with the private appropriation of the social product by the hegemonic class, the capitalist mode of production reproduces scarcity as capital in a way that pervades all life spheres intensively and extensively, economic and non-economic alike. On the other hand, it is precisely this pervasiveness of capital which makes the signification of abundance negentropic--that is, qualitatively far richer than Ravenstone's economism could envision. Indeed, it is the very dynamics whereby capital develops, that ongoingly threaten to outgrow the limitations that confine production to the dynamics that make possible the

producing of capital. As noted in The Communist Manifesto:

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. [42]

Further still, Marx's duly famous ode to the historical accomplishment of capitalist production intensifies the sense of unlimited developmental potential made possible through capitalist development.

> The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more collossal 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 even had a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor? [43]

Indeed, Ravenstone himself would acknowledge even a fundamental contribution to social development made possible by producing capital. To quote Marx:

> Similarly, according to Ravenstone, no conveniences, no machinery no luxury products would be produced without capital and property, neither would the development of the natural sciences have taken place, nor the literary and artistic productions which owe their existence to leisure, nor the urge of the wealthy to receive an equivalent for their "surplus product" from the non-workers. [44]

And yet it is in response to the brute historical fact that all of this has been accomplished at the expense of the proletariat, "in opposition to the interest of the workers and not for them", that leads the left Ricardians into a logical orgy of renunciatory asceticism. By focusing singlemindedly on the fact of exploitation, the left Ricardians substitute the fairness of historical revenge for

living well in a non-renunciatory, abundantly developing, post-scarcity present. Thus, as we read Marx, "they share the narrowness of the economists" by failing to overcome the contradiction between capital and labor in a way that preserves what has been historically accomplished for appropriation by a different mode of social interrelationship. Whereas the vulgar economists wish to preserve this contradiction in order to maintain the hegemony over production by the capitalist class, the left Ricardians wind up destroying the prospects for negentropic historical development beyond physical necessity in their zeal to eliminate the contradiction formally--by suppressing capital--without really transforming the historical grounds that really make it possible. In Marx's formulation:

> In this respect they share the narrowmindedness of the economists (although from a diametrically opposite position) for they confuse the <u>contradictory form</u> of this development with its content. The latter wish to perpetuate the contradiction on account of its results. The former are determined to sacrifice the fruits which have developed within the antagonistic form, in order to get rid of the contradiction. [45]

The outcome is more akin by far to Nietszchean resentment than to Promethean self-assertion.

The <u>praxis</u> that accomplishes a post-scarcity social formation must, in our Marx's view, preserve the developmental potentials for growth and maturation, economic and non-economic alike, that the hitherto prevailing mode of production possible. As Marx states in the <u>Poverty of Philosophy</u>: "The utter annihilation, or negation of the opposition that generates the very possibility of its own transcendence, merely substitutes one form of one-sided development for another." [46] The left Ricardians still get labor or capital's hegemony,

but no qualitative transformation of the mode of activity or of the theft of time. Thus, their strategy for development is a choice between one of two modes of fatalism: either the resignation the scarcity entailed in a mode of class (by capital) domination that is consolidated theoretically by the maintainance of the capital-labor contradiction; or the absurd, virtual nihilism of shared deprivation that is entailed in a mode of class domination (by labor) that is consolidated theoretically by the absolute formal negation of the capital-labor contradiction.

Positing abundance on the level of necessity which is made necessary by the annihilation of production beyond the level of necessaries is, in Marx's view, a bogus abundance. Its falseness, indeed its boundedness to scarcity, resides in its being a trade-off. The trade-off compensates workers for terminating an economic condition that barely maintains physical survival by means of a shared equality of scarcity, of the relative deprivation offered by the left Ricardians.

The difference between an abundance of necessaries accomplished through the sacrifice of non-necessaries and the abundant mode of development which distinguishes Marx's theorizing, is the difference, theoretically speaking, that distinguishes political economy from the <u>critique</u> of political economy. The left Ricardians represent the most advanced, albeit self-contradictory, theoretical development of political economy. It is a mode of theorizing which runs the gamut from the eternalization of capital to its annihilation. Yet that mode never relinquishes a model of production and matter that is bound to the developmental dynamics grounded in material scarcity.

For our Marx, the limits of political economy are most acutely manifest in precisely the one-sided view of wealth as merely more or less capital, to be measured ultimately as an accumulation of discrete goods. A critique of political economy that intends abundance must surmount a theorizing whose impoverished conception of wealth is nonetheless the primum mobile and holy grail that keeps the modern world in thrall to the dynamics of scarcity.

The self-denial by the theory of capitalism (political economy) of the potential for abundance that it recognizes in capitalist production is most acutely symptomized, we saw, in the theoretical self-repudiation of abundance accomplished by such left Ricardians as Ravenstone. The problem posed by political economy is not so much that it is symptomatic of and consolidates the hegemonic worldview "where production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production" (as opposed, say, to the loftier, non-materialistic ethos of a bygone age).[47] Rather, as we read Marx, the root problem is that it consolidates a world and its dynamics of production in the image of an impoverished and humanly impoverishing kind of wealth. It is a theory of resignation as well as a strategy for maintaining capitalist hegemony.

The fact that the development of this mode of wealth presupposes poverty, a necessary precondition of its accumulation and private appropriation, is only one of its problematic sides. The scarcity dynamics of private accumulation are also manifest in the stunted human development that is necessarily undergone by capitalist and non-capitalist alike. The open-ended goal in Marx is abundance, and abundance is a mode of human development unfettered by unalterable

structural invariance. In contrast, the dynamics whereby wealth is developed through the capitalist mode of production is constrained by the historically produced--albeit seemingly natural--invariant requirement that production must produce capital while wealth, accordingly, must take the form of privatized possession. Here, invariance is scarcity enforced. Invariance is enforced, that is, by historically produced exigencies of class-domination.

A mode of wealth that is constrained by a developmental dynamics that structurally frustrates the abundance it makes possible must, in turn, deform the panoply of possiblities for qualitative development of and through the social relationships amongst "individuals producing in society."[48] The problem of wealth in its "limited bourgeois form"[49] is that it is one-sided in two seemingly natural, invariant senses. First, its materiality is reduced to the materiality of apparently static, discrete, tangible, solid and, in sum, accumulatable objects. Second, its privatized possession entails and presupposes an accumulation process that necessarily deforms and aborts the full human development of other human beings as well as its seeming beneficiary. Indeed, the Midas touch that characterizes the capitalist beneficiaries of this development process deforms them too, precisely to the extent that it impoverishes the developmental potential of those whom they necessarily must exploit. This is because social life is produced through the fact and quality of their internal relatedness.

Insofar as the full range of their potential development, too, is accomplished through their internal social relationships with others, whatever deforms and stultifies the development of other people

must, in a fateful turn, ravage their capacities to develop their own fullest potentials. The denial-repression-rebuttal of an essential need for others--what Marx calls the "rich need"[50] in his 1844 Manuscripts--or even of the fact of reciprocal self-development, is consolidated by the hegemonic imagery of the Robinsonade, and the grounding of political economy in the standpoint of the isolated "individual." The wealth of political economy, of the theorizing whose alpha and omega is "the individual," is the wealth that is an accumulation of tangible, solid goods, held in individual, private possession.

For Marx, all this is stupid; and even more so, it is not human. As he states it in the early Paris Manuscripts of 1844:

> Private property has made us so stupid and partial that an object is only ours when we have it, when it exists for us as capital or when it is directly eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc., in short, utilized in some way. But private property itself only conceives these various forms of possession as means of life, and the life for which they serve as a means is the life of private property--labor and the creation of capital.[51]

In Marx's view, real wealth is human beings developing--the real development of wealth is the real development of individuals and, ultimately, of humanity. The "limited bourgeois form" of wealth must be stripped away--in part through a new, strategic mode of theorizing--so that the historically specific production of a wealth that produces impoverishment through its limited mode of development can be overcome. Through revolutionary praxis, it can be replaced by a wealth whereby the producers ongoingly re-make themselves through their multiple relationships with each other for their ongoing, mutual enhancement.

To call this--a developing individuality--wealth is, to put it mildly, scandalous to economistic thinking, whether this be the theorizing of bourgeois political economy or of bureaucratic Socialist planning. What must be grasped, however, is that this view is no mere quirk of Marx's juvenalia, his own limited Hegelian adolescence. Seeing ourselves foremost as each one our own private possession, it becomes profoundly disorganising to consider our own wealth to be our development for and through the enhancement of other people, through community. Entrapped in the imagery of possessive individualism, of private self (and other) possession, it seems impossible to see our wealth as the mutual enrichment we can accomplish through relationships with other people for and through whom we might continually strive to be more than we started out as. Moreover, trapped in the imagery of matter as tangible object, it seems nearly futile to expect us to discern wealth as a process of developingly humanly. And yet. as we read him, it is Marx's precise intention to theorize iconoclastically, and to break the imagery and iconography that bound material development to a self-delimiting form: hence, his critique of political economy. Indeed, what for "the life of capital" is most de-stabilizing about Marx's notion of material wealth as ongoing human development itself, is that he means it. For Marx, in sum, the strategic need to strip away the bourgeois form of wealth which enthralls the modern world produces a new version of wealth that would fulfill it. It is that developing wealth whereby humanity progressively becomes free to develop without absolute invariance.

The urgency of Marx's theoretical task resides in the need to produce a new kind of theorizing that would <u>ground</u> the prevailing

versions of wealth in the service of an overall strategy for making it possible to produce a new kind of wealth in the world. To re-member the possibility of producing an abundant wealth out of the here and now, we quote Marx's text from the Grundrisse:

> In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself... [52]

The wealth that is abundant, then, is the ongoing historical process of individuals producing in society, individuals producing for themselves unlimited by any absolute invariance. Such producing, moreover, must itself be transformed--producing must transpire abundantly. This applies equally to the producing of objects for theorizing. For example, the process of object constitution cannot be dichotomized. Thereby, Marx rejects any duality of object and method. Correspondingly, Marx does not recognize an "outside" to contain the object for theorizing. All theorizing is activity grounded by and a constitutive moment of the activity of a mode of production. The theorizing is itself an activity which is situated within--indeed, internally related to--its object. It is situated therein as an activity which both constitutes and is made possible by the saliency of that object towards its intentions. Thus, all theorizing, indeed all activity, occurs from inside of the totality.

The prevailing mode of production is for Marx, we should note, "a rich totality,"[53] as a negentropically developing object-in-birth.

In that abundant sense, capitalism signifies a totality of ongoing human development in and as history. Consequently, there is no end outside of the human totality. It is simultaneously its own end-and-means, a means-end. In the present context, it is the historical possibility of abundantly developing wealth. Indeed, for each individual, the wealth constituted by that development is the wealth of one's own developing through, with and for others.

By contrast, the development of wealth through capitalist accumulation is a process whose end goal is extrinsic to the process. The goal of wealth's development here is not the development of the producers involved, but the realization of a goal by which the process--not an end-in-itself--is legitimated, redeemed and developed further. The theorizing of political economy rationalizes that process. It strategically reduces development to a means-ends instrumentality, a linear progression, and an ongoing repetition that merely adds more of the same to what already exists. To attempt that is to contain, by theorizing, a negentropic process that continually threatens to outgrow its own parameters and develop abundantly.

To Marx the capitalist version is just such a containment strategy. Through alienated labor, the commodified object which is capitalist wealth exists in alienated, external relationship to the selfsame individual whose labor is constitutive of it. In its bourgeois form, commodified wealth--i.e., capital--appears as the sole aim of production. It is, thereby, posited in external relationship to the dehumanized producer. Marx states this in the Grundrisse:

> . . . on the other side, as value, wealth is merely command over alien labour not with the aim of ruling, but with the aim of private consumption etc. It appears in all forms in the shape of a thing, be it an object

> or be it a relation mediated through the object, which is external and accidental to the individual. [54]

Corresponding to this external dominion over the producer by the object of wealth he produces, is a version of that productive activity as an entropic, self-limiting process. The producer depletes him or herself of living content through "externalizing" the object and losing control over it in the very activity of capitalist production. The process of producing objects, of generating a heartless wealth, is then tantamount to the self-consumption of the producer as an exhaustible resource. This self-depletion, moreover, <u>is</u> the production and re-production of capital. Clearly this version of production stands in diametric opposition to the negentropic "development of all human powers as such as end in itself" which is the heart of Marx's notion of abundant development. Thus, labor is re-presented by political economy as self-sacrifice, development as entropy. To cite Marx's characterization of political economy's version of labor:

> In bourgeois economics--and in the epoch of production to which it corresponds--this complete working-out of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out, this universal objectification as total alienation, and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an entirely external end. [55]

To dichotomize the development process by positing its end as both distinct and external relative to the process itself is, in sum, to sacrifice the fruit of abundance. By defining wealth as extrinsic to the process of its own development, it becomes impossible, by definition, to articulate, legitimate or produce wealth as intensive self-development. Instead of wealth being an ongoing "totality of development," "the development of all human powers as such," it is

reduced to an activity delimited by an absolute invariant, something that in Marx's phrase can be "measured on a predetermined yardstick."[56] That is the measure of capital. We see wealth reduced to a one-sided measurability, a quantifiable accumulation of discrete tangible objects. Here wealth is generated by a production process that necessarily depletes the producer. Hence, the production of capital is the outcome of a developmental dynamic that is self-devouring.

Finally, it is not the case that scarcity is a state of absolute deprivation. Rather, in its capitalistic form--as our Marx reads political economy--it is the acute frustration spawned by deprivation amidst plenty--of a Siamese twin who has long outgrown the bond that makes him a sibling. Correspondingly, in our reading of theorizing as strategy we note that the "naturalization" of scarcity appears as the enforcement of one-sidedness or dualization upon what would be multi-sided and omnipotential. And that is strategically performed by political economy--even by its Ricardian left wing. Indeed, political economy strategically proffers a version of being human. Yet its individual would willingly--it seems--reproduce him or herself in one specificity when he could ongoingly "produce his totality" as an individual developing through and with others--what Marx calls "the absolute movement of becoming."[57]

Nevertheless, let us not read political economy one-sidedly. To develop as a bourgeois, whether as an individual, social formation, or mode of wealth, is not to abort totally the possibility of self-fulfillment. It is, rather, to render it one-sided and impoverished; or, as Marx coldly states it, "it is satisfaction from a limited standpoint."[58]

Through his critique of political economy, Marx jettisons the self-frustrating development of a mode of wealth whose object is external to the process of human self-enrichment. For Marx, the ground that makes such wealth possible is a mode of activity-- one freed to produce directly for broad and ever changing needs. By intentionally grounding all of his critique of political economy in negentropic qualitative development, Marx made that reading of social theory itself an abundant activity. In that way, he came to know abundance by his own life's activity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

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46. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER TEN

MARX'S RECOVERY OF A RICH TOTALITY

Insofar as production in Marx is always need-related, it is possible through our reading to explore the relationship of Marx's producing a category "rich totality"[1] to that "genuine need"[2] Marx refers to in his letter to Ruge. As we read Marx, the genuine need is the need for a new way of becoming human from that made possible--and necessary--by capitalist social relationships. The genuine need for theorizing, then, is to transcend not merely capitalist social relationships but, even more, the entire regime of a scarcity-bound social life. For a theoretical practice to produce a new mode of social development, it is crucial to not render scarcity absolute as if chiseled in a granite fate. The primary need for theorizing is not to reify scarcity, nor to render it static, but to reconstitute it developmentally--to understand it as an historical process harboring and spawning possibilities for further qualitative development. In our terms, the theoretical urgency is to refashion scarcity, not as the closed economic system, the object-in-itself of political economy, but

as an object-in-birth capable of ongoing, negentropic self-development.

Marx's "rich totality" is such an object-in-birth. It is scarcity specified historically at a threshold of now abundant possibility. As a "rich totality" scarcity is neither denied as an actuality nor eternalized as a finality. Its abundant potential is neither guaranteed in advance, nor is it dismissable as mere fantasy, a groundless utopia. Rich totality, rather, is scarcity rehabilitated. No longer is it a finite object of consumption, but it is an historically produced object which, in turn, as a strategic category of praxis, would articulate and produce new, post-scarcity historical possibilities. Indeed, produced and producing as an object-in-birth, Marx's rich totality becomes a new mode of production in the making. As such, it is an historically specific scarcity which, specifiable in its capitalist form, reproduces itself as a threshold that presages a new qualitatively different mode of human development.

In sum, "a rich totality" is capitalist society conceived, not as an economic system, but more as a mode of production. As an object-in-birth, a mode of production develops negentropically. The capitalist mode of production develops, both towards and across an historically unprecedented threshold which was not possible for pre-capitalist modes of production. That threshold, of course, is the formerly invariant outer limit hitherto posed to human development by a seemingly irremediable material scarcity. Indeed, capitalism alone, of all known modes of producing social life, makes abundant negentropic transformation possible. That is why it is "a rich totality."

This chapter, then, will explore some of the copious significations it holds as a category in Marx's strategic praxis.

Moreover, it will display rich totality as it has been developed as a result of Marx's critique of his strategic rivals--namely,political economy and Hegelian idealism. Indeed, through an emancipatory animated reading of the silences of rival discourses, Marx is able to recover a rich totality from the repression of the glimpse of abundance which their theorizing might otherwise try to account for and display. Through his recovery of a rich totality, then, Marx transcends the self-repudiative versions of development which undergird the hegemonic theorizing of his day.[3]

As we read Marx, the historical possibility of making a new history is situated for theorizing and political practice in his seminal category, rich totality. The category is produced as a product of Marx's methodological critique of Hegelian idealism and political economy, his strategic theoretical rivals. The same category is producing as a strategic embodiment and articulation within active political struggles to make post-scarcity development a genuine historical possibility.

The method of political economy reproduces concrete human productive activities as unproduced, pregiven natural laws. Thereby its method severs producing from human agency. The productive activity of individuals is subsumed and subjected to natural laws. Their own producing energies are reified and set off in external opposition to these producers in the alienated form of necessary laws that must govern their historical activities. Alternatively, the method of idealist dialectics reproduces concrete human productive activities by idealizing them and formally subsuming them under the unfolding, abstracted dialectical movements of (absolute) consciousness knowing

itself. Again, human activity is mystified, allegorized, and set off in opposition to its own progenitors, whose producing activities thereby become mere moments in and of the self-development of the Absolute Spirit. In each case, then, the producing activities of individuals are theoretically expropriated--conceptualized and hypostatized--as respectively natural laws or Absolute Consciousness. In this way, they are superimposed upon those very individuals as though autonomous, alien powers stood in external opposition to them.

By contrast, Marx self-consciously produces the category "rich totality," a new kind of object for theorizing. It is not produced through theorizing as an alienated activity, but as a critique of alienated activity and its objects. As a category, the "rich totality" does not embody or accomplish the severance of productive activities from the producing individuals. It doesn't abstract productive activities from overall historical development either by "naturalizing" as general laws of human activity as such, or by "idealizing" them as moments of the Spirit's self-development. Indeed, its production is accomplished self-consciously through a critique of rival methodologies read as self-alienated activities.

As an object produced through this dual critique of these alienated activities and their theoretical products, the rich totality embodies and articulates the historically specific possibility of the new kind of history. This history is constituted by activities and social relationships whereby individuals-producing-in-society self-consciously produce the conditions of their lives. Unlike "natural laws" and the "Absolute Spirit," then, the "rich totality" is not an autonomous power standing over and above producing individuals.

Instead, it is a categorial expression of a possible historical activity that is not set off and turned against the producers that embody it. The activity includes a new kind of theorizing and, of course, the very theorist amongst those who produce.

As an object for theorizing, Marx's "rich totality" is produced self-consciously through an historically-specific "working up" of observation and conception into concepts that differ qualitatively from the objects-in-themselves of empiricist theorizing, as well as from the predetermined, harmonious unities of idealist dialectics. Through the critique of rival methodologies, Marx then fashions a new object for theorizing, in a different way, through a different kind of thinking and practicing. He thereby constitutes a "rich totality" as a "new gathering point": a new kind of starting point and object for theorizing and other strategic, revolutionary practice(s).

As a product of methodology critique, the rich totality is "a product. . .of the working-up of observation and conception into concepts".[4] As a unique category, it is developed through the process of Marx's emancipatory animated reading of each rival's respective version of development. In each case, Marx attends, and qualitatively develops the silences that abort qualitative development--or even an analysis of its possibility. For both political economy and Hegelian idealism, development is re-presented unhistorically as an object-in-itself, closed to further qualitative development, and, saliently, to the possibility of a human intervention that would fundamentally transform its dynamics. For Marx, those silences pose an invitation to ground their respective texts in the historical mode of production which makes them possible. This strategy intends to

undermine the seeming stability of these rival re-presentations of development.

Marx's production of grounds for theorizing, his self-conscious grounding activity, is also a process that moves in a circular trajectory. (The starting point for critical activity is a groundless image, a chaotic conception of the whole.) Its point of departure, an empiricist version of the totality as an object-in-itself, is qualitatively transformed and becomes, as the moment of return, an object-in-birth. Reaching the point of return, the immediate result of the critique, accomplishes the qualitative transformation of the starting point. This is the process of grounding the object-in-itself. This grounding process produces a "rich totality," an all-embracing and dynamic, "totalized" conception of an historically specific form of life, or the mode of producing it.

Through animatedly reading the silences in these rival discourses on development, Marx's critique accomplishes the qualitative re-constitution of the very principles of object development which characterize the objects of political economy and Hegelian idealism respectively. Through this process, Marx strategically "works up" a "rich totality" which, as an object-in-birth, is thoroughly historical whereas the others are unhistorical, while undergoing open-ended development whereas the others abort it and consolidate their own closure.

Rich totality, most of all, is produced as theoretical and practical (for <u>praxis</u>) embodiment of negentropic development. Thus, the moment of return (so to speak) of Marx's critique of rival methodologies and their objects is their being qualitatively

transformed and superseded. In that way that Marx develops a new kind of object whose very principles of development themselves undergo qualitative transformation. This object, therefore, develops negentropically and, as a category, it embodies and articulates that mode of development.

This new kind of object, in turn, constitutes the starting point for a new kind of self-conscious theorizing. In Marx's hands, that theorizing intends a post-scarcity form of social life. "Rich totality" then, is Marx's strategic re-formulation of society as an historical object-in-birth. As such, it becomes a crucial category for articulating and fostering a praxis whose objective is to produce a post-scarcity mode of producing social life.

It is salient that neither idealism nor political economy views development as an ongoing process that continuously makes a qualitative difference in itself or of the world(-object) it partly constitutes. Re-presenting activity as predominantly consumption, both paradigms posit an invariant activity that is wholly circumscribed by its relationship to its object. Idealism is self-constrained by maintaining the formal self-identity of its self-consuming end-state. Political-economy realizes itself only by repeatedly depleting, through consumption, its self-contained objects-in-themselves. Critically, in neither mode of consumption does either the object or the process as a whole undergo further qualitative development. Indeed, activity is pervaded by a logic of self-containment in both cases. Development becomes self-repudiative. It is reduced to a self-delimiting, invariant activity which thereby constitutes a history (of object development, economic activity, and social relationships) etched

in irremediable scarcity.

In this context, Marx's categorial shift from consumption to development is a major strategic intervention into the dual theoretical hegemony of idealism and political economy. Further, it enables him to articulate and struggle politically for the possibility of a new, post-scarcity history.

Abundance, as a mode of human development, is the historically specific possibility of people producing and undergoing ongoing, multidimensional, qualitative development. It suggests development without invariant outer de-limitation, internal self-division, or entropic self-depletion. In our view, a theoretical articulation of abundance as we define it cannot be adequately accomplished from the standpoint of the categorial primacy of consumption. One reason for this is that consumption cannot adequately account for the possibility of its objects and is required, instead, to take an object as a given. Givenness, however, poses invariance and, thereby, constraint for any process or development. Consumption qua consumption is dependent upon an automatically given object--one always already there, just as it is. Consumption qua consumption is thereby an inadequate standpoint from which to articulate or re-present the possibility of a mode of activity that transcends any seeming invariance through its qualitative development. Production, by contrast--producing a whole form of life--does account for the possibility of not only objects but, thereby, of consumption itself.

Whatever appears as an invariant and, thereby, as given, can itself be regarded (in Marx's sense) as both produced and producing, and as engaging in ongoing, qualitative development. In our view, any

theorizing that articulates a negentropic mode of ongoing qualitative object-development must make some version of production its predominant categorial expression for human activity. Rendered in relation to production--in the broad sense of active, purposive human creativity--objects thereby become occasions for further qualitative development. This stands diametrically opposed to their being structural invariances that delimit development when it is rendered from the standpoint of consumption. As we read Marx, he underscores a strategic shift to production as the predominant moment and category of human development. He regards that shift as a necessary and minimum condition for articulating the possibility of a history that develops beyond the constraints of scarcity. The "rich totality", accomplishes, embodies and articulates this shift for theorizing and other practices. Correspondingly, "rich totality" is Marx's theoretical articulation of the historical possibility of transcending scarcity--that is, of abundant development.

The strategic formulation for theorizing of the possibility of a new history as a moment of self-conscious political struggle. The formulation is rooted in present historical needs, and actively embodies the politicized wish for their fulfilment. In 1844, Marx writes as much to Ruge:

> . . .hence it becomes ever clearer that a new gathering point must be sought for the really thinking and independent minds. I am convinced that our plan would meet a real need, and real needs must surely also be able to find real fulfillment. I therefore have no doubts about the enterprise if only we undertake it seriously.[5]

The self-consciously political nature of the intended undertaking is indisputable:

> Nothing prevents us, then, from tying our criticism to the criticism of politics and to a definite party position in politics, and hence from identifying our criticism with real struggles.[6]

The political struggle includes an educative moment that "clarifies" consciousness regarding (in our view) its emancipatory potential. In addition, it is fought out on the contested terrain of meaning and rival interpretations of historical activity:

> The reform of consciousness consists only in enabling the world to clarify its consciousness, in waking it from its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions.[7]

As we read Marx, moreover, the pivotal meanings at issue concern the nature of the historical relationship amongst past, present and future in regard to human development and the fulfillment of human needs:

> It will transpire that it is not a matter of drawing a great dividing line between past and future, but of carrying out the thoughts of the past. And finally, it will transpire that mankind begins no <u>new</u> work, but consciously accomplishes its old work.[8]

Thus, the present historical moment becomes both enriched through the past, and pregnant with the possibility of accomplishing its "unfinished business" through a qualitatively transformed future. Present historical actuality is now fraught with the possibility of engendering a different mode of historical development. That development is to be accomplished through the political realization of hitherto unrealized historical potentials for meeting and developing human needs. Again, it is the present possibility of making history differently that imbues old meanings with new significances, especially as it presages an emergent post-scarcity mode of human development.

As we read Marx, "rich totality" is the "new gathering point" which is urgently sought for as <u>praxis</u> that intends a new history.

Rich totality is both an object constituted and an activity which constitutes it. Object and activity are inseparable, internally related, and developing negentropically. Rich totality as object is a content-form, negentropic development. This category is produced negentropically by emancipatory animated reading. Here critique is a moment of a political praxis. Furthermore, as content, form and constitutive method, it must be understood as an historically specific mode of development. Correspondingly,it is made possible by, entails, and,in turn,produces a particular version of history. The rich totality is this version of history. It is a version which embodies as well as intentionally implements post-scarcity development as a genuine human possibility.

The rich totality is inseparable from the methodological critique, the reading of social theory, that constitutes it. The "working up" of this new object, the process by which analysis "rises from the abstract to the concrete," is Marx's strategic critique of the modes of abstraction by which political economy and Hegelian idealism de-historicize activity. Political economy extinguishes history by transforming human development--especially production--into generalized, abstract natural laws. Hegelian idealism transcends history through the Spirit's formalized, abstract self-reconciliation. One "naturalizes" history, the other "idealizes" it. In contrast, Marx's "working up" of the rich totality is performed partly through an emancipatory animated reading which "re-historicizes" those hegemonic abstractions by grounding them in the historically specific processes of human development that make them possible at all. "Historicizing" formerly unhistorical objects for theorizing by grounding is not giving

them over to history, as if it were itself either a transhistorial or suprahuman force. Instead, it renders them products of human activity. To quote from The Holy Family:

> History does nothing, it "possesses no immense wealth," it "wages no battles." It is man, real, living mand who does all that, who possesses and fights; "history" is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.[9]

Marx's method does not stand in external relationship, outside of its object and the social world that situates it. Rather, it actively constitutes its unique object for theorizing and practice, the rich totality. Thereby his method is itself an historically specific activity in the world. Moreover, as an historical activity of object development, Marx's method is not merely theorizing about abundance. Instead, as noted already, it is the strategic practice of abundance as an historical-political intention.

As we read Marx, his version of history is inseparable from the historically specific intentions that inform and are embedded in and as that specific reading. The "working up" process that produces the rich totality entails such a strategic reading of history. It "rehistoricizes" rival modes of theorizing and their objects by accounting for their possibility, grounded by (according to) its version of historical development. This "rehistoricization" produces a new historical object, a rich totality. Its negentropic mode of historical development and its significances presuppose and produce basic transformations in the habitual linear relationship amongst past, present, and future. This "linear accomplishment" has assumed iconic status as a given, for currently (and then) prevailing accounts of

history. Thus, Marx does not re-produce the hegemonic "linear accomplishment", to use Said's phrasing, whereby history is actively re-constructed from the outside as an object-in-itself--a "course of events"--which proceeds along a straight line from past to present to future. Instead, he produces a history as an object-in-birth, from within (and as) a specific historical praxis whose intention is to make a fundamental qualitative difference in and for human development.

As we read Marx, "working up" a rich totality is a strategic practice that intends, in Michael E. Brown's apt phrasing, "to make the present an historic possibility."[10] That is, Marx would overcome the embalmment of the historical present as a dehistoricized object-in-itself (as accomplished respectively by idealism and political economy). To make possible a different present, Marx offers a different account of history. For his account the present--that is, the needs of the present--takes primacy as its predominant moment.

"Working up" a rich totality, treating a form of life as a dynamic totality, an object-in-birth, embodies present needs for making a new history--a qualitatively different way of developing together. The strategic "working up" of this object-in-birth is accomplished in part by re-membering and, thereby, preserving the past in relationship to the needs of the present. Thus, the retrospection of the past is undertaken as present activity for emancipatory rather than antiquarian purposes. Consequently, re-membering the past in relation to present needs becomes a present activity that produces a history from the standpoint of those historically specific needs. Re-membering, moreover, being present, self-conscious and producing activity is also a strategic activity in that the present intention that governs

re-membering is the making of a different future. Thus, the past is read here--and by Marx--from the standpoint of the present, so that the present can be re-made as a qualitatively different future.

Marx reverses the usual hegemonic, linear sequence by which the past precedes a present, followed by a future that extends the present. The past, on this linear account, seemingly bestows significance and imparts meaning to a present which appears merely as its extension. Through this appearance, however, the present is strategically consolidated as virtually an inevitable historical outcome. Also, it is tacitly legitimated as nothing more remarkable than the mere extension of time-honored principles of the past, principles whereby history has always developed. Through this strategic process, choice and possible alternatives to present historical forms are forgotten. And the present, while nominally historical, holds sway with the force of fate.

Pivotal for our purposes is that the strategic conflict between these ways of making history also rages as a struggle over meanings, one whose outcome is of inestimable political consequence. Thus, in the same letter to Ruge wherein Marx stresses the urgency with which "a new gathering point must be sought", so that "a real need" will "be able to find real fulfillment", he characterizes the revolutionary task as consisting in part

> . . . in waking it [the world] from its dream about itself, in <u>explaining</u> to it the meaning of its own actions.[11]

And again, climactically:

> . . . the work of our time is to clarify to itself . . . the meaning of its own struggle and its own desires.[12]

For our Marx, these meanings are not self-evident, nor are they objectively inscribed in the nature of things as eternal givens. Instead, meanings are themselves historically produced--and producing--in the midst of historically-specific conflicts amongst rival modes of discourse. In this rivalry, moreover, the meanings ascribed to the past take on particular saliency for present political practice:

> It will transpire that it is not a matter of drawing a great dividing line between past and future, but of carrying out thoughts of the past. And finally, it will transpire that mankind begins no <u>new</u> work, but consciously accomplishes its old work.[13]

For a history rendered as a linear chronology, the past has strategic meaning insofar as it eternalizes and legitimates current practices. Alternatively, for a history produced in the present through retrospective-prospective activity, the past has strategic meaning predominantly in terms of the future we need--the present needs for a future that is qualitatively transformed. Indeed the political stakes in this struggle are chillingly pronounced as Party strategy in the following slogan from Orwell's <u>1984</u>:

> Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.[14]

The political contest over meaning can be illustrated in the struggle for interpretation of such phenomena as "poverty." For political economy, poverty is eternalized in part through its chronological re-presentation as an automatic carry-over, a linear extension of the past. To quote Marx's characterization:

> Poverty is in their eyes merely the pang which accompanies every childbirth, in nature as in industry.[15]

Marx, in contrast, "re-habilitates" poverty as an historical phenomenon

and, thereby, as a revolutionary possibility for a different future. He reads poverty through a retrospective-prospective account of history. His account is mediated by its rivalry with "the historians of this epoch," the political economists:

> . . . they see in poverty nothing but poverty, without seeing in it the revolutionary, subversive side, which will overthrow the old society.[16]

His own interpretation situates poverty in a totalized history no longer shackled to irremediable scarcity as its iron invariance.

For Marx, meanings are both produced and, in turn, producing as so many social relationships within an overall, historically specific situation. Here, meanings are not abstract universals whose Platonic essence somehow transcends time and place. For our Marx, instead, meanings are historically specific dimensions of political--and, especially, of class struggles, in that power relationships are linguistically mediated. Language, in turn, is necessarily active as a formative political agency that makes history and develops historically. Correspondingly, politically significant terms like freedom, justice, equality, et al., develop and enact different significances with respect to specific struggles. That reads true most crucially with respect to what is historically both actual and possible at a specific moment of historical development.

In The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx contests the strategic de-historicization of terms like "equality." Universalizing the terms is a strategic practice by which the economists ("the historians of this epoch"[17]) eviscerate their political potential for articulating and implementing the possibility of a mode of human development. That goes beyond what is currently institutionalized and, yes, enforced. To

quote Marx:

> Of course, the tendency towards equality belongs to our century. To say now that all former centuries, with entirely different needs, means of production, etc., worked providentially for the realizaton of equality is, first of all, to substitute the means and the men of our century for the men and the means of earlier centuries and to misunderstand the historical movement by which the successive generations transformed the results acquired by the generations that preceded them.[18]

Thus, the economists abstract such politically significant terms from the developmental setting in which their significance itself is an active, historical relationship, developing in relation to likewise developing "levels" and kinds of productive activities that constitute everyday social life. To universalize such terms is to render them abstract and formal, without historically specific content. Words thereby become so many self-contained objects-in-themselves, seemingly closed to further changes in political significance and consequence. This strategic treatment of such terms destroys the tension they otherwise maintain with actual conditions as standards for comparing existing social and historical conditions as against what they might yet become.

Through an emancipatory animated reading, it is possible to re-member or otherwise transform hitherto "neutralized" meanings, and to revive their latent capacity to contribute to a revolutionary political praxis. To do this, of course, runs counter to the strategy Marx fights against. Thereby political economists try to conflate different historical epochs into a single, homogenized, non-developmental line of chronological sequence which words can only "objectively" describe but not play an active role in transforming. Marx characterizes that strategy in The Poverty of Philosophy as

follows:

> Economists know very well that the very thing that was for the one [epoch] a finished product was for the other but the raw material for new production.[19]

Correspondingly, Marx's counter-strategy is rehabilitative: to restore a developmental potential to seemingly inert meanings. Thereby, he strategically transforms seemingly finished (word-) products into active processes that contribute to producing a qualitatively different history.

If the chronological reading of history results in a de-historicized present such that reading the past's significance for the present becomes a political strategy whose intention is to immunize present power relationships against radical interventions, or the development of new needs that could spawn them. Marx characterizes this strategy as follows:

> The so-called historical presentation of development is founded, as a rule, on the fact that the latest form regards the previous ones as steps leading up to itself, and, since it is only rarely and under quite specific conditions able to criticize itself. . .it always conceives them one-sidedly.[20]

To counter this, our Marx subverts the strategic imposition of linearity on the significances of the past through a rival reading whereby the past is re-membered from a present standpoint for present emancipatory purposes.

Marx's emancipatory animated reading of the past intervenes into the chronological reading of the past, "the linear accomplishment." He sees political economists as reading the past one-sidely so that in their "so-called historical presentation of development," "the latest form regards the previous ones as steps

leading up to itself . . . ." Thus, political economy reads the feudal past as at once a chronological precursor to the present and an inferior version within the same line of historical march. As Marx states this, in its fuller version:

> Economists like Adam Smith and Ricardo, who are the historians of this epoch, have no other mission than that of showing how wealth is acquired in bourgeois production relations, of formulating these relations into categories, into laws, and of showing how superior these laws, these categories, are for the production of wealth to the laws and categories of feudal society.[21]

In this chronological approach is to de-historicize development so that only quantitative increase or decrease of a given product or development so that only quantitative increase or decrease of a given product or outcome is intelligible, and not the qualitative transformation of the principles by which it is produced. Marx puts this in doubt adroitly in The Poverty of Philosophy:

> In other words it was the principal that made the history, and not the history that made the principle.[22]

Indeed, the task of political economy as historiography is to terminate history with the producing of capital as its "finishing point." Thereby, political economy de-historicizes production and its development:

> When the economists say that present-day relations--the relations of bourgeois production--are natural, they imply that these are the relations in which wealth is created and productive forces developed in conformity with the laws of nature. These relations therefore are themselves natural laws independent of the influence of time. They are eternal laws which must always govern society. Thus there has been history, but there is no longer any.[23]

History de-historicized by Hegelian idealism and political economy respectively is constituted as a vicious circularity whose

further qualitative development is aborted in the authoritative name of some cultural icon such as "natural law" or "eternal harmony." Through such appeals and corresponding demonstration, scarcity is pre-ordained--if not sanctified--as reality itself (or, perhaps, as Max Weber calls it, "worldly conditions").

Similarly, the chronological reproduction of the present--as if history were the pre-ordainment of what now prevails--makes the fact and continued existence of the scarcity-bound present a foregone conclusion. Indeed, a chronological sequencing of events can be read, further, as an historically-specific practice whereby an extant social order legitimates and naturalizes itself, while rendering itself immune to further historical alteration. One upshot of this chronological replacement for historical development is to replace human history with "the life of capital"--a self-enclosed, self-subsistent object-in-itself which no longer has a history of its own, a history which can articulate it as an historical possibility. Treated non-historically--or, rather, chronologically--capital undergoes quantitative transformations only. It increases or decreases only relative to what the intensivity of production in relation to the relative scarcity of resources makes possible--or not--for eternity. Its activity is expansion or depletion within the invariant outer limits imposed by irremediable scarcity. By contrast, Marx intentionally undermines the chronology that re-presents the historical present as an unhistorical cul-de-sac.

We find Marx reversing the prevailing sequence for re-presenting history, the past-present relationship, in his introductory notes to the Grundrisse:

> Bourgeois society is the most developed and the most complex historic organisation of production. The categories which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure, thereby also allows insights into the structure and the relations of production of all the vanished social formations out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up, whose partly still unconquered remnants are carried along within it, whose mere nuances have developed explicit significance within it, etc. Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape. The intimations of higher development among the subordinate animal species, however, can be understood only after the higher development is already known.[24]

Here, in our reading, Marx poses a simultaneous critique of political economy and bourgeois historiography as a self-conscious strategy to undermine the linear appearance that held sway over the sequencing of categories, through which historical and economic analysis have remained captive to present relations of power and production. This strategic predominance of the present over the past enters into and guides any historical analysis of present social formations with the intention of achieving its qualitative transformation through a revolutionary strategy.

In the Introduction to the Grundrisse, Marx develops a strategic approach to producing an account of capitalist society as a rich totality through precisely this brilliant reversal of the iconic past-present historical sequence. There, he targets the all-important matter of category sequencing:

> It would therefore be unfeasible and wrong to let the economic categories follow one another in the same sequence as that in which they were historically decisive. Their sequence is determined, rather, by their relation to one another in modern bourgeois society, which is precisely the opposite of that which seems to be their natural order or which corresponds to historical development. The point is not the historic position of the economic relations in the succession of different forms of society... Rather, their order within modern bourgeois society.[25]

We illustrate this point with a specific example. Marx reads pre-capitalist history and its production forms in a reflexive way. He is self-conscious as to its (the reading's) historically specific location in and as a present moment of human, social development in a capitalist mode. Agriculture, for instance, is read from the historically specific standpoint of a present dominated by capital as its predominant social and economic relationship. A "linear history" treats agriculturally-based pre-capitalist economic activity so that:

> . . . nothing seems more natural than to begin with ground rent, with landed property, since this is bound up with the earth, the source of all production and of all being, and with the first form of production of all more or less settled societies--agriculture. But nothing would be more erroneous.[26]

Read through Marx's strategy, however, agriculture is analyzed in reverse from an historically specific standpoint in the present, as a moment of the historical development of capital:

> In bourgeois society it is the opposite. Agriculture more and more becomes merely a branch of industry, and is entirely dominated by capital. Ground rent likewise. In all forms where landed property rules, the natural relation still predominant. In those where capital rules, the social, historically created element. Ground rent cannot be understood without capital. But capital can certainly be understood without ground rent.[27]

It is now time, however, for the proverbial "other shoe" to drop: Marx re-members the past to produce a new future. Correspondingly, reading the past through present needs is also to strategically appropriate the past for present purposes of realizing new historical forms that fulfill them and spawn, thereby, their further qualitative development. As we read Marx, then, theorizing historically is acting in a way that is simultaneously

retrospective-prospective. It is present activity which at once re-members and preserves a past with the political intention of producing a genuine historical difference, a new kind of future. It is present activity which moves at first in a direction that is seemingly opposite to the forward flow of time. Appearances notwithstanding--although strategically speaking they are precisely to the point--the retrospective moment of this historical activity is necessarily prospective. Through its forward trajectory, then, a present by capital as its predominant social and economic relationship a "linear history", relationships of agriculturally-based production re-membering of the past for emancipatory purposes produces a different future. It does so, that is, through the qualitative difference it makes in the present situation. By producing a difference in the present, through actively re-membering the past, retrospective-prospective activity--through which Marx produces a new version of history--presages a future developing through qualitative difference in and as history. Present retrospective-prospective activity, then, <u>is</u> negentropic development. The future it presages and--as a moment of present political <u>praxis</u>--makes possible is a mode of human development is and can no longer be constrained by historical scarcity.

For Marx, a "present standpoint" selected to strategically ground the reading of the past is no merely formal abstraction. As we read him, it is an historically specific moment of <u>productive</u> activity which is itself historically produced and, in turn, producing. Marx characterizes this further in the <u>Grundrisse</u>:

> In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colors and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.[28]

Indeed, this predominant moment of historically specific human development is producing in the mode of capital. Again, as Marx says in the Grundrisse:

> Capital is the all-dominating economic power of bourgeois society. It must form the starting-point as well as the finishing-point, and must be dealt with before landed property.[29]

And it is capital--read here as an historically-specific relationship whereby people actively engage in fulfilling their needs through social production--that constitutes the moment of departure for the theorizing and praxis that would produce a qualitatively different proto-abundant history of people developing--a history which is a rich totality.

Capital, as we read it, is at once an historically specific development and a product of past development. As Marx states, "it must form the starting-point as well as the finishing point."[30] As a moment of departure for a rich totality, capital has not only developed through previous productive activity, but is also developing irreversibly. Its being a "finishing point," as well as a moment of return, signifies its having undergone qualitative development. Its "finishing" is not the final consolidation of an object-in-itself, closed to further qualitative development through human intervention. Rather, "finishing" signifies the qualitative transformation of the very principles whereby the object initially had been developing. Forming both "the starting-point as well as the finishing point" in

capitalist development, the qualitative development of capital constitutes an open-ended history which Marx re-presents as an object-in-birth. Correspondingly, taken as a moment of return, capital transfigured is capital no longer re-produced as the selfsame capital, but as a new object: a new kind of history, a new kind of relationship between production and needs, a new "mode of activity"[31] whereby people develop differently from before. Thus, reading the past from the vantage point of present needs is tantamount to reading the past retrospectively from a predominant mode of present productive activity--here, producing of and by capital.

Marx states in the Introduction to the Grundrisse, that the "working-up" by way of "observation and conception" of a totality of "many determinations and relations" re-produces society as a "concrete totality." This "concrete totality" is produced through a "process of concentration" as a "result" of analysis, and "not as a point of departure." As a "rich totality", moreover, it has a significance that is quite distinct from that other hegemonic totalization of human activity, namely "the economic systems"[32] of the political economists.

A rich totality signifies a history produced by human activity and open to change by further human intervention. The "economic system," by contrast, is a closed model which signifies an airless history that persists as an existential condition. It sports nothing new under the sun and is there independently of human constitution, to be understood, but not to be fundamentally transformed. In sum, each history implies its own possibilities. An economic system poses a self-contained, self-subsistent occasion for being understood, independently of and indifferent to self-conscious acts of human

intervention. Conversely, rich totality poses an occasion for self-conscious human production and strategic intervention that is formulated from within a history.

As our Marx formulates it, a rich totality is a human history. It is rooted in "the relations between man and man," rather than in a repetitive cycle of events determined from on high by eternal principles like an economic system based on natural laws. As we read it, The Poverty of Philosophy offers an account of precisely the kinds of determinations and relations that taken together would constitute human development as a concrete, practical totality. For any historical epoch, formulating a concrete totality is an activity rooted in a set of questions about people:

> . . . what were their respective needs, their productive forces, their mode of production, the raw materials of their production--in short, what were the relations between man and man which resulted from all these conditions of existence.[33]

Moreover, as the passage becomes climactic, human development is read as a history that is self-produced by humans developing:

> 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? But the moment you present men as the actors and authors of their own history you arrive--by a detour--at the real starting point, because you have abandoned those eternal principles of which you spoke at the outset.[34]

As we read it, this insight is crucial for our grasping the fullest significance of a rich totality. The insight helps us grasp it as a strategic conceptualization embedded in political practice. Indeed, the very possibility of mounting a self-conscious, strategic intervention into history as it now is, so as to produce a different history, depends upon--as a minimum condition--its progressive

de-alienation and de-mystification as an activity of which men are "the authors and actors." Correspondingly, a rich totality constitutes at least such a history. Even more, it is a strategic unit of political intervention into present history, formulated through theorizing as a moment of revolutionary praxis.

A rich totality is characterized as a "unity of the diverse" in the methodological language of the Introduction to the Grundrisse.[35] The subsequent First Notebook (1857) speaks of "a mass of antithetical forms of the social unity."[36] Let us develop this notion further. In The Poverty of Philosophy Marx contrasts a one-sided reading of Feudalism with a two-sided reading of it as "a mode of production."[37] Both are strategic readings: the former would eradicate history whereas the latter would account for its qualitative transformation. Moreover, the former eliminates history by dissolving sources of conflict whereas the latter re-members historical transformation--for present historical needs--by displaying class antagonisms. The de-historicized, one-sided reading of feudalism is characterized as follows:

> If, during the epoch of the domination of feudalism, the economists, enthusiastic over the knightly virtues, the beautiful harmony between rights and duties, the patriarchal life of the towns, the prosperous condition of domestic industry in the countryside, the development of industry organized into corporations, guilds and fraternities, in short, everything that constitutes the good side of feudalism, had set themselves the problem of eliminating everything that cast a shadow on this picture--serfdom, privileges, anarchy--what would have happened? All the elements which called forth the struggle would have been destroyed, and the development of the bourgeoisie nipped in the bud. One would have set oneself the absurd problem of eliminating history.[38]

By contrast, for Marx's two-sided reading of feudalism, class

antagonism is an inseparable, invariant condition of qualitative historical change:

> Thus Feudal production, to be judged properly, must be considered as a mode of production founded on antagonism. It must be shown how wealth was produced within this antagonism, how the productive forces were developed at the same time as class antagonisms, how one of the classes, the bad side, the drawback of society, went on growing until the material conditions for its emancipation had attained full maturity. Is not this as good as saying that the mode of production, the relations in which productive forces are developed, are anything but eternal laws, but that they correspond to a definite development of men and of their productive forces, and that a change in men's productive forces necessarily brings about a change in their relations of production?[39]

This two-sided reading of Feudalism--feudalism read as a mode of production--is a strategic reading undertaken from the standpoint of present needs. From this standpoint, Feudalism is read as a retrospective-prospective history, a history which re-members the past by way of strategically informing present struggles that intend a different future. Correspondingly, Marx's two-sided historical re-construction of Feudalism both produces as well as embodies the following strategic-political conclusion:

> As the main thing is not to be deprived of the fruits of civilization, of the acquired productive forces, the traditional forms in which they were produced must be smashed.[40]

Indeed, our Marx reads Feudalism as a retrospective-prospective history from the standpoint of a present need to produce a new kind of human historical development beyond that made possible by bourgeois society. As we read Marx, qualitative historical development is made possible through strategic revolutionary <u>praxis</u> as a necessary (albeit not sufficient) condition thereof.

This reading of feudalism as a mode of production is an integral moment of his strategic formulation of capitalist society. Indeed, Marx is not a Marxist historian of feudalism; his interest is not exhaustive historical scholarship as such. He reads history as an emancipatory strategist. And so he re-formulates any historical epoch as a concrete totality of "many determinations and relations"[41] foremost among these being the class antagonisms with which capitalist society is replete. Indeed, re-membering and in-stating class antagonism is a sine qua non is the constitutive "working-up" if social relationships which Marx signifies by a mode of production. That is, we read Marx's re-formulation of capitalism--not as an economic system but--as a mode of production--as necessarily constituted in terms of a strategic intention to overthrow it through revolutionary praxis. In sum, mode of production is necessarily formed as a categorial unit of strategic intervention, as theoretical moment in the qualitatively transforming prevailing modes of historical development.

As a mode of production--but not as an economic system--bourgeois society is strategically formulated with respect to its revolutionary overthrow and possible replacement by a qualitatively different mode. In the Grundrisse, Marx characterizes bourgeois society as "a rich totality of many determinations and relations." It is then defined, to repeat, as "a unity of the diverse" and as "a mass of antithetical forms of the social unity".[42] As a mode of production it is formulated prospectively with respect to its possible qualitative transformation through revolutionary praxis:

> But within bourgeois society, the society that rests on exchange value, there arise relations of circulation as

> well as of producion which are so may mines to explode it. (A mass of antithetical forms of the social unity, whose antithetical character can never be abolished through quiet metamorphosis . . .[43]

As we read Grundrisse, the ground-plan, rich totality is our Marx's specification of a distinctive mode of production at the "level" of capitalist development. It is a protean conception. Rich totality, then, is formulated with and as a strategic intention to detonate that "social unity" whose explosive potential as "a mass of antithetical forms"--basic class antagonisms--is masked, de-constructed, and so, de-fused by political economy and Hegelian idealism alike. Produced through Marx's methodology critique, it is one of "so many mines to explode it." It is simultaneously an actuality-possibility, an intention-expectation, a theoretical-practical unit of political intervention, a retrospective-prospective history.

Capitalism, rendered as a "rich totality," is a fertility: an object-in-birth. Indeed, it is targeted for detonation because it is worth detonating! Indeed, it has been a repository for an accumulation of hitherto unprecedented modes and levels of human development which Marx cherishes and would preserve. As Marx formulates it, capitalism is both repository and wellspring of a negentropic human development. And, "as the main thing is not to be deprived of the fruits of civilization,"[44] capitalism can only be saved for its life-enriching contributions--"the acquired productive forces"--by eliminating the self-cannibalization of its developmental potential inflicted by its endemic class depredations. Yet it, too, like the Hegelian Absolute Spirit, enshrines a self-repudiating development that without a revolutionary intervention ultimately destroys the possibilty of

history and an abundant future.

As a "rich totality," moreover, it can develop historically across an historically unique threshold of devlopment which was not possible for pre-capitalist mode of production. That threshold is the former invariant outer limit hitherto posed to human development by a seemingly irremediable material scarcity. Presaging the possibility of a post-scarcity mode of producion, capitalism is historically unprecedented. Capitalism, thereby, is formulated as a rich totality, whereby it embodies a unique historically specific possibility: making abundance possible. Thus, as an historically specific expectation-intention, capitalism formulated as a mode of production embodies the historical possibility of a post-scarcity mode of human development, as well as the termination of class as a scarcity-bound, invariant deformation of human needs, growth and historical potentiality.

As a rich totality, in other words, the capitalist mode of production makes possible a specific kind of class struggle which, in turn, makes a classless society possible for the first time. Tnus, a rich totality is "worked up" in order to make human development without class predation an historical and strategic possibility. To quote from the Grundrisse:

> . . . on the other hand, 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.[45]

Thus, Marx's method produces a rich totality whereby Marx, the Promethean destroyer of capitalist development becomes, ironically, its greatest celebrant. Indeed, the capitalist mode of production is given

its most Dionysian treatment in the politically strategic Communist Manifesto. To display Marx's ode to the bourgeoisie as a class:

> It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former migrations of nations and crusades.[46]

Again, it is an historical chrysalis that harbors and spawns a negentropic mode of development that uproots seemingly eternal boundaries and transforms them into historical thresholds presaging qualitative human transformation without invariance:

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.[47]

As a rich totality, the capitalist mode of production develops negentropically and makes possible further negentropic development. Like any mode of production, capitalism is "a historically produced social production process."[48] As Marx construes it in Volume III of Capital, it is a totality of social relationships, all of which are historically produced and producing under "material conditions of existence" which themselves are historically produced and producing (of course, in our Marx's sense of the word):

> We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process

> of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under specific historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves, and thereby also the bearers of this process, their material conditions of existence and their mutual relations, i.e., their socio-economic form.[49]

The multidimensional, protean development that <u>is</u> capitalism of production develops negentropically by "constantly expanding its reproduction process."[50] However, it develops through and at the cost of its self-cannibalization. By producing capital as its exemplary form of wealth, capitalism regularly de-stabilizes--if not devours altogether--the very possibility of its ongoing expansion. Developing negentropically, however, the capitalist mode of producing and reproducing itself produces the possibility of its own qualitative supersession. Its seemingly permanent boundaries and principles--reproduced and reproducing under the appearance of a self-stabilizing economic system--are negentropically transformed into so many historical thresholds presaging a root and branch changeover of the very principles whereby it has hitherto been developing. In sum, Capitalism, as a negentropic mode of production, continuously produces its own "crisis-potential."

Read from one side, the recurrent crises of capitalism as a mode of production produce material grounds for the historical possibility of its own supersession as a new kind of history. It thereby makes possible an abundant future, a post-scarcity history. Read from the other side, however, there is no guarantee of an abundant outcome, only of a qualitative transformation in the irreversible principles of development. Thus, an alternative outcome is the

production of material grounds for the historical possibility of no possibility at all: no more history, its utter termination as a human prospect. This negentropic production of regular, systemic "crisis" is displayed as an historical threshold in Volume III of Capital as follows:

> Each specific historical form of this process further develops its material foundations and social forms. Whenever a certain stage of maturity has been reached, the specific historical form is discarded and makes way for a higher one. The moment of arrival of such a crisis is disclosed by the depth and breadth attained by the contradictions and antagonisms between the distribution relations, and thus the specific historical form of their corresponding production relations, on the one hand, and the productive forces, the production powers and the development of their agencies, on the other hand. A conflict then ensues between the material development of production and its social form.[51]

In our setting, the negentropic production of systemic crisis presages a qualitatively unprecedented future: on the one hand there is an abundant possibility--a post-capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, there is, to use E.P. Thompson's term, "exterminism":[52] the fullest realization of scarcity as self-repudiating, self-consumptory development, nuclear annihilation.

What is crucial from our immediate standpoint here is that our Marx reads material scarcity as so many modes of production, historically produced and producing social production processes, each of which actively makes possible its own qualitative transformation through negentropic development. As we read Marx, moreover, scarcity no longer must signify an iron invariant that regularly aborts emergent possibilities for human development--social and historical--at a predetermined outer limit. It no longer signifies an abyss that menaces seafarers at the earth's outer edge. It no longer signifies a

sun that polices the divine order against human intervention by melting the wings of Icarian flights. It no longer represents the self-repudiating, ironic mode of development by which a Midas starves through his sheer protean capacity to expand wealth. Indeed, it no longer mandates history as a long march of Armageddon-bound nuclear lemmings.

In our language, scarcity is no longer the paradigmatic Given: self-contained, Procrustean, and impervious to further human intervention as an object-in-itself. Here, instead, scarcity is read through an emancipatory strategy. It is articulated as an historically-specific object-in-birth, produced and producing as a moment of ongoing historical development. That unique, totalized development makes possible--but by no means guarantees--a qualitatively different human history.

Through Marx's emancipatory animated reading, his critique of rival methodologies and their objects, material scarcity is rehabilitated as a present <u>historical</u> possibility. Moreover, by re-historicizing scarcity, it is no longer meaningful to universalize "it" as an existential condition. Scarcity as such no longer remains self-identical regardless of historical situation. As we read Marx, instead, scarcity is always historially specific. It signifies an ensemble of historically produced social relationships themselves produced and producing at a specifiable "level" (or rather moment) in the overall development of productive forces which is human history. In sum, as we read Marx, historical scarcity is specifiable strategically as a mode of production which, <u>in its capitalist form</u>, reproduces itself as a threshold which makes possible a new,

qualitatively different mode of human development. Scarcity can also be specified methodologically as a rich totality whereby capital, in its moment of departure, initially anchored in material scarcity, undergoes qualitative transformation as a moment of return and becomes, thereby, "a new gathering point."[53]

Here, we have read "rich totality" in a way that entails and embodies, indeed, re-members history of a particular sort, in a particular way. That is, "rich totality" is a history re-membered, retrospectively-prospectively, as a history of people producing in the broadest sense--a sense that necessarily includes but is not reducible to economic, let alone presently prevailing, practices. As we read Marx, production--in this broad sense--is the ground, marrow, telos, and dynamism of historical development. Production here is historical development. It is that "one process, in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment."[54] Marx strategically posits his materialist conception of history in the German Ideology:

> This conception of history thus relies on expounding the real process of production--starting from the material production of life itself--and comprehending the form of intercourse connected with and created by this mode of production, i.e., civil society in its various stages, as the basis of all history . . . .[55]

But let us not stop here as if this constitutes an authoritative silence or an edict to interdict further development. Indeed, as we read, our Marx hones in further on the core of the matter in a subsequent passage:

> In the whole conception of history up to the present this real basis of history has either been totally disregarded or else considered as a minor matter quite irrelevant to the course of history. History must

> therefore, always be written according to an extraneous standard; the real production of life appears as non-historical, while the historical appears as something separated from ordinary life, something extra-super terrestrial.[56]

Here, history is the production by individuals of ordinary life, the historical life of individuals producing in society. However, lest it prevail as yet another groundless, global abstraction, ordinary life too must be further specified as an historically specific, humanly produced occasion. Indeed, as we read it, historical production ("production at a definite stage of social development--production by social individuals"[57])--or, restated, everyday life as (an) historical production is no mere self-alienated abstraction. It is Promethean. It strategically supplants Absolute Spirit as an abstract appropriation of human history. By so doing, Marx heralds, indeed trumpets the restoration of a history with a humane face: that is, a history that is thoroughly grounded in <u>human needs</u>. The generative protean hub of this history is people fulfilling their needs. Production, its predominant moment, embodies, manifests, fulfills, indeed <u>is</u> that process.

To return to the <u>Grundrisse</u>:

> The obvious, trite notion: in production the members of society appropriate (create, shape) the products of nature in accordance with human needs...Production creates the objects which correspond to the given needs . . . .[58]

Marx notes that this "obvious trite notion" belongs even to the theorizing of political economy, albeit as a strictly economic category. Read in an emancipatory, animated mode, however, this apparently obvious, unremarkable first principle of economics becomes, as an object of Marx's critique, fertile and explosive as a new

starting point for a new mode of theorizing and (other) revolutionary political practice--"a rich totality."

Through Marx, the production-needs nexus is rescued both from its unhistorical idealization as the self-consumption imperative of the Absolute Spirit, and from its equally unhistorical reduction to the economism of a first principle of political economy. Instead, Marx renders human needs and the mode of production that fulfills or inters them, as a thoroughly historical and developmental panoply of relationships amongst people. Here, unlike Hegelian idealism, need is not predominantly an activity of consumption, an insatiable gaping maw which devours matter and history alike as it both engenders and finally--in an everlasting, idealized self-consumption--transcends them. Indeed, the historical world is not posited as an object for entropic consumption by needs which deplete it, while themselves remaining unchanged through the process of their fleeting satiation.

For idealism and political economy alike, needs are so many activities of consumption which maintain a privileged, transcendental place. They act catalytically, making movement possible without being transformed by it. On those accounts, whether they accrue to the isolated individual(s) of political economy or the self-alienated Spirit, needs are given, persist, and are immediately renewed upon satisfaction. But they do not undergo immediate qualitative development. Nor, since they are immunized from historical change, can they spawn qualitative changes in the institutional and social relationships that--more or less--address them. They can only repeat themselves, recurrently posing the selfsame demand on the selfsame source of supply. That source--nature and history--must either undergo

entropic depletion or "transcend" it.

Given their conception of need, both idealism and political economy posit an entropic universe and simultaneously deny it. The former denies it by turning the Spirit's consumption of history into an idealized, formal self-consumption that transcends history. The latter denies it by reconstructing "the material production of life itself" as a de-historicized model, an "economic system," whose ongoing movement is guaranteed irrationally by transcendent consumption. Thus a deus ex machina, as Marx says, "actually belongs outside economics except insofar as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure and initiates the whole process anew."[59]

Rooted in an unhistorical, non-developmental, self-repetitive conception of need as a mode of consumption, idealism and political economy alike re-present social relationships unhistorically. Social life is predominantly a mode of consumption and, thereby, self-depleting; the ongoing fulfillment of needs through consumption devours the very source of their potential fulfillment. And yet, it is precisely this unhistorical, nondevelopmental treatment of needs which strategically enables both paradigms--whether consciously or as self-deception--to deny to themselves the entropic self-depletion which otherwise would logically ensue on an irreversible, historical account. In sum, once needs are treated in this way, social life necessarily is represented as a world of irremediable scarcity, whether scarcity is rendered dynamically as entropic self-depletion, or is embalmed for eternity through a model that--like idealism and political economy's--mandates a lifetime of repetition instead of one of ongoing, qualitative, historical development.

As we read Marx, needs are neither given nor, like Tantalus, immutably fixed in an eternal self-repetition without fulfillment or self-development. Needs are thoroughly historical and, thereby, developmental. Once more, needs are human; they are not reified, self-subsistent mechanisms that somehow abide within humans. Needs are "productive forces": they are inextricably interwoven and bound up with historically-specific processes of production. They are inextricable from productive, purposive activity, and must be grasped as productive activities themselves. And, finally, needs are social: Marx renders human needs as so many social relationships that are socially and historically produced. Equally crucial is that needs, in turn, actively produce qualitative differences in and through the daily ensemble of historically specific, interpersonal social relationships through which they have been developed. Produced and producing, needing is an historically specific social relationship whose history is the course of its qualitative transformations in the marrow of "ordinary life."

For Marx, then, history itself is ongoing human development produced through a dialectical relationship of needs and their fulfillment (or not) through people's producing activities. The German Ideology offers a luminous display of this:

> Since we are dealing with the Germans, who are devoid of premises, we must begin by stating the first premise, of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history." But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as

> thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life.[60]

Merely having needs is not an historical phenomenon. Sustaining human life, however, is an historical act: a human possibility achieved only socially, through producing activities that satisfy needs. By contrast, human life--unlike the life of the Absolute Spirit or, alternatively, the life of the economy--is not automatically self-sustaining. It requires other people producing and caring for needs. Accordingly, satisfying needs is necessarily an historically-specific social accomplishment. It presupposes producing, "the production of means to satisfy these needs." Furthermore, satisfying needs produces a qualitatively different ensemble of needs for a different kind of satisfaction. Need-satisfaction is not terminal. It does not produce or leave a void. It is not an act that depletes as its consummates. It is not merely reducible to an act of consumption. Instead, fulfilling needs is producing: producing a qualitative difference in the world, a new kind of social relationship, namely, new needs.

That is, fulfilling needs produces a transformed mode of needing. For Marx, producing new needs is an inseparable moment of that very (first) historical act that fulfills needs. We cite <u>The German Ideology</u>:

> The second point is that the satisfaction of the first need, the action of satisfying and the instrument of satisfaction which has been acquired, leads to new needs; and this creation of new needs is the first historical act.[61]

As we read Marx, then, fulfilling needs <u>is</u> history. Fulfilling needs <u>is</u> qualitative development; it develops needs.

Fulfilling needs is negentropy: it is not merely an occasion that automatically repeats the identical cycle whereby the same need gets satisfied, once again, in the same way. On this account, history is no longer a Sisyphusian fate of incessant repetion (e.g., the dark side of the Absolute Spirit is its eternal self-consumption). By producing qualitatively new needs, need fulfillment is no longer reducible to the depletion by consumption of a finite world-object (e.g., the life boat ideology of the neo-Malthusians). Instead, need-fulfillment is human beings producing their history together in a way that makes possible the ongoing qualitative transformation of their needs as well as their mode of fulfillment. Marx states this in The German Ideology:

> Thus it is quite obvious from the start that there exists a materialist connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and which is as old as men themselves. This connection is ever taking on new forms, and thus presents a "history" irrespective of the existence of any political or religious nonsense which would especially hold men together.[62]

Implicit, then, in this historical activity of satisfying needs is producing new needs that intend new modes of need-fulfilment. Since, in our reading, history is the activity of fulfilling needs, satisfying needs produces a qualitatively new need. This new need requires a new mode of fulfillment. It thereby embodies the need for a new history. The historical fulfillment of this need is not accomplished automatically.

Reconstructing history in the Sisyphusian mode construes activity as a non-developmental process of repetition whose predominant moment (and theoretical category) is consumption. Need is formulated as self-renewing consumption (or, to stay with the Sisyphus metaphor,

self-consumption) irrevocably rooted to a finite (world-) object-in-itself which it must deplete. Historical existence is thereby construed as a vale of eternal, irremediable scarcity. In this way, bourgeois historiography becomes a rationalization of entropy as if it were a social reality principle. The critique of Sisyphusian fatality is the production of a Promethean history--Prometheus, the hero of Marx's doctoral dissertation. It is a history of human activity construed as a process of ongoing qualitative development whose predominant moment (and theoretical category) is production (in Marx's sense). It is a history that actively refuses to turn human needs against themselves. It is a history that refuses to reduce social life to a bad joke whereby people destroy the very possibility of their continued survival, let alone development, merely by meeting their extant needs--let alone by wanting more and desiring differently. It is a history that does not apologize for human beings needing and, thereby, existing at all. Nor is it an <u>apologia</u> for a scarcity-bound form of social life whereby people must apologize or suffer for needing as a condition for even their partial fulfillment.

Indeed, as a Promethean history, it is a history of human beings' struggle for fulfillment, a history produced without apology or tears, as it presupposes the fulfillment of need as a birthright. A Promethean history is not a passivity, a record of struggles lost and won. It is itself a <u>praxis</u>: an active struggle for an historical possibility--the possibility of making the fulfillment of need unexceptional, an historical given. In that fulfilling need develops need qualitatively, a Promethean history develops negentropically wherever history decrees scarcity as its silent testament. In

strategic contrast, then, to a Sisyphusian history, a Promethean history replaces irony with praxis.

In an open-ended account, history is an object-in-birth. A rich totality is a proto-abundant history, a history through which post-scarcity development is made possible. As a moment of theorizing, its version of history and display of historical development are constituted as a strategy for need-fulfillment. The history which a rich totality is entails a fundamental reorientation of the relationships amongst past, present and future. As a moment of praxis, it is negentropic historical activity, necessarily engaged in political struggle, as it embodies and advocates present needs which require, in turn, new historical modes of fulfillment. Rich totality, then, is a new mode of production in the making. It entails and is made possible by a new way of being human together. Fulfilling needs through forms, practices, and social relations of production that are progressively freed from historically enforced scarcity.

In The Communist Manifesto mode of production is formulated in a way that self-consciously posits both man's "real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind"[63] at the heart of historical development. Marx puts it like this in The German Ideology:

> The production of life, both of one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a twofold relation: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relation--social in the sense that it denotes the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a "productive force."[64]

This dual connection of men is a "history of humanity," "a materialist

connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production." As Marx further states, "this connection is ever taking on new forms, and thus presents a 'history' irrespective of the existence of any political or religious nonsense which would especially hold men together."[65] Capitalism as simultaneously mode of production and mode of co-operation is negentropic human development deformed by class predation. It is self-repudiating development. It is a form of life "in which coercion and monopolisation of social development (including its material and intellectual advantages) by one portion of society at the expense of the other"[66] reigns as its predominant moment--the production of capital in its social significance. Since Capital is an internally related, social relationship of interdependent production, Capital, in this sense, is vampirism. It is a mode of co-operation whereby the expansion of wealth and fulfillment of needs for one sector of society is the plunder of the time and energies that would otherwise fulfill needs as the wealth and lifeblood of its host. Capitalism, however, is also formulated by Marx as a rich totality, a mode of production which presages abundant development as an historical possibility.[67]

The qualitative transformation of capital, its moment of departure, is achieved through a revolutionary praxis which thereby produces a new mode of cooperation, communism, as its moment of return. This "finishing point," communism, constitutes a new historical departure, the "new gathering point" Marx seeks in the mood of urgency with which he addresses Ruge. Indeed, as Marx puts it in "Private Property and Communism" (1844 Manuscripts):

> Communism. . .consequently, for the next stage of historical development, [is] a real and necessary factor in the emancipation and rehabiliation of man. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism is not itself the goal of human development--the form of human society.[68]

Communism here is not the end of history, an object-in-itself, but its beginning as a mode of human development no longer bound to scarcity. For our Marx, then, communism is human beings developing abundantly, people producing a new history by fulfilling newly developing needs in newly developing ways.

Capitalism, then, "the society that rests on exchange value",[69] is formulated as a mode of co-operation whereby one person's needs are fulfilled at another's expense. It is, thereby, a self-depleting, self-negating mode of human development. Its highest standard of conduct is "fairness" rooted in scarcity and embodied through exchange as <u>quid pro quo</u>: I give you something you lack and I have, for something I lack and you have.

Communism, alternatively, is formulated as an historically specific mode of co-operation which, on the ground of its no longer scarcity-bound development of productive forces, makes possible a qualitatively different ensemble of social relations from the "mutual robbery" institutionalized as capitalist interdependency. It makes possible man's "relations with his kind" no longer deformed by class predations. It makes possible a mode of need-fulfillment which is sundered from the invariant vampirism whereby one develops through producing the other's underdevelopment. Its supreme virtue transcends mere fairness. Indeed, fairness is invoked as a strategic defense of an isolated egoism whose "life chances" in a vale of scarce resources

would otherwise radically decrease in the unregulated competitive sweepstakes. By contrast with fairness, a communist mode of cooperation is expansive rather than defensive. Its characteristic experience is the regular fulfillment of one's needs through mutual cooperation with other people, rather than the dread of their denial spawned by the competition for scarce resources. Indeed, what a post-scarcity mode of production makes possible as its genuinely different contribution to genuinely different human development is the historical possibility, not of fairness but, of loving as its unremarkable, indeed characteristic mode of cooperation.

For Marx, as we read him, love is the cardinal social relationship made possible by a mode of human development that transcends scarcity. It is not reducible to a quid pro quo, a regulated, defensive exchange whereby giving is really a sacrificial "giving up." Love rather, is protean and expansive, a mode of ongoing cooperation that proliferates as it is given for itself, quid pro quid. To cite the 1844 Manuscripts:

> Let us assume man to be man, and his relation to the world to be a human one. Then love can only be exchange for love, trust for trust, etc. . . . Every one of your relations to man and to nature must be a specific expression, corresponding to the object of your will, of your real individual life. If you love without evoking love in return, i.e., if you are not able, by the manifestation of yourself as a loving person, to make yourself a beloved person, then your love is impotent and a misfortune.[70]

For Marx, then, abundant development is produced through and as loving, a profuse, "productive force." It is a social relationship, produced and producing in and as a new mode of cooperation, a truly rich totality. To cite love, moreover, as the intended, central human

relationship of a new, communist history is neither to sentimentalize nor to trivialize Marx's accomplishment. This is not a divine love that transcends history. Nor is it a romantic love that renders itself a scarce resource by reserving itself for a single idealized object which it would privately possess. No, Marx's love is revolutionary praxis. Its passion and intention is to make a history which makes possible the ongoing fulfillment and, thereby, unlimited qualitative development of human needs. It is, thereby, negentropy.

Indeed, that love is best characterized as Promethean: its foremost passion and expression is fulfilling human needs. It is, thereby, abundance. It generates more of itself, at a qualitatively higher level, through fulfilling needs. As we read Marx, the strategic intention of his theorizing as a moment of revolutionary political praxis is to produce a history that genuinely makes loving possible as a mode of human development. The minimum precondition of this historically specific possibility is the elimination of scarcity as an outer limit that seemingly ratifies human despair.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TEN

1. Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft), trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 100.

2. Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," trans. Ronald Rogowski, in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 12-13.

3. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 100.

4. Ibid., p. 101.

5. Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 12-13.

6. Ibid., p. 14.

7. Ibid., p. 15.

8. Ibid.

9. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Baer and Company, trans. Richard Dixon and Clemens Dutt (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 110.

10. Michael E. Brown, "Ideology and the Metaphysics of Content" (Unpublished Manuscript, Summer 1981), p. 19.

11. Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," p. 15.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. George Orwell, 1984, (New York: New American Library, 1981), p. 32.

15. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978), p. 119.

16. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

17. Ibid., p. 118.

18. Ibid., p. 114.

19. Ibid.

20. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 106.

21. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 118.

22. Ibid., p. 109.

23. Ibid., p. 115.

24. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 105.

25. Ibid., pp. 107-108.

26. Ibid., p. 106.

27. Ibid., p. 107.

28. Ibid., pp. 106-107.

29. Ibid., p. 107.

30. Ibid.

31. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), rev. ed., p. 60.

32. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 100.

33. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 109.

34. Ibid.

35. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 101.

36. Ibid., p. 159.

37. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 116-117.

38. Ibid., p. 116.

39. Ibid., pp. 116-17.

40. Ibid. p. 117.

41. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 100.

42. Ibid., p. 159.

43. Ibid.

44. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 117.

45. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 159.

46. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto, ed. Samuel H. Beer (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 12.

47. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

48. Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 3, ed. Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 815.

49. Ibid., p. 818.

50. Ibid., p. 820.

51. Ibid., pp. 883-84.

52. E. P. Thompson, "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization," New Left Review, 121 (May-June, 1980), pp. 3-31.

53. Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," p. 12.

54. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 94.

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

56. Ibid., pp. 62-3.

57. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 85.

58. Ibid., pp. 88-9.

59. Ibid., p. 89.

60. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 47.

61. Ibid., p. 48.

62. Ibid., p. 49.

63. Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 13.

64. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, pp. 48-9.

65. Ibid., p. 49.

66. Marx, Capital, vol. 3, p. 819.

67. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 60.

68. Karl Marx, "Private Property and Communism," Third Manuscript of the Economical and Philosophical Manuscripts in T.B. Bottomore, ed. and trans., Karl Marx: Early Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 167.

69. Marx, Grundrisse, p. 159.

70. Marx, "Money," trans. and ed. T.B. Bottomore, in Karl Marx: Early Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), pp. 193-94.

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