

回到马克思

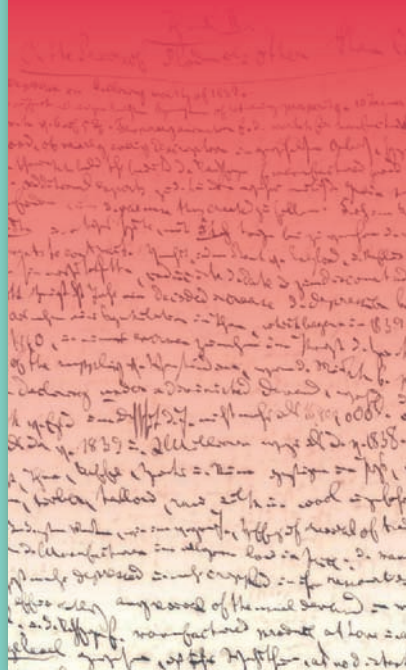
经济学语境中的哲学话语

张一兵

Zhang Yibing

Back to Marx

Changes of
Philosophical
Discourse in the
Context of Economics



Universitätsverlag Göttingen

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Changes of Philosophical Discourse
in the Context of Economics

Edited by Oliver Corff

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Zhang Yibing (originally named Zhang Yibin), was born in Nanjing in March 1956 although his ancestral home is Chiping in Shandong. In August of 1981, he graduated with a degree in philosophy from Nanjing University. He later went on to receive a doctorate in philosophy, and currently teaches philosophy and tutors doctoral candidates at Nanjing University. He is Chancellor of Nanjing University and director of the Marxist Social Theory Research Center. Additionally, he is a permanent member of the Chinese Academy of Marx-Engels Research, Chinese Academy of Dialectical Materialism, a permanent member of the Chinese Academy of the History of Marxist Philosophy, chairman of the Philosophy Academy of Jiangsu Province, and chairman of the Marxist Academy of Jiangsu Province. His representative works include: *Back to Lenin, A Post-textological Reading of 'Philosophical Notes'* (Jiangsu People's Press, 2008); *The Impossible Truth of Being: Image of Lacanian Philosophy* (The Commercial Press, 2006), *A Deep Plough Of Texts* (Vol. 1, RUC Press, 2004; Vol. 2, RUC Press, 2008); *Problematic, Symptom Reading and Ideology: A Textological Reading of Althusser* (Central Edition and Translation Press, 2003); *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic* (Wuhan University Press, 3rd edition, 2010); *Atonal Dialectical Fantasia: A Textological Reading of Adorno's 'Negative Dialectics'* (Beijing Sanlian Bookstore, 2001).

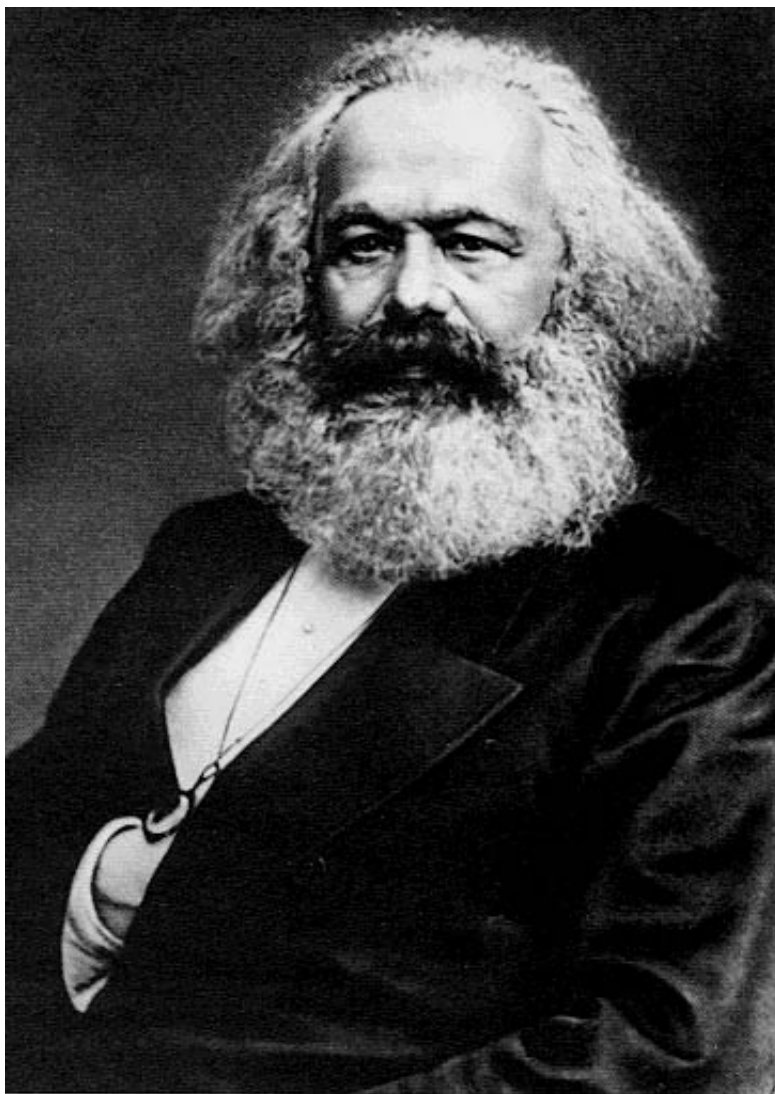


Figure 1: Karl Marx



Figure 2: Zhang Yibing posing at Marx's home in Trier

To my beloved father, Zhang Shicheng

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Editor's Preface

Introduction

Karl Marx (1818-1883) is perhaps the single most influential philosopher, writer and political activist of the 19th century. His ideas have shaped the course of modern history and have affected deeply the livelihood of millions of people around the globe. In numerous countries, including China, one of the most populous nations on earth, political systems and socio-economic orders have been established with reference to his name and thought. Given Marx's immense influence and contribution to the shaping of our modern world, the interpretation of his oeuvre has been subject to intense scholarly and political debate, often driven by considerations not immediately found in Marx's opus itself.

Prof. Zhang aims to uncover Marx's philosophical development via a detailed study of Marx's notes and the literature he digested in the course of his construction of thought. *Back to Marx* is much more than just an extensive and thorough piece of philosophical research. Perhaps without any intention, it is as much a testimonial for the profound scholarly and philosophical exchange between China and Europe that has been shaping our worlds of thought at both ends of this bridge of ideas.

The enormous ploughing of texts, to borrow a phrase from Prof. Zhang, required for this book, was in part possible because a majority of works by those authors essential for Marx have been translated into Chinese in a great collective effort lasting many decades.

As an editor, I consider it important for the Western reader to be offered not only the immediate perspective into the author's text but also to be enabled to fathom the ample treasure of Chinese translations of Western works on economics, philosophy and policy which were consulted in the process of writing this book.

State of Work

The English text presented here reflects the 2nd edition of the Chinese version (*Hui dao Makesi*, "Back to Marx") as published in 2009. The most notable difference between the first and second editions is the approximately 300 footnotes and references added by the author in addition to the original 1,250 notes. Great care was taken to include these notes as well as all substantial changes in text.

Editorial Principles

A polyphonous choir of voices

The author builds on Marx's intellectual tradition of structuring notes and excerpts in a manner allowing deep insight into his thought process. We read the author's philosophical elaboration, the quotations of Marx's texts, the quotations of texts quoted by Marx, we see the personal opinions and reflections by the author and the authorities he quotes on the subject under discussion — all separated by different typeface and set apart clearly by typographical conventions.

Furthermore, Prof. Zhang's text offers a rewarding insight into China's rich literary heritage; more than once there are short portions of text which, at first glance, seem to leave the realm of sober scholarly discussion, but which, at second glance, are excursions into the riches of Chinese poetry, giving access to a vast array of philosophical, cultural and historical allusions. The editor considered it helpful to the Western reader to highlight some of these sources of inspiration with his own footnotes, duly marked as additions by the editor.

Translation of selected quotations

In numerous cases, the Chinese translation of critical quotations (e.g. Hegel's) was still reasonably close to the original intention, but any attempt to produce a meaningful re-translation would inevitably shift the subject, the focus of attention etc. in subtle yet unpredictable ways, rendering the final outcome insufficiently comprehensible despite maintaining an air of profundity. I considered it necessary to translate these quotes of critical importance into English by departing from the German original rather than by departing from the Chinese text.

Citations and bibliography

An extensive array of Western and Chinese literature was used in the process of writing this book. At least four major areas can be identified: the works by Marx and Engels, the vast amount of literature Marx read and excerpted from, the works of scholars writing about Marx, and finally works by Chinese (and a few Japanese) scholars. Dividing the bibliography into these major groups was considered useful to the reader interested in aspects of Marx's writings, the history of economics, or later philosophers.

With regard to Chinese translations of Marx's and Engels' as well as Western scholarly works, the bibliography always lists both: the translation originally referred to by Prof. Zhang, and the Western language source. For this purpose, the huge majority of footnotes contains bibliographical references to original and translation. Sometimes this results in Chinese text (authors, titles, editors, publishers) appear in footnotes, but there is no Chinese text which remains untranslated. The Western reader only interested in the philosophical discussion can safely ignore these references while the reader with a specific interest to the transfer of Western thought to China can plough through this material.

Virtually all Western language sources of Chinese translations were verified, notably all citations from Marx. Even though Thomas Mitchell, the translator, consulted the authoritative English translations, page references for Marx quotations were based on MEGA 2, MEGA 1 or MEW (in order of precedence). In a few cases, I had to consult other sources (journals, yearbooks). The same principle was applied to other sources in Western languages. I always tried to consult the original text, whether in German, English, French or Russian, in order to verify the references. As mentioned above, multiple translations (from foreign language to Chinese, then from Chinese to English) have a tendency to introduce subtle shifts which should be borne in mind when consulting any of the original sources.

Words of Thanks

The process of preparing this book for publication was, in fact, a showcase of division of labor, including the division of intellectual labor as sketched by Babbage, from whom I drew huge inspirations in the organization of work helpful for preparing this book. Author, translator, editor and publisher had to coordinate and collaborate, not necessarily in the same time frame, but certainly on the same subject. I wish to thank Prof. Fang for her support of communication about those all too many “last questions” which appeared in this process. Thomas Mitchell helped me with some last-minute translations and contributed by clarifying some questions I had about the best choice of terminology. Derek Scally’s help in translating numerous quotations of German philosophers, most notably Hegel’s, into English, was indispensable. Jutta Pabst, Göttingen University Press, gave me all administrative support and helped me locate some critical books.

It is highly probable that I introduced new errors into this book; either due to my shortcomings in the knowledge of literature, my shortcomings in comprehension, or a lack of attention to detail. Whatever shortcoming it is, I claim and accept responsibility as my hands were the last to touch this text.

Oliver Corff, Berlin 2014

Preface

As this book neared completion, I was reading *The Archaeology of Knowledge*,¹ by the postmodern master Michel Foucault. Foucault wrote that he expounded the concept of “the archaeology of knowledge” in order to try to understand the mystery of “the stigma of tempered dislocation,” or discontinuity; a notion that has been intentionally omitted by traditional historians of philosophical history (Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [Oxford: Taylor / Francis, 2002], 9). According to Foucault, traditional studies of philosophical history often undertook “descriptions of concentric circles”; that is to say, in describing a concept or a philosopher, traditionalists often employ linear logic in narrating a continued, homogeneous, incrementally developing whole; one with both a beginning and an end. Though simple, this method of description can be deceptive. The most true and fundamental things in the development of a given philosophy exist within the discontinuities in the theoretical discourse, hover on the periphery of the theoretical explanation, and become active in the unique heterogeneity in the theoretical logic. Because of this, Foucault argued that one must accord special attention to the hidden, nameless discontinuities and inconsistencies in any philosophy or philosopher. Of course for the most part, my reading of history is plainly different from the truncated explanations of quasi-structuralists such as Foucault or Althusser. That being said, I echo Foucault’s attention to discontinuity. In fact, what sets this book on Marx apart from all previous works on the subject is my particular attention to the discontinuity in the development of Marxist thought. That said, **this discontinuous explanation comes after affirming the inner continuity in the development of Marx’s philosophy.** In fact, the development of Marxism in the real world has been based on the discontinuousness found in breaking out of the “concentric circles,” without which Lenin’s “October Revolution” would never have taken place, Mao Zedong’s strategy of “encircling the cities from the rural areas” would not have happened, and Deng Xiaoping, a contemporary Chinese Marxist, would not have instituted a market economy with Chinese socialist characteristics. This is, evidently, the dialectic of “source” and “flow.”

As a member of a new generation of Marxist scholars, I have often found myself pondering why Marxist theorists in Russia, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China, despite having painstakingly poured so many times over the classical texts of Marx and Lenin for nearly 150 years, still seem to be so far from truly understanding them. In the course of my recent research, I believe I have discovered new answers. It should be noted that the weak and halting state in which the current research finds itself has been aggravated by a lack of access to the recently published second edition of *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels* titled *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* in German, referred to below as *MEGA 2*)², which happens to be the foundational text for this volume. The research has been

¹Cited after the Chinese translation of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault [Mixie'er Fuke 米歇尔·福科], *Zhishi kaoguxue*, 知识考古学, trans. Xie Qiang 谢强 and Ma Yue 马月 (Beijing 北京: Sanlian shudian 三联书店 [Joint Publishing], 1998), p. 9.

²For more information on MEGA 2, please refer to the second appendix of this book.

further hampered by problems with interpretive methods. In other words, using different words and interpretive approaches when dealing with the same texts can produce fundamentally divergent results. In terms of the textual research in *Back to Marx*, this implies that different interpretations of Marx's works will produce utterly dissimilar theoretical perspectives. This is my reason for first proposing different interpretive models in the introduction to this book. To avoid misguiding my readers, I would like to state before I begin that my interpretive method is not simply a misappropriation of **any one model** in modern science or philosophy. To borrow a well-known Maslow quip from his *Motivation and Personality*, "Is the sandwich I ate an hour ago the cause of the words I now set down, or was it the coffee I drank, or what I ate yesterday, or was it the lesson in writing I got years ago, or the book I read a week ago?" Maslow continues, "It would certainly seem obvious that any important expression, such as writing a paper in which one is deeply interested, is not caused by anything in particular, but is an expression of, or a creation of the whole personality, which in turn is an effect of almost everything that has ever happened to it."³ As such, it is impossible for me to calculate just how many modern scientific cognitive models and theoretical methods, not to mention deep-rooted Chinese cultural characteristics, have found their way into my theoretical logic.

The unique research perspective of this book lies in my re-exploration of the shift in Marx's **philosophical discourse from the perspective of his economic research**. From the texts which I have read from China and abroad, this very well may be the first time since the death of Marx and Engels that a comprehensive study of the development of Marxist thought has been undertaken that combines economics with philosophy.⁴ While this has brought me great gratification, more importantly, the publishing of *MEGA 2* and compilation of Marx's notes on economics has become, for the first time, the subject of Chinese Marxist philosophical research. These notes, written in the form of excerpted reflections on what Marx learned in the course of his studies, have guided the textual research on his notes and manuscripts, as well as the comparative interpretive studies on his writings and publicly published works. It follows that this distinctive theoretical research perspective has determined the **academic limitations** of this book. As Heidegger put it, "In revealing, one cannot help but conceal; that which is illuminated by the light of reason is still darkness." Additionally, it is necessary for me to avoid the topics which I have already touched on in *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*.⁵

³Abraham M. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 301 (Chinese transl.: *Dongji yu renga*, p. 366).

⁴Other books on the development of Marx's thought include *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, by Alfred Schmidt, prominent member of the second generation of the Frankfurt School (1971). This volume is a philosophical discussion based on Marx's economics achievements during his mid-late years. Also in this category we can include Schmidt's *The Concept of Epistemology in Economic Criticism*, the influential *Reading Capital* by French Marxists Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar (1968), *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World* by Czech scholar Karel Kosík (1976), and *Yi wuhualun wei shizhou du* Ziben lun by Japanese scholar Hiromatsu Wataru (Nagoya 1986).

⁵Yibing Zhang [张一兵], *Makesi lishi bianzhengfa de zhuti xiangdu*, 马克思历史辩证法的主体向

Astute readers may find that the writing of this book shares many structural similarities with *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. Both works explore the deeper meaning of Marx's texts, a **situating** meaning that is hidden beneath the surface words and phrases: this is referred to as the **latent logic within Marx's philosophical discourse**. Gaston Bachelard once declared that the only true science is knowledge of hidden things. I have always believed in and been enchanted by this statement. However, because of my unusual method of writing and thinking, I will inevitably lose a significant number of readers who are accustomed to direct cognitive models. For this I express my regrets. Nevertheless, through this writing experiment, I hope to push our textual research one step deeper. In particular, I hope to release Marxist textology (the study of original works) from the grip of a dogmatism which has afflicted it so long that it has reached the level of "somatization."⁶

In the first chapter of *Back to Marx*, I focus on clarifying the philosophical discourse which has been hidden in economic theory and which can be found in the background of Marx's philosophical reform. Unlike past interpretive approaches, I have independently advanced the viewpoint that early bourgeois political economy, especially the latent philosophical premise of classical economics, recognized the fundamental place of material production in social life. These disciplines abstracted **social materialism**, a study of objective social relationships and economic laws. At the same time, I have made significant theoretical progress in researching the underlying relationships between Hegel's philosophy and classical economics, as well as in researching the economics criticisms of bourgeois society put forth by Sismondi, Proudhon, Hess and young Engels. I believe that this theoretical innovation is brought about by studying Marxist philosophy with a **subsidiary awareness**⁷ of economics.

Our discussion of Marx begins with young Marx's first systematic study of economics in his *Paris Notes*. Beginning in chapter two, I explore the difficult question of why in 1842, when young Marx first underwent a philosophical shift, he became a materialist and a communist but not a Marxist. At this point, in addition to refuting Western "Marxologie," I also rebut Western humanist Marxism and the ambiguous scholars of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. With a change in the narrative logic, the underlying, latent philosophical discourse hidden within an economics context begins to become clear. In analyzing Marx's attitude towards classical economics in *Paris Notes*, we can clearly see how under the influence of humanism, his proletariat political criticism briefly intersected with social materialism. We are also able to observe the formation of a humanist interpretation of history based on alienation, which began with *Comments on*

度 [The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic], 2nd (Nanjing 南京: Nanjing daxue chubanshe 南京大学出版社 [Nanjing University Press], 2002).

⁶"Somatization" is a concept frequently employed by Pierre Bourdieu. It describes a tacit level of consciousness that controls the embedded individual psychosome. Refer to Bourdieu's *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*.

⁷Here I borrow the concept of subsidiary awareness, developed by Michael Polanyi, the British philosopher whose research focused on tacit knowledge. The term refers to the latent, supporting frame of reference behind subjective consciousness. Polanyi believes that it is an integral element of tacit cognition. Refer to my article "Polanyi on Tacit Cognition."

James Mill, Elements of Political Economy (abbreviated below as *Comments on Mill*) at the end of *Paris Notes*, and continued through his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (abbreviated below as *1844 Manuscripts*). Relative to similar research found in *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historic Dialectics*, in my discussion of the *1844 Manuscript* in the third chapter of this book I make theoretical headway in my elaboration of young Marx's **humanist social phenomenology**. I place this concept as the **first theoretical high point** in the development of Marx's philosophy. Building upon the foundation of Sun Bokui's concept of "double logic," I identify the origin of the latent logic of economic social materialism, which stemmed from objective reality under the influence of humanism. It can be seen that in the theoretical debate over the humanization of Marxism, my line of thinking is naturally clearer, more microanalytic, and more scientific than Althusser's "Fracture Theory," a copy of Bachelard's epistemology, as well as the purely philosophical babblings and metaphysical dogmatism of the quasi-structuralists. This is the most significant support that can be offered for Sun Bokui's "Indexdouble-turn theory."⁸

In chapters four through seven, I identify the formation of what is as Marxist materialism in its broad sense and historical dialectics, which I contend constitutes the **second theoretical high point** in Marxist philosophy. My theoretical construction takes the form of theoretical reevaluation, which comes after a discussion of the economic underpinnings of Marx's philosophical revolution. First, through a thorough discussion of *Brussels Notes A*, I suggest that the qualification of practice in *Theses on Feuerbach* (abbreviated below as *Theses*) is not the result of simple philosophical addition (materialism + dialectics), but rather a broader recapitulation of industrial productive forces. This point is only made clear through an economics interpretation of *Draft of an Article on Friedrich List's book: Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie* (abbreviated below as *On List*). Second, based upon an analysis of *Brussels Notes B* and *Manchester Notes*, I advance for the first time the perspective of the qualification of the "ontology" of history in the general theory of historical materialism. This is the most important but most often veiled element of the manuscript of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. Third, I identify two lines of thinking which exist in *The German Ideology*, namely the separate establishment of philosophical logic and an economic criticism of reality. Fourth, in studying the *Letter from Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov* (abbreviated below as *Marx to Annenkov*), I prove for the first time that Marxist philosophy contains the "given," singular, space-time situation, which constitutes the essence of the historical dialectics.

In chapters eight and nine, I make my most important theoretical contributions of this book. I take a ruminant, philosophical approach to Marx's *1857–1858 Economics Manuscripts* (referred to below as *Grundrisse*), in which he constructed a critical **historical phenomenology** based on a scientific theoretical foundation. I have noticed that in the philosophical revolution which took place in Marx be-

⁸On behalf of the "double-turn theory" of Marx's philosophical thought as well the concept of "double logic" in Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* see Sun Bokui's *Exploring the Path* and the author's *Subjective Dimension* (later republished by Nanjing University Press in 2002; author's note for the second edition of this book).

tween 1845 and 1847, while Marx was abandoning the critical logic of humanist alienation, he was actually refuting the legitimacy of **phenomenological cognition** on the basis of positivist science. However, in the process of meticulously gathering economic data for his *1850–1853 London Notes* (abbreviated below as *London Notes*), he realized for the first time in a scientific context that what he had hitherto identified as the social historical form of the “bourgeois society” (civil society) was in reality a capitalist society, whose power ruling structure was based on production relations of capital. This was the first time he realized the complexity of the inverted and reified nature of the economic relations in real capitalism. Accordingly, at the same time as he surpassed the limits of classical economic ideology, Marx reestablished historical phenomenology on the basis of **the special theory of historical materialism** and **historical epistemology**. Here the issues with which Marx was most concerned were no longer the principles of the general theory of historical materialism, but rather how to see to the core of this inverted pseudo-phenomenon from the perspective of narrowly defined historical materialism; in other words, how to peel back layer after layer of phenomena and pseudo-phenomena in order to discover the essence and laws that truly exist. This is because the inverted, objective alienation which takes place in the natural state of capitalist economic reality must be analyzed through the non-perceptual, un-ready lens of critical phenomenology. Here the historical phenomenology of which we speak is not the subjective phenomena with which Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit concerned itself, neither is it the form of humanist social phenomenology that focused on refuting real economic phenomena that was espoused originally by young Marx and Feuerbach. This is because the premise of Marx’s historical phenomenology at the time was the objective inversion of social relationships. This inversion cannot be accomplished in the realm of abstract notions, but rather must be accomplished with material change. The scientific phenomenology of social history elucidates the historical formation of the inversions of capitalist economic phenomena; its goal is to uncover the objective, inverted social relationships of capitalist modes of production. In so doing, it hopes to discover the secret of capitalist economic exploitation. Strictly speaking, Marx had to face material, representations of material, externalized relations, inverted relations, reified relations, non-dominant relations (such as past feudal relations), all of which were extremely complex. It was necessary for Marx to find original relations (simple relations) through the method of scientific, historical abstraction, before gradually exposing the true, complex relations and inverted social structure of his day. The process of finding original relations was not an intuitive or abstract reflection, but rather a reconstructed reflection that had passed through the **medium** of practical historical dialectic. Here it is not only necessary to gradually break down the barriers in social relations caused by inversion and thus return to prehistoric social relations, but also to gradually return from these abstract relations to the inverted, complex totality of economic phenomena. I contend that historical phenomenology is the most important philosophical result of Marx’s *Grundrisse*. I also argue that historical phenomenology is the **third and greatest theoretical highpoint** in the development of Marxist philosophy.

To put it simply, from a textological foundation, this volume describes the changes in Marx's latent philosophical discourse — hidden within the context of his economic research — in order to finally “return to Marx”; a slogan touted by many contemporary Chinese researchers. I have realized that this begins to approach that profound maxim once asserted by the great master Hegel: a result without a path leading to it is lifeless. I hope this work constitutes the veritable beginning of an escape from the fetters of the hitherto unfounded scholarship conducted in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I do not wish to directly identify Marx's metaphor of the “dragon's seed” or the “flea”; so doing would only be embarrassing. Of course, I must also point out that by proposing a “return to Marx,” I am not attempting to solidify a kind of fundamentalist dogmatic precept, but rather opening a new level of understanding in Marx's texts. In so doing, my research has produced results worthy of gratification. This is because in discovering the early theoretical foundation in Marxist philosophy, which has so perplexed me since the 1980s, I am finally able to return to the questions in which I am truly interested, such as Marx's transition to the contemporary era.

Zhang Yibing
August 7, 1998
Hejialong, Wuchang

Introduction

It is common knowledge that one of the most important topics within the study of Marxism is the investigation of the fundamental nature of Marxist philosophy. Though there was already a broad range of interpretations of this issue before the 1930s, these all relied upon a single textual source: the works of Marx and Engels published publicly later in their careers. The result of basing all research on a single source is that in the traditional framework of research on Marxist philosophy, what we inherit from the early 20th century is an anonymous and half-latent doctrine of “whatever;” that is, that “whatever” Marx and Engels said **must be truth**. This has given rise to the erroneous belief that researchers of Marxist philosophy are free to **uniformly** cite anything they desire from volume one to volume fifty of *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels*, without giving any special historical explanation. This illegitimate research method can still be found in some of today’s writing.

Before the death of Lenin, very little attention was paid to the early works of Marx and Engels. However, during the 1920s and 30s, due in large part to the publication of a prodigious amount of young Marx’s early writings, even those assertions about the development of Marx’s thought which had once appeared to be the most uncontroversial began to become increasingly complex. Both in China and abroad, differing and sometimes even completely opposite explanations of “the true meaning of Marxist philosophy” began to surface. Most perplexing however, is that the proponents of these divergent opinions all claimed to rely on Marx’s first-hand texts. Here we find a kind of dominant ideological trend of Marxist “reform,” embodied by Western Marxologie, Eastern Marxism, Gorbachev in his reconfirmation of humanist socialism, and even by non-textual interpretations found in research on Marxist philosophy conducted in China. All of these thinkers acted under the guise of practical philosophy, practical humanism, and philosophy of subject value. I am of the opinion that this is a theoretical melee which has not truly attained a scientific level. Viewing the matter from a deeper theoretical context, the sorry state of current research has been caused by the influence of the attitude of unconsciously accepting “whatever [Marx wrote].” This acceptance has prevented us from reflecting on the possibility that the theoretical context of the early works of Marx and Engels **is not necessarily scientific**. When we base our research on young Marx’s early texts with this unquestioning acceptance, we have no doubts as to the scientific validity of Marx’s philosophical texts. More importantly, when identifying with a certain theoretical logic, we do not de-

fine our seemingly self-evident theoretical source or the theoretically unconscious subsidiary awareness upon which our arguments rely; this subsidiary awareness is none other than the multitude of explanatory contexts which have emerged after the 1930s in China and abroad. This has caused us to incorrectly and frivolously use the words “I believe that...” without first defining our theoretical boundaries. This current state of research can be likened unto a lily with no roots, which has no firm theoretical base. Such a state of affairs inevitably leads to the paralysis of research standards and the disappearance of scientific discussion.

The Five Great Interpretive Models: From Young Marx to Marxism

Before we begin a formal discussion of the central topics of this book, it is necessary to elucidate the existing logical baseline which defines the development of Marxist philosophy. I call this theoretical background “the five great interpretive models.” Only after this theoretical baseline has been expounded and defined can the perspective of my commentary become clear. In my text “Young Marx, the Humanist: An Obsolete Myth”⁹ I identified for the first time the five great interpretive models of the development of Marxist philosophy which exist today: the Western Marxologie Model, the Western Marxist-humanist Model, the Althusser Model, the model developed by Soviet scholars, and the Chinese model developed by Professor Sun Bokui. In the following paragraphs I will provide further explanation for these models.

The first interpretive model, the Western Marxologie Model, proposes the myth of **two Marxes**. Here, “Marxologie” refers to the research conducted by scholars who do not believe in Marxism but who study its texts as “objective” historical sources. *In actuality, this omniscient form of value neutrality is nothing but an ideological illusion.*¹⁰ While “Marxologie”¹¹ has existed since the 1950s, this research trend had already appeared even earlier in the West. It is common knowledge that as early as the 1920s, Western Marxologie scholars had already begun to identify the dichotomy between “young Marx” (represented by the *Communist Manifesto*) and “mature Marx” (represented by *Capital*). Thus, between 1924 and 1932, when *The German Ideology* as well as a large number of Marx’s pre-1845 early works were published (including *Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession*, *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* as well as literature he prepared while writing it, *Bonn Notes*, *Berlin Notes*, *Kreuznach Notes*, the manuscript of *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, and the *1844 Manuscripts* etc.), Western Marxologie scholars immediately began suggesting a new theoretical label. They dubbed the “newly discovered Marx,” or the “humanist Marx” found in the *1844 Manuscripts* the epitome of Marxist

⁹Zhang Yibing. “Young Marx, the Humanist: An Obsolete Myth”. *Seeking Truth*, 1996.

¹⁰It is surprising to see that this bourgeois pretendingly objective research method has achieved model status among some Chinese researchers. They simply will not realize that a “value-neutral” **Marxologie** is contrary to Marxist belief. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

¹¹“Marxologie” is a term coined by French scholar Maximilien Rubel. In 1959, Rubel named the new journal that he founded and for which he was chief editor, *Studies in Marxologie*.

philosophy, claiming that the humanist young Marx was the most valuable. On the other hand, to the mature Marx of *Capital*, they assigned such labels as stagnant and declining. The philosophy of the mature Marx was also seen as the theoretical basis for orthodox Marxism, upheld by communist leaders from Engels to Stalin. According to Marxologie philosophers, these “two Marxs” were mutually incompatible. While this is the basic tenet of the well-known “two Marxes” perspective, under closer analysis, it becomes evident that this viewpoint held by Western Marxologie is actually utterly complex and intricate.

The viewpoint of the well-known Marxologie scholar Maximilien Rubel can be summarized in one phrase: “Using Marx to criticize Marxism.” He in no way recognizes the legitimacy of Marxism. According to him, Marx himself never did approve any form of “Marxism” (once stating, “I am not a Marxist”). This is because the term “Marxism” originated during the First International, when members of the Bakunin faction coined it to attack Marx. Following the death of Marx, Engels himself did not accept the term at first, it was not until later that he tacitly acquiesced to this improper usage. Furthermore, Rubel denies Engels’ later summary of Marx’s two great discoveries, historical materialism and the theory of surplus value, because these form the foundation for the establishment of future, traditional Marxist theories, which Rubel also rejects. Instead, Rubel suggests organizing Marx’s discoveries into 18 essential points of logic.¹² He believes doing so confirms the rationality of the humanist dream of “utopianism,” which was developed from young Marx’s humanist philosophy. This has caused Rubel to believe that Marx’s primary legacy for humankind was that of a “moral clarion call.” Another Western Marxologie scholar, Iring Fetscher, also follows this moral line of argument; he openly promotes using the spirit of young Marx’s humanism to oppose Marxism, and in particular to criticize Stalinist Marxism. It should be evident that **the primary viewpoint of this interpretive model is a refutation of Marxism since Engels, as well as advocacy of young Marx’s humanist philosophy.** Thus originated the second error of Western Marxologie: “Engels is against Marx!”

We should note here that there have been some changes among later Western Marxologie scholars. For instance, many can now recognize the coexistence of the two kinds of Marxism: Marxist-humanism, sometimes referred to as critical Marxism, and the orthodox, ossified Marxism. However without exception, Western Marxologists support the former and refute the latter. Though the influence of Western Marxism has caused them to suggest reading Marx’s works as a “whole” (proposed by Shlomo Avineri), even in this they are still using Marx’s early works to explain his later ones. This idea of a “whole” is related to the second interpretive model outlined below.

The second interpretive model, the **Marxist-humanist Model**, emphasizes the perspective of Marxist-humanism found in Western Marxism. This is an important interpretive model of Marxist philosophy, one that is related to and yet distinct from Western Marxologie. *I contend that it is vitally important for Chinese theorists to properly define this model; because, whether consciously or unconsciously,*

¹²Joseph O’Malley and Keith Algozin, eds., *Rubel on Marx: Five Essays* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 183.

many of them are simply repeating its arguments at this time. Early Western Marxists such as Lukacs, Gramsci and Korsch, while sincerely restructuring their philosophical theories, nevertheless **tacitly** confirmed the subjectivity of history, using qualifications such as the totality, reification, practical philosophy, and the dialectic of subject and object to publicize the subjective aspects of Marxist philosophy. However, because most of Marx's early works were not published at the time, these Western Marxists were forced to rely on Marx's later mature works (such as *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*). It is even possible for us to say that they were not conscious of the distinction between "young Marx" and "mature Marxism." After the 1930s, however, as more and more of Marx's early works were being published, this theoretical perspective directly developed into an **overt** form of Marxist-humanism. This process was primarily realized during the second generation of Western Marxist scholars (such as early Fromm, Marcuse, and Lefebvre, as well as late Sartre). According to these researchers, there did not exist two distinct, antithetical Marxs as proposed by Western Marxologie scholars. Departing from earlier Marxologie, they claim to be true Marxists: however, they use only the *1844 Manuscripts* in an attempt to explain the whole of Marxist logic. **They contend that there is only one Marx — the humanist Marx, and that there is only one Marxism — the Marxism which holds the elimination of alienation and the liberation of man as its noblest aspiration.**¹³ In their line of philosophical thought, the formulation of Marxism took place in the *1844 Manuscript* (they accord little attention to young Marx before 1843). They directly identify Marx's a priori conception of history based on the alienation of labor in his humanist logic as evidence of Marxism's true meaning. They further argue that the concept of practice (labor) which begins with the subject (elaborated in Marx's 1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*), as well as his treatment of the problem of the liberation of mankind found in his manuscripts (especially with the 1939 publishing of *Grundrisse*, called the "second shockwave" after the publishing of the *1844 Manuscripts*), and even the anthropological studies which Marx undertook in his later years, were all improvements or expansions on Marx's original humanist logic. Therefore the Marxist-humanists naturally refute Engels' position (especially the view of traditional Marxists after the Second International) that Marxism was an economic determinism "absent of humanism."

This interpretive model was later inherited by Eastern European "Neo-Marxists" (such as the Praxis Group of the former Yugoslavia and Polish scholar Adam Schaff's later humanist theories). In the course of the discussion on humanist alienation that took place in China in the 1980s, as well as the development of "practical philosophy" and "practical humanism" by several contemporary Chinese theorists, we are able to see the reemergence of this line of reasoning.

The third interpretive model, advanced by the Western Marxist school of scientific methodology, is the so-called "rupture theory." Simply put, this can be considered an **ideological and scientific** interpretive model which emphasizes the **heterogeneity** in Marx's philosophical thought. This model was formed as a theoretical repudiation of the second interpretive model. In the 1960s, the Western

¹³See chapter 4 of my book *Zheduan de lixing chibang*.

Marxist scholar Louis Althusser, using methods of scientism (primarily Gaston Bachelard's epistemology and quasi-structuralism), re-categorized the progressive development of Marxist thought by proposing the "rupture theory" in the collection of essays entitled *For Marx*.¹⁴ Althusser's analysis is not rooted in the surface semantics of the general texts, but rather focuses on the underlying theoretical structure (the "problematic," or fundamental method and logical structure of posing questions) of the various characteristics in the development of Marx's philosophy. Thus, Althusser identifies two Marxs, divided by Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, which was published in April of 1845. The first Marx, supported by the logical framework of humanist ideology, he dubs "young Marx," and the second Marx, the Marx who established a brand new scientific worldview, he calls "mature Marx". Althusser recognizes only a single Marxism, though this is a **scientific** historical materialism concerning the objective movement of history, a movement which is "without a subject." Althusser goes on to suggest that in its underlying logic, Marxism is "a rejection of theoretical humanism." *This view is echoed by Japanese Marxist philosopher Hiromatsu Wataru, who argues that Marx shifts from the logic of alienation to the logic of reification in April of 1845. It should be noted that because Hiromatsu has been heavily influenced by Heidegger and other contemporary thinkers, his theory is a more complex theoretical variant of the rupture theory.*¹⁵ *Among Chinese philosophers who have been influenced by Althusser's theories, we must count Hu Wanfu and his work On Young Marx.*¹⁶

The fourth interpretive model is the "evolutionary theory" found in traditional Marxist philosophical history: the theoretical perspective most commonly used by scholars from the former Soviet Union (especially between the 1960s and 1980s) in interpreting Marxist philosophy.¹⁷ In terms of theoretical logic, by restricting themselves to Lenin's views on the stages of development in Marx's philosophy (Lenin did not have access to the later published works of young Marx), these scholars have held a superficial and ambiguous position on Marx's philosophical development. They identify pre-*Paris Notes* (pre-1843) Marx as a young Marx still under the influence of Hegelian idealism. They further claim that from the summer of 1843 to the end of that year, Marx had already **begun** to turn to Marxism's neo-materialism and communism, though they do not dare conclusively argue that this shift was not a shift towards Marx's historical materialism. They contend that this process lasted through the summer of 1845 with the writing of

¹⁴Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: The Penguin Press, 1969) (Chinese transl.: *Baowei Makesi*). In addition, refer to my text Yibing Zhang [张一兵], *Wentishi, zhenghou yuedu yu yishi xingtai*, 问题式、症候阅读与意识形态 [Problematic, Symptom Reading and Ideology] (Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe 中央编译出版社 [Central Edition / Translation Press], 2003). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁵Refer to my article "Guangsong She de Makesi guanxi bentilun."

¹⁶Refer to Wanfu Hu [胡万福], *Lun qingnian Makesi*, 论青年马克思 [On Young Marx] (Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe 华中师范大学出版社, 1988).

¹⁷It should be noted that before the 1970s, theorists from the Soviet Union were opposed to the discussion of humanism, directly obstructing the humanist tendencies found in Eastern Europe's "Neo-Marxism." It was not until after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the 1980s that Soviet scholars began to turn to a more humanist form of Marxism. The logic of "new thinking," expressed in such phrases as "common human interests should take priority over class interests," was really an idealized humanism. The tragedy caused by this delusional viewpoint is plain for all to see.

the *Theses on Feuerbach*, not ending until the publishing of *The German Ideology* in the autumn of 1846. These traditionalists assert that the formation of Marxism was, in fact, a **gradual, quantifiable progression**, one in which a more mature theoretical expression gradually developed through constant purging of Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophical influences. In many of the works written by young Marx after summer 1843, Marxism can be identified in numerous places.¹⁸ In Marx's analogy of development in animal species, he writes that "human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape," — for the traditionalists, the analogy becomes "the monkey body is the human body."¹⁹ This emphasis on gradual change causes the significance of the 1845 methodological revolution of Marx's philosophy to be greatly devalued. In the face of the grave theoretical regression represented by the humanization of Marxist philosophy proposed by the post-1932 Western Marxists, this model's internal contradictions and vagueness have caused it to appear all the more impotent. Regretfully, a number of traditional studies of philosophical history conducted in China have been plagued by the "evolutionary theory," Soviet style line of reasoning.

The fifth interpretive model was advanced by my own teacher, Professor Sun Bokui of the Nanjing University Philosophy Department, and was first published in the late 1970s in his book *Exploring the Path*. Specifically, this model expounds the **double-turn theory** of Marxist-Engels philosophy, in addition to describing the oscillation between **two kinds of theoretical logic** found in the *1844 Manuscripts*. According to Professor Sun's research, young Marx can be viewed in two stages. The first stage began when Marx joined the Young Hegelians in 1837 and continued until the summer of 1843; during this time, his thinking was primarily influenced by the Young Hegelian's interpretation of Hegelian philosophy. This influence is most clearly reflected in Marx's doctoral thesis *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, as well as in the many articles he published for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The second stage came about when young Marx, perplexed by a plethora of practical problems, began serious historical research centered on the French Revolution. At this time, under the influence of Wilhelm Weitling, Moses Hess, and young Engels, he experienced his first major philosophical shift (**though it was not yet a conscious establishment of Marxism**): from idealism to **Feuerbachian, humanist** materialism, and from democracy to **general** communism (not scientific socialism). Texts corresponding to this time period include those published after the summer of 1843, such

¹⁸Some of the more important contributions by Soviet scholars should be mentioned here: Nikolaj Lapin [H. Лaпин], *Molodoj Marks*, Молодой Маркс [The Youth of Karl Marx] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskij literatury, 1968) (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de qingnian shidai*), Georgi Bagaturija [Ge. A. Bajiatulija 格·阿·巴加图利亚], *Makesi de diyi ge weida de faxian*, 马克思的第一个伟大的发现 [Marx's First Great Discovery], trans. Lu Ren 陆忍 (Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe 中国人民大学出版社 [People's University Press], 1981) and I. S. Narskii [Na'ersiji deng 纳尔斯基等 [И. С. Нарский]], *Shiji shiji Makesi zhuyi zhexue*, 十九世纪马克思主义哲学 [19th Century Marxist Philosophy], trans. Jia Zelin 贾泽林 Jin Shunfu 金顺福, 上、下 vols. (Beijing 北京: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社 [Chinese Social Science Press], 1984). In addition, refer to Shen Zhen, ed. [沈真], *Makesi Engesi zaoqi zhexue sixiang yanjiu*, 马克思恩格斯早期哲学思想研究 [Study of the Early Thought of Marx and Engels] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社 [Chinese Social Science Press], 1982).

¹⁹This idea was proposed by one of my PhD students, Chen Shengyun, in an essay he wrote in 1995.

as Marx's *Kreuznach Notes*, articles for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, his earliest forays into economics in *Paris Notes*, *The Holy Family*, the manuscript of *On List* published in March of 1845, as well as the famous *1844 Manuscripts* which were completed during this time. Marx's second shift was first manifested in the text of *On List*, developed in *Theses on Feuerbach*, and completed in the conscious philosophical revolution which finally established Marxism, as seen in *The German Ideology*, *Marx to Annenkov*, and *The Poverty of Philosophy*. **This transformation was a complete gestalt shift, not a quantifiable, gradual process.** It was not until this moment that Marx and Engels established a practical, neo-materialist philosophical perspective. This was not a philosophical logic system, but rather a living scientific position, perspective, and method; it was also not until this moment that Marx and Engels finally created scientific socialism.

Professor Sun first proposed an additional and even more important theoretical advancement in the study of texts such as the *1844 Manuscripts*. He argues that although in terms of politics, young Marx had already turned to supporting the proletariat position and in terms of philosophy, to a form of general, Feuerbachian materialism, nevertheless in the recesses of his theoretical application, there appeared two completely different forms of theoretical logic. The first is a humanist and latently idealist view of history, which begins from workers' a priori species-essence (labor), and views social history (primarily modern industrial civilization) as the process of alienation and reversion of the essence of man. This was the guiding theoretical framework for the second stage of young Marx's philosophy. The second form of theoretical logic appeared after Marx truly came into contact with the practical and economic historical facts of the proletariat class. Though this was a new **unconscious** theoretical logic which was rooted in objective historical reality (this was also **the** primary textual basis for the contention by traditional Soviet Marxist philosophical historians that Marxism had already been established), it did not mean that Marxism's new worldview had already been established; rather, it implied that as Marx's understanding of reality grew ever more profound, he unconsciously deviated from the logic of humanist alienation. While this new theoretical logic indeed existed, it is relatively hidden when compared with Marx's dominant philosophy. In the three months from the end of 1844 to the beginning of 1845, these two forms of theoretical logic were in a state of dynamic oscillation. Of course, in terms of the overall process of young Marx's theoretical thinking during this time, an interpretation of history based on Feuerbachian humanist labor-alienation occupied the dominant position in Marx's mind. In observing the deeper theoretical meaning, this humanist critique based on ethical values may have been a defense of the proletariat revolution, but it had not yet surpassed (Germany's) bourgeois ideology. Not until April of 1845 when Marx wrote *Theses on Feuerbach* did his philosophical development finally experience a conscious philosophical revolution. Here the humanist discourse which had originally been apparent in the *1844 Manuscripts* was completely deconstructed, and a new, practical, philosophical worldview began to rise to the forefront. *This philosophical revolution was not completed until after an exposition and criticism of Feuerbach and Marx/Engel's own pre-March 1845 viewpoint took place in The German Ideology.* Professor Sun differs from Althusser in that

he does not metaphysically “rupture” two mutually exclusive time periods, but rather describes them as a complex, interconnected, dynamic, paradoxical process of transition. Professor Sun first believes that Marx and Engels did not cease to care about “mankind” or “the collective,” but rather established a kind of **scientific** humanism on the foundation of a new historical materialism. This was not an abstract humanism; rather, by focusing on the specific social **subjective dimension** of the proletariat revolution and reflecting on the **realistic** possibility of human liberation established after the 19th century industrial revolution, Marx and Engels were looking ahead to the inevitable tide of social development: communism.

In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*, I give further systematic explanation for the differences in principle between this last interpretive model and Althusser’s perspective. I do this because I believe that under the influence of the traditional theoretical environment, some of Professor Sun’s expressions tend to be rather strategically orthodox; this can easily cause readers to confuse his theories with those of the evolutionary theory model as promulgated by Soviet scholars (this is also one of my primary reasons for reinterpreting the philosophical texts of Marx, Engels, and Lenin). For this reason, a redefinition of the theoretical boundaries and characteristics of Professor Sun’s theory is not only inevitable, but also necessary. On a textual basis, this book represents the most important theoretical extension of this fifth interpretive model.

There is one more point which I must address here briefly. The five great interpretive models that I have identified here do not have any chronological relation; for all intents and purposes, their development can be considered simultaneous. At the same time, these models only represent the typical paradigms of each line of theoretical reasoning, not absolutely generalizable models. This is because there is no singular, purely textual interpretive model, as the specific form of each model is both complex and variable.

Finally, stepping away for a moment from the topic at hand, it is necessary to briefly mention the “post-Marxist” interpretations of Marx. This new theoretical logic began during the later period of the Frankfurt School. More precisely, it was introduced by the heads of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.²⁰ Of course, this logical line of reasoning first came into being in the early 20th century, when Lukacs inadvertently connected Max Weber’s instrumental rationality and Marx’s theory of reification. This is, of course, a research topic for a different theoretical context.²¹

As for China’s theorists, regretfully some of them have hastily plunged into philosophical theorizing without a complete understanding of the existing theories of Marxist philosophical history. While unconsciously falling into one of the aforementioned interpretive models, they believe themselves to be blazing new scholarly trails. It is clear that their greatest mistake is in not knowing **where past research**

²⁰Chinese translation: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno [Makesi Huokehaimo, Aduonuo 马克思·霍克海默、阿多诺], *Qimengde bianzhengfa*, 启蒙的辩证法, trans. Hong Peiyu 洪佩郁等 (Chongqing 重庆: Chongqing chubanshe 重庆出版社 [Chongqing Press], 1990).

²¹See my articles “Wudiao zhexue, hourenxue he fouding de bianzhengfa,” “Xifang Makesi zhuyi, houxiandai Makesi sichao he wanqi Makesi zhuyi” and my text *Wenbende shendu gengli. Makesi sichao zhexue wenben jiedu*, vol. 2. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

has left off and thoughtlessly speaking, as it were, to themselves. The result of this kind of “research” is plain to see. I believe that to merely use young Marx’s 1843–1844 humanist logic to counter Marxist philosophy is extremely inappropriate today. In the contemporary development of Marxist philosophy, this is a **retrogressive movement** in philosophical history. Continuing one step further, if we seriously study texts such as Heidegger’s later works on technology, Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics*, Barthes’ *Empire of Signs*, Jameson’s *The Prison-house of Language*, and Hiromatsu’s *Existence and Meaning*, we will find that more often than not, we are only repeating what classical humanists (we have not even attained the level of the neo-humanists!) have already made clear. Perhaps these theorists will indignantly retort that they promote humanism because our situation in China is different from modern Westerners; we have already turned from humanism to post-humanism, and as our market economy today is destined to establish the subjectivity of man (even if it’s a reified subjectivity?!), therefore China has greater need of man’s subjectivity. Yes, from a practical perspective, this point is true; **but this does not mean that this need is reasonable**. The results of arousing the emotions of the people and giving them science are fundamentally different. The Chinese people have suffered under the control of passion for too long! Today as we move towards modern reification (secularization) with a rational and scientific foundation, what we most need is to redirect our focus towards humans, not to return to unscientific humanism. Therefore, whether we approach the issue from a historical or realistic perspective, Marxist-humanism based on young Marx’s theories can be nothing but an obsolete myth. The recent destruction of this myth is seen in the failure of Soviet and Eastern European humanistic socialism. When some people use humanistic illusions such as “mankind’s interests are higher than class interests” to overthrow their socialism (essentially the character of their own race), then the Western Powers of **globalized** capitalism (Arif Dirlik’s words) do not take any significant step back. Does this mean it is necessary for us to try once again, to follow this same disastrous path to ruin?

Philosophical Evaluations of The Three Types of Text in Marx’s Theoretical Writing

As Marxist research in China continues to expand, a second problem has gradually risen to prominence, in addition to the problem of the subjective cognitive structure of our interpretive model mentioned previously: this is the issue of **textual taxonomy**. In the past, traditional textbooks and scholarly investigations tended to focus almost exclusively on Marx’s publicly published theoretical texts, believing these to be the primary basis for theoretical research on Marxism. The objective historical reason for this obsession with published texts was that most of Marx’s notes and manuscripts did not begin to be publicly available until the 1920’s — 1980’s. *Furthermore, research on Marx and Engels in China has been hindered because a relatively large number of Marx and Engel’s original texts, which are currently available in other languages, have yet to be translated into Chinese.* Nevertheless, the most important cause for the current problems with Chinese

Marxist research can be traced to misleading elements within our own interpretive framework. Specifically, we insist that there is a simple dividing line between “mature” and “immature” in Marx’s formal works, notes, and manuscripts; however, this claim is, itself, immature. I assert that there are basically three different types of texts to be found within Marx’s theoretical writings, each of which has its own significance and value. First, excerpts of other works, notes, and records of events; second, unfinished manuscripts and letters; third, finished works and published documents. In past research, the third type has always enjoyed the most scholarly research attention, the second has received some, while the first type has never obtained the kind of research attention that it ought to have had. I believe that discovering the true nature and original context of the development of Marx’s philosophy will only take place through in-depth analysis of all three types of text; this is an especially important point.²²

The first type of text (book excerpts and notes) was written by Marx and Engels during the course of their study and research, in both their purposefully recorded book excerpts as well as the notes that represented their **sub-intentional** thoughts and feelings on new scholarly fields and texts. These texts include notes in which Marx recorded research theses, bibliographies, and theoretical musings. At the present time, about 250 such notebooks have already been published and indexed, of which, 60,000 pages of text were annotated and commented on by Marx and Engels. *Some of these have already been published in the fourth section of MEGA 2. In total, there will be more than 30 volumes.*

Marx developed a habit of keeping notes as he read while still a university student (from 1836–1837). Later, this method of learning and research would permeate his entire scholarly career. In addition to large amounts of poetry and other literary writing, the bulk of Marx’s early writings was composed of notes on philosophy and the arts, such as the seven notebooks entitled *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy* (1839), the eight notebooks composing *Berlin Notes* (1840–1841), the five notebooks titled *Bonn Notes* (1842), and the five notebooks of political history excerpts entitled *Kreuznach Notes* (1843). After 1843, over 90% of Marx’s writings can be considered economics notes, with the exception of reading notes (there are about 17 of these, of which the most important, such as *1843–1847 Notes* and *Theses on Feuerbach*, were included among these notebooks) and some mid-late period historical, anthropological, natural science, and history of technology notes. The most important of these economics notes are the seven notebooks of *Paris Notes* (1844), seven notebooks of *Brussels Notes* (1845), nine notebooks of *Manchester Notes* (1845), and twenty-four notebooks of *1850–1853*

²²In my recently published *Back to Lenin*, I propose a fourth type of text: **quasi-text**. This type of text includes the vast quantity of reading notes taken in the margins of books, which can be found in documents by Marx and Lenin. Because these texts are not fully-formed, they have been re-structured according to the context of the books in which they were found. Originally, the publishers of MEGA 2 intended to include many of these notes taken by Marx and Engels, though this plan was eventually canceled. These notes were published as a general introduction and bibliography in the second volume of the first document of the fourth part of MEGA 2 in 1999. The bulk of Lenin’s important notes have already been published. For more on my discussion of “quasi-text,” refer to the second chapter of *Back to Lenin*.

London Notes (*London Notes* was written from September, 1850–August, 1853 and containing about 100 printed pages).

These notes are crucial to our understanding of the **primary elements** of Marxist philosophy, because in these notebooks, we can directly read the theoretical intent, earliest commentary, and subsequent plans and outlines Marx and Engels had for future writing on a variety of scholarly views. In addition, in these notebooks we find the **earliest theoretical activation points and original lines of thinking** of Marx's philosophy. These important initiatory theoretical elements are impossible for us to find in Marx's ordinary theoretical manuscripts and published works. More importantly, these notes are the key to understanding the second type of text (unfinished manuscripts and letters). For instance, if we do not study the political and historical excerpts centered on the French Revolution found in *Kreuznach Notes*, then it is impossible for us to understand Marx's first philosophical shift towards general materialism, which can be found in the 1843 manuscript *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. This mistake is what led traditional scholars to oversimplify, incorrectly concluding that young Marx's philosophical shift was nothing more than a defense of Feuerbach. In turn, this belief has caused them to overlook the complexity of the internal elements of Marx's independent research. If we do not study the gradual logical progression of Marx's economic explorations of Say, Smith, Ricardo, and Mill found in his 1844 *Paris Notes*, then it is impossible for us to correctly interpret the true context of the *1844 Manuscripts* which he wrote at the same time. Thus we lose the objective foundation for our understanding and evaluation of the Manuscripts. If we do not study the *1845 Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*, then it is impossible for us to truly understand *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, and *Marx to Annenkov*, much less comprehend Marx's second great philosophical shift; in other words, the true nature of Marx's philosophical revolution. If we do not study the *1850–1853 London Notes*, it is impossible for us to fully grasp the intrinsic philosophical logic found in *Grundrisse*; this will naturally cause us to lose touch with the important philosophical theories of Marxist economics.

Regretfully, up to now, our research in this second group of texts has yet to fully develop, but is rather plagued by a multitude of imperfections. In contrast, beginning in the 1960s and especially during the 1980s with the publishing of the fourth section of *MEGA 2*, the research of Soviet and Eastern European scholars had already begun to produce some new and valuable breakthroughs. *Consider here the achievements of Soviet scholars such as Nikolai Lapin, Georgi Bagaturija, Alexander Malysch, and German and Austrian scholars such as Egbert Jahn and Gustav Jäckh, or the Korean scholar Chung Moon-gil.* Chinese researchers in the Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Central Committee also began compiling and translating portions of the notes in *MEGA 2*. However, because the vast majority of these notes have not been formally translated or published in China, research progress has been made only with great difficulty.

The second type of text is composed of the manuscripts and scholarly letters that Marx composed before beginning theoretical development. This type of text is, in essence, the initial baseline for all of Marx's theoretical development because the manuscripts and letters were the **mental laboratory where Marx himself**

resolved questions and constructed new theories. Of particular import are first draft editions of several unfinished and later abandoned theoretical manuscripts, such as the 1843 manuscript *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, the expository manuscripts in the 1844 *Comment on James Mill*, the 1845 manuscript *On List*, and the 1879–1880 *Notes on Adolph Wagner's "Lehrbuch der politischen Ökonomie."* Also in this category are the manuscripts which Marx repeatedly revised in the process of his major theoretical developments, such as the multiple manuscripts in the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*, the multiple manuscripts of the third volume of the 1850–1870 *Capital*, and the multiple manuscripts of *Letter to Vera Zasulich*. Furthermore, among Marx's personal letters, especially those which he exchanged with Engels and others on subjects of philosophical investigation, we also find extremely important theoretical texts. These include Marx's correspondence during the 1840s with Feuerbach and Ruge, his correspondence with Engels between 1844 and 1845, his letter to Annenkov in 1846, and his correspondence with Engels between 1850 and 1880 concerning *Capital*, etc.

In these manuscripts and letters, we see a candid picture of Marxism's **unadorned**, authentic context, allowing us to more clearly grasp the developmental process of Marx's philosophy. In terms of the differences between research and expression of thought, some manuscripts and letters surpass formally published works in importance. For example, in Marx's process of revising the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology* in late 1846, his letter to the Russian theorist Annenkov directly reflected many of the new perspectives in his theoretical reasoning; specifically the "given" concrete theory of historical situation which combined historical materialism and historical dialectics. To illustrate with another example, most traditional researchers interpret Marx's *Grundrisse* as an economics text, measuring it against the level of maturity found in the economics theory construction (specifically the theory of surplus value) of *Capital*. In so doing, they gloss over the abundant philosophical achievements of this text. I contend that in this manuscript Marx was actually completing a crucial theoretical breakthrough for Marxist philosophy, and erecting a new theoretical monument in the realm of Marxism: the theory of historical phenomenology that rises above the special theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology.

Besides the problems with our subjective cognitive framework and textual taxonomy, there is another factor which often exerts unnoticed influence on our research methods: in the past, research on these manuscripts tended to use Marx's later, formally published works to judge the non-scientific philosophical tendencies in his earlier manuscripts.²³ This causes us to miss many important insights. Why? Let us answer this question by a further analysis of the third type of manuscript. *Here I have noticed an important idea suggested by the Soviet scholar Evald Ilyenkov. In Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's Capital Ilyenkov explains that the true nature and scientific method of Marxism should*

²³Or, as Thier wrote: "It remains to be seen whether he had 'already' or 'not yet' approached the 'classics.'" (Erich Thier, "Etappen der Marxinterpretation," *Marxismusstudien* [Tübingen] I [1954]: p. 5)

not be “an analysis of the rough notes, excerpts, fragments, and arguments that came into Marx’s head in his original study of the economic facts.”²⁴ Why not? First, he is firmly opposed to the notion of using the philosophy of young Marx’s manuscripts (in particular the 1844 Manuscripts) to interpret Marx’s later scientific works, a notion proposed by a few Western Marxist and Marxologie scholars. Second, Ilyenkov argues that the most developed content in Marx’s scientific method exists only in *Capital*. Third, Ilyenkov believes that relying on manuscripts and presumptions to study Marx’s thinking “only complicate[s] the work.”²⁵ From this it appears that Ilyenkov’s view is directly opposed to the line of thinking that I have been establishing. To make matters worse, Ilyenkov gives my research methods some fairly weighty monikers, referring to them as “revisionist” and “capitalist” tricks. The gravity of his accusations forces me to confront them directly. In terms of the methods for researching Marx’s *Capital*, Ilyenkov’s book was considered to be an excellent scholarly achievement in its day (the first publishing of the Russian version was in 1960). Nevertheless, I must reiterate that Ilyenkov’s view which I have briefly outlined here is incorrect. How was it wrong? He was not wrong in opposing the use of young Marx’s philosophy to counter Marxism; this is, in fact, one of the major theoretical intentions of Back to Marx. However, to identify Marx’s most developed work, *Capital*, as the only path to understanding the true nature and scientific methodology of Marxism is incorrigibly unscientific. I assert that this one-sided reliance on *Capital* is unscientific because Marxist methodology is not a simple economic narrative method, proceeding from abstract to concrete; furthermore, single-mindedly focusing on the result without earnestly seeking to understand the developmental process of the philosophy is the most fundamental flaw in the research of past dogmatists such as Ilyenkov. Ilyenkov’s fear that concentrating on researching Marx’s notes and manuscripts will “complicate” the process proves that he and other adherents to the traditional research model that he represents, advocate an overly simplistic, linear line of reasoning.

The vast majority of these unfinished documents and letters have already been published in sections one through three of *MEGA 2*, and the most important ones have been translated into Chinese and published in the last 10 volumes (40–50) of the Chinese translation of *Marx and Engels Complete Works*. Ever since the 1930s, the focus of international Marxist research has always been on these documents, the study of which has produced a great quantity of important achievements. Among these achievements can be counted the research conducted in the 1930s and 1940s by Western Marxists and Marxologie scholars on the *1844 Manuscripts* and the research conducted by Soviet and Eastern European scholars in the 1960s and 1980s on *Grundrisse* (including the work of Soviet scholar Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky and East German scholar W. Tuchscheerer, among others). Among Chinese theorists, only in the field of Marxist economic research did the study of this new body of documents achieve any significant progress.²⁶ In terms of Marxist

²⁴Evald Ilyenkov [Yilinkefu 伊林柯夫], *Makesi Ziben lun zhong chouxiang he juti de bianzhengfa*, 马克思《资本论》中抽象和具体的辩证法 [Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s *Capital*], trans. Sun Kaihuan 孙开焕等 (Jinan 济南: Shandong renmin chubanshe 山东人民出版社 [Shandong People’s Press], 1992), chapter 3, p. 109.

²⁵Refer to *ibid.*, chapter 3, p. 114.

²⁶These are mainly achievements of experts affiliated with the “*Capital*” Research Society, like Zaixin

philosophical research, besides the attention accorded to the *1844 Manuscripts*, there was no profound or scientific research conducted on these documents. This situation inevitably affects the depth and breadth of our philosophical research on Marxism.

The third type of text includes the works that Marx wrote with the intention of publishing, though some of them were ultimately never published. These texts comprise the **formalized expression of Marx's completed philosophical thoughts**. Past scholarship has fallen short in its research on these texts because of its overemphasis on Marx's more scholarly major works. This overemphasis is so serious that scholars have neglected Marx's political commentaries, which represent Marx's involvement in real socio-political struggles. Marx's major works are theoretical studies, while his political commentaries are the applications of theory to reality. In fact, these applied texts make up the majority of those which Marx formally published, and have played a more active role in his philosophy.

In comparison to the two previous types of text, Marx's published works naturally represent more developed thinking and views. As such, these ought to be the guiding texts to our understanding of the developmental process of Marx's philosophy. With the exception of the texts published before 1845, those after 1847, including *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the *Communist Manifesto*, and *Capital* (volume one) are of unquestioned scientific standing. However, in a sense, Marx's principal focus in this type of text was no longer the construction of theoretical logic per se, but rather the realization of the specific conditions, forms, and systematized expressions of said logic. For instance, because Hess participated in the writing of the second volume of *The German Ideology*, it was inevitable that Marx be influenced by the very subject he was attempting to criticize: Moses Hess himself. Also, due to changes in Marx's original writing plans under the influence of various real-world factors, in the four volumes between *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, *Capital* is not necessarily a more developed, more comprehensive, "ultimate achievement" in terms of general scientific theory. This is because the choice of whether or not to include portions of the copious content of the former (such as his penetrating idea of historical philosophy) was not based on a scientific standard, but rather controlled by the prevailing line of thinking in his discipline. An understanding of this background information is crucial in our comprehensive study of Marx. One important theoretical purpose of this book is to demonstrate that in distancing oneself from a serious and profound understanding and study of the first and second type of text, it is impossible to achieve any complete or scientific cognitive results in the research on the third type of text, Marx's published documents. This is an especially important point for us Marxist philosophers to remember.

Please allow me to make one more additional suggestion: in our theoretical research, we must not be overly rigid in differentiating between the subsystems in Marxist theory. In other words, in the development of Marx's theoretical research,

Tang [汤在新], *Makesi jingjixue shougao yanjiu*, 马克思经济学手稿研究 [Study of Marx's Economic Manuscripts] (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe 武汉大学出版社 [Wuhan University Press], 1993), but also includes articles by Zhang Zhongpu, Li Jianmin and Yao Xiaopeng.

his philosophical, economic, and social-historical criticisms of reality (scientific socialism) form an integrated whole, unbroken from beginning to end. In Marx's research, a plethora of theoretical studies influence each other and accommodate each other. Therefore, it is impossible for us to study Marx's economics without comprehending his philosophical views, just as it is impossible to engage in philosophical analysis without a grasp of his economics. Committing either of these errors and engaging in one-sided analysis will cause us to miss Marx's true purpose in criticizing capitalism. According to my own understanding, in studying Marx's philosophy, it is necessary to read and understand Marx's economic works; if they are not understood, the result will inevitably be a kind of metaphysical frivolousness. In terms of the line of thinking put forth in this book, I have endeavored to establish a brand new perspective, that of **seeking for the foundation of Marx's philosophical shift within the context of his economics research**. This is a crucial element which has been ignored by traditional Marxist philosophers. Marx's true subsidiary awareness in the development of his own philosophical thought was his economics and historical research; one could even argue that after 1844, each time Marx made significant philosophical progress, it was always inextricably linked to his study of economic reality. With this understanding of the importance of Marx's economic research, we can provide some additional insights to a statement Lenin made: Lenin once said that it was impossible to truly understand Marx's *Capital* without first reading and comprehending Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Turning this statement around, we can say that without truly understanding Marx's economics research, we will never completely attain a scientific understanding of the internal logical progression of Marx's philosophy.

The Three Theoretical High Points in the Development of Marxist Philosophy

By considering the first and second types of text discussed above, delving deeper into the specific theoretical circumstances of Marx's earliest economics research, and investigating the complete developmental process of Marxist philosophy, we begin to see **three high points of theoretical development** in Marx's philosophical structure. The first took place in 1844. Here, the most important works included *Comments on Mill* and the *1844 Manuscripts* found in *Paris Notes*. These documents elucidate young Marx's humanist social phenomenology. The second took place between January 1845 and December 1846. Its notable works included Marx's first set of Marxist philosophical texts, specifically *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, and *Marx to Annenkov*, three documents which established the general theory of historical materialism. The third high point took place between 1847 and 1858 and is represented by *Grundrisse*. This is where Marx first proposed historical phenomenology, a concept that he developed on the foundation of the special theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology. I identify these three theoretical climaxes as the **three great discourse shifts and leaps of understanding** in the development of Marxist philosophy. They form the line of reasoning that guides this book's study of the historical development of Marxism.

The first major shift in the development of Marx's philosophical thought was that from Young Hegelian idealism to general materialism, and from democracy to socialism (communism). As I have repeatedly explained, this first shift was not a shift to Marxism. This transition began with Marx's *Kreuznach Notes*, continued through *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, and *On The Jewish Question*, and finally culminated during the later stages of *Paris Notes* and the *1844 Manuscripts*. Generally speaking, the actual foundation of Marx's philosophical shift during this time period was Marx's studies of history and his contact with socialist workers' movements, though during the later stages of this period, Marx had already begun his first forays into research on economics. At this point, I will propose a new interpretation: if we consider the philosophical background and environment of the time within the context of the entirety of European philosophical history, this shift in Marx's thought was not a simple theoretical breakthrough, but was rather a logical acknowledgement under the influence of a host of background factors. In terms of Marx's subsidiary awareness at this point, we can not only include Feuerbach's general materialism and Hegel's dialectic which we have already discussed, but also the economically based philosophical criticisms and socialist views held by young Engels, Hess, and Proudhon. Of even greater importance than these in Marx's subsidiary awareness were the methods and logic of social materialism that already existed in classical economics. Young Marx, who was still operating within the framework of a view of history based on humanist alienation, only appeared to reject and deny these classical economic methods. A correct understanding of Marx's views on the methods and logic of social materialism has also been glossed over in our traditional research.

Marx's second philosophical shift is what we recognize as the Marxist philosophical revolution: Marx's first great discovery, the establishment of the general theory of historical materialism. This shift took place in the course of Marx's second stage of economics research (*Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*), beginning with *Theses on Feuerbach*, continuing through *The German Ideologies*, and ending with *Marx to Annenkov*. The most important theoretical basis for this shift was the development of Marx's critique based on the science of political economics. I propose a new assertion that, with the exception of the effect of practical socialist experience and other philosophical views, Marx established historical materialism and the historical dialectic on a critical transcendence of capitalist ideology as well as the social materialist view of history proposed by the classical political economists Smith and Ricardo. Based on practical materialism, Marxism's theoretical focal point became research on the real, specific, historical, social relationships in a given social-historical period. He especially meditated on the scientific ontological qualifications of historical existence. I assert that the developed views of Marx's general theory of historical materialism and the historical dialectic were expressed in his letter to Annenkov, which he wrote while revising the fourth and fifth manuscripts of the first chapter of the revised edition of *The German Ideology*. This is social history's "given" theory of historical situation, also called **theory of historical situating**.²⁷ At this time, Marx finally abandoned the

²⁷I began a more in-depth theoretical exposition of this philosophical idea in 2007. Refer to my articles

theoretical method of using a philosophical framework to describe the world and social history, and turned to a scientific study of social reality. *To borrow Engels' words, at that time "reality was economics."* A completely new stage in Marxist philosophical research was thus defined by scientific study of social reality based on economics and history. Therefore, in this exceptional, revolutionary time, the beginning of Marx's philosophical revolution coincided with his shift to scientific research based on political economy. This differs from the traditional claim that Marx first established historical materialism and then turned to research in political economics. This false conclusion has almost reached the point of being a collective misunderstanding in our philosophical and economic research.

The view that I advance is that the third shift in Marx's philosophical thinking was not a **heterogenous** philosophical revolution, but rather an extension of Marxist philosophical research itself. This extension was the great leap of understanding that came with the establishment of historical phenomenology based on the special theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology. This shift developed through Marx's third stage of economic research, beginning with *The Poverty of Philosophy*, passing through the *1850–1853 London Notes*, and finally concluding with *Grundrisse*. The foundation for this shift was Marx's revolutionary investigation of economics: Marx's second great discovery, the formulation of the theory of surplus value. My view on this leap of understanding in Marxist philosophy is one of the important achievements of my latest research. After 1847, Marx began a scientifically critical study of human social history, for which "capitalist society" was the most advanced stage of its productive forces ("the human body," as opposed to the "ape" representing earlier stages of development). I have discovered that in the course of Marx's research described here, philosophical investigation was not abandoned, but rather truly realized. As Marx researched past capitalist societies, especially the economic history of capitalist societies, he scientifically explained the fundamental nature of the development of human society for the first time, revealing the special laws governing the development of social history. For the first time, the relationship between mankind and nature (our surrounding environment) as well as the social relationships between people were specifically identified in a social historical context. This was the principal content of Marx's special theory of philosophical theory of historical materialism. Marx goes on to argue that in the developmental process of socialized material large-scale production in capitalist society, the living conditions established by the division of labor and exchange inevitably lead to the objective externalization (value) of man's social labor relationships (species), as well as, under the conditions of the capitalist market, a further inverted relationship defined by enslavement to material (capital). Thus came the formation of the most complex stratum of the internal structure of social life in history, which inevitably laid a new philosophical foundation for a unique, indirect historical epistemology. The following can sum up the principal content of Marx's historical phenomenology: seeing through the various inversions and reifications of the pseudo-phenomena of economic relations,

on the subject entitled "Philosophical Situating Theory" and "Historical Materialism and Situating," as well as my book *Back to Lenin*, notably the introduction.

critically eliminating capitalist ideological fetishisms, and ultimately, scientifically explaining mode of production of **capitalism**.

In fact, in light of my most recent research achievements, I have found that Marx's methodological shift was not a simple, sudden change, but rather a **repeated, multilayered, complex process that took place very gradually**. Beginning our analysis in 1838, Marx's first shift came in 1843 when he turned from the Young Hegelians to Feuerbachian general materialism; the second shift came in 1845 when he turned from general materialism to historical materialism measured in epistemological terms; the third shift came in 1847 when he turned from philosophy to critiques of reality; the fourth shift came in 1857–1858 with the realization of the critical logic of historical phenomenology; and the fifth shift came with the establishment of logical methods based on economic expression. Looking at this from another angle, the aforementioned shifts can be expressed as five inversions in Marx's philosophical logic: the first in 1843 with the inversion of Marx's philosophical premise and the early formation of a logic rooted in perception (actually still a non-historical abstract logic); the second in 1845 with the inversion of Marx's cognitive methods and the formation of a logic rooted in reality (a practical and productive historical ontology); the third with the inversion of Marx's research content in 1847 and the formation of a logic rooted in historical reality; the fourth in 1857–1858 with the phenomenological inversion of the reified representation of capitalist society; and lastly, the fifth with the inversion of the theoretical structure of economics and a return from the abstract to the concrete. Of course, this complex process of philosophical change is fundamentally subordinate to the three great categories of change in philosophical discourse discussed above.

The **primary context** of these three philosophical theoretical logic structures developed as follows: In the first time period (not including 1837–1842, the time before young Marx turned to materialism), Marx still operated within the traditional framework of classical German philosophy. At this time, the dominant theoretical framework guiding Marx's thoughts was a Feuerbachian humanist discourse system. However, Marx's earliest achievements in economics research already allowed him to greatly exceed Feuerbach's naturalism and Hegels speculative idealism, as well as surpass the general economic-philosophical critiques of young Engels, Hess, and Proudhon, forming a unique humanist labor alienation theory — humanist social phenomenology. The framework of Marx's philosophical discourse at this point was not Marxism (historical materialism). In the second time period, Marx began with practical experience in society before confirming a new philosophical worldview that revolved around material modes of production under certain conditions. With Engels, Marx established the tenets, views, and methods of the general theory of historical materialism, annulling for the first time the metaphysical system of traditional philosophy. In the third time period, while Marx was being forced to confront the modes of production brought about by capitalism's large-scale industry and still completing the theoretical formulation of the science of political economy, he conducted a philosophical identification and criticism of human society and the existence of its individual reality, using the highest level of the productive forces of humankind's social-historical development as a measure. This was a historical phenomenological criticism, established

on the basis of the special theory of historical materialism; this was a historical, real, and concrete social philosophical description.

The **common theoretical goal** shared by these three periods was a criticism of capitalism based on reality. In the first time frame, Marx began with man's social species-essence — idealized autonomous labor activities — as his value postulate. Using this inherently true state under which mankind ought to exist as his standard, Marx confirms the anti-humanist nature of the capitalist system of private ownership of property. This system is man's labor species-essence: the abnormal, alienated, inverted relationships between an individual and the product of his labor, as well as between one individual and another. Marx advocated abandoning labor alienation, destroying the system of private ownership of property, and restoring to man's nature the ideal state of communism. Here Marx's equation is S ought to be P . This is an extension of the contradiction between "ought" and "is" found in traditional humanism, where the internal motivation for its logical criticism is an *a priori* ethical antithesis between "what should be" and "what is." In the second period, Marx and Engels had already established their theories on the objective laws governing the development of human society, fully affirming the necessity of "capitalist society" in the course of the development of human society. They scientifically identified the possibility that the liberation of human society would only take place at the peak of the development of large-scale industry. Here Marx's equation is S realistically might be P . In the historical dialectic, this is a new analysis of the objective contradiction in the interplay between "what is possible" and "what is." In the third time period, Marx relied completely on the historical facts provided by his economic research to expose the trend of the complete liberation of human world history. He accomplished this through conducting research and critical investigations on the history of former capitalist societies, especially the reality of capitalist modes of production, and scientifically explaining the whole of human society, the real living state of individuals, and the process of historical development. Here Marx's equation is the former S_1 became today's S_2 , and is in the process of becoming $S_3 \dots S_n$. In the development of history, this is an analysis of the historical contradictions of "prior existence," "present existence," and "future existence."

In these ways, my understanding and investigations begin to distinguish themselves from the five great interpretive models of traditional Marxist philosophical thought, because I take another important step forward from Professor Sun Bokui's double-turn theory. With the link between Marx's economic and philosophical research as my foundation, I unequivocally oppose the two forms of "rupture theory." The first of these is Althusser's quasi-structuralist "rupture theory." In his opinion, in the development of young Marx's philosophy, there was a rupture between the ideological mindset of his humanism and the scientific mindset of his historical materialism. The second is the long-standing traditionalist view of a rupture between Marx's philosophical emphasis and economic emphasis. Those in favor of this view argue that after 1847, philosophical research was no longer the main focus of Marx's theoretical study, but was rather the so-called period of economics research. My research refutes this conclusion. This is because only after 1847 did Marx's philosophical research produce another important achievement: the

creation of a philosophical theory that dealt with the real historical development of humankind, the scientific proof of the subjective essence of man, and criticisms of social reality, using real capitalist social relationships as a frame of reference. These are not theoretical fragments scattered within an economics structure, but rather a complete process resulting in an inclusive, cogent philosophical structure. There is no doubt that philosophy was always one of the main threads in Marx's theoretical career; if we do not recognize this point, we cannot help but obscure vital changes in Marx's philosophical discourse.

Chapter 1

The Subsidiary Awareness of Young Marx's Early Exposure to Economics

Textual hermeneutics teaches that no text is imbued with inherent readability. Only through thoroughly elucidating the background of each text can its complete historical context become clear; this is also prerequisite to the reader's understanding of the historical significance of a given text. Similarly, in analyzing the works of Marx, it is first necessary to examine, in a given historical period, the subsidiary awareness and underlying theoretical framework that supported his thinking. Thus, it becomes possible to delve to new depths of comprehension of the text. This is critical to our interpretation of Marx's early works. I have discovered that only after departing from the interpretive framework of traditional philosophy can important clues to Marx's subsidiary awareness be gradually brought to the surface. In this chapter, this process of "bringing to the surface" primarily takes the form of breaking the traditional delineations of the background of Marx's philosophy.

1.1 The First Hidden Clue: The Latent Philosophical Framework of Early Political Economy

In our traditional theoretical research, an important philosophical clue that existed in early political economy¹ has unwittingly been hidden. This clue is a very distinctive brand of materialist logic that existed in social-historical research, namely social materialism. It is necessary for us to differentiate the social materialism that existed in early political economy from social realism, which is understood in the context of sociology. The logic of the former is philosophically abstract; the context of the latter is experiential and concrete. Likewise, this form of social materialism and its resulting manifestation — economic determinism, the fulcrum

¹Instead of the German term "politische Ökonomie", the English equivalent of which is "political economy", Marx and Engels first wrote "nationale Ökonomie". They may have been influenced by Hess who in turn may have been influenced by List. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

of bourgeois ideology — form the theoretical premise of Marx's three fetishisms. In his first contact with this theoretical framework in 1844, Marx was unable to completely grasp its essence; however during his philosophical shift in 1845, it became a logical step in transcending the science of historical materialism.

1.1.1 The perceptual experience that formed the basis for political economy

In contrast to the purely economic focus of classical economics, Chinese economist Wu Yifeng introduces the philosophical premise of classical economics in the second chapter (“On Methodology”) of his book *Yingguo gudian jingji lilun*. Basing his comments on Marx's own assessment, Dr. Wu affirms: “If the philosophy of Bacon and Hobbes formed the basis of the perspective of early English political economy, then it follows that the philosophy of Locke formed the basis of the perspective of later English political economy.”² Dr. Wu continues to explain the relationships between the abstract and the concrete as well as between history and logic in classical economics. His discussion brings a powerful and fresh theoretical viewpoint to the table, revealing several theoretical points worthy of our examination.

Dr. Wu's contention that English empirical materialism formed the premise of classical economics is undoubtedly true. However, if we do not move beyond this superficial level of identification, it will be difficult to attain the depth that should be found in profound theoretical logic. To attain this level of analytical profundity, there is one critical question that must be answered: is the implementation of materialist methods in early political economy a simple transplantation of English empirical materialism? I assert that the answer is no. To further explicate this point, I will refer to the definition of the premise of the theoretical methodology of classical economics used by several classical economists themselves.

The first of these is William Petty, one of the founders of classical economics.³ In the past, it was believed that the premise of Petty's methodology was the materialist philosophy of English empiricism. This belief was based on the fact that he was the first to use empirical methods to observe social phenomena, particularly in his observation of economic phenomena. This is all true; in fact, the views of 17th century English materialist philosophers Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes were of crucial importance to Petty's research.⁴ In Petty's economics writings, we can

²Yifeng Wu [吴易风], *Yingguo gudian jingji lilun*. 英国古典经济理论 [Britain's Classical Economic Theory] (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1988), p. 27.

³Sir William Petty (1623–1687) was the founder of classical British economics. His most notable works are *A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662), *Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1672), *Political Arithmetic* (1676), and *Verbum Sapienti* (1691). Marx refers to Petty as the “father of English political economy” (Karl Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,” in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 13 (1971), p. 39 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan,” p. 43)). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁴Petty and Hobbes were fast friends. Their correspondence had a direct and important influence on the development of Petty's materialist methodology. Petty himself participated in the 1646 “London Philosophical Association,” an organization of natural scientists and materialist philosophers whose goal was to oppose medieval scholasticism.

truly see that, as Marx put it in *The Holy Family*, methods of “induction, analysis, comparison, observation, and experiment” form the basis of [Petty’s] logic.⁵ To use Petty’s own words, his goal was to establish a form of “political arithmetic,” discarding mutable ideas, opinions, and emotions. In the preface of *Political Arithmetic*, he writes that his goal is to directly “express myself in terms of Number, Weight, or of Measure; to use only Arguments of Sense, and to consider only such Causes, as have visible Foundations in Nature.”⁶ *This is what led later generations to respectfully refer to Petty as “The Father of Statistics.”* Petty’s desire was to establish a **science that dealt with social (political) life**. His science later became known as political economy. I have noticed that the English economist John McCulloch, who was later the subject of Marx’s economic criticisms, also had a similar intuitive identification of Petty’s methodological premise.⁷ In his book *Principles of Political Economy*, he refers to political economy as **science**, because “it is established on **fact and experience**.” According to McCulloch, the principles governing such phenomena as the accumulation of wealth and the progress of society are not established by law, rather, these “principles” and their effects are “a part of the original constitution of man, and of the physical world; their operation may, like that of the mechanical principles, be traced by the aid of observation and analysis.”⁸ McCulloch argues that economic conclusions can only be drawn from “observing the principles which govern the conduct of mankind, as presented on the large scale of nations and empires.”⁹ Another English economist, Richard Jones¹⁰ clearly elucidates the fact that economics is an “inductive science.” In *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation*, Jones writes, “Political economy must be founded on all maxims which pretend to be universal on a comprehensive and laborious appeal to experience... [these] can only be separated, examined, and thoroughly understood by repeated observation of events

⁵Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer & Consorten,” in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 1)*, vol. 1/3 (Frankfurt am Main, [1845] 1932, 1970), p. 304 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 163).

⁶William Petty, *Essays in Political Arithmetick; or, a Discourse Concerning The Extent and Value of Lands, People, Buildings; Husbandry, Manufacture, Commerce, Fishery, Artizans, Seamen, Soldiers; Publick Revenues, Interest, Taxes, Superlucration, Registries, Banks; Valuation of Men, Increasing of Seamen, of Militia’s, Harbours, Situation, Shipping, Power at Sea, &c. As the same relates to every Country in general, but more particularly to the Territories of Her Majesty of Great Britain, and her neighbours of Holland, Zealand, and France* (London: Printed for D. Browne, [1676] 1755), p. ix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi suanshu*, p. 65).

⁷**John Ramsay McCulloch** (1789–1864) was a British economist. His notable works include *On Ricardo’s Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1818), *On The Accumulation of Capital and its Influence on Exchange Value* (1822), *Principles of Political Economy* (1825), *A Discourse on the Rise, Progress, Peculiar Objects and Importance of Political Economy*. Analyzing McCulloch from the perspective of the historical development of political economy, Marx placed McCulloch as the representative of the vulgarization of the theories of Ricardo and even Mill.

⁸John Ramsay McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy: With some Inquiries Respecting their Application, and a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Science*. (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1825), p. 14 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 10).

⁹*ibid.*, pp. 15–16 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 10).

¹⁰**Richard Jones** (1790–1855) was an English economist. His notable works include *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation* (1831), *Writings on Political Economy* (1833), and *An Introductory Lecture on Political Economy* (1852).

as they occur or have occurred in the history of nations.”¹¹ He asserts that, “The principles which determine the position and progress, and govern the conduct, of large bodies of the human race, placed under different circumstances, can be learnt only by an appeal to experience.”¹² Importantly, Jones stresses the fact that this observation must be complete and thorough, that an economist cannot be restricted to “the narrow sphere of his own personal observation.”¹³

Up to this point in our discussion, there seems to be little doubt as to the validity of classifying empirical materialism as the methodological premise of early bourgeois economics, as well as its role as the origin of classical economics. Is reality really that simple though? I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation: that there is a significant **theoretical discrepancy** between the philosophical methodology of early political economy and English empiricism.

I would like to remind readers that the focus of the experimental observation conducted by early political economists was no longer on the intuitive natural phenomena studied by the English empiricists, nor was it on the intuitive, perceived substances within social life studied in **social realism**. Rather, as Jones put it, the focus was placed on **insubstantial** social empirical phenomena such as human “behavior” and “affairs” in social life. These even included, as McCulloch suggested, such invisible, subjective elements as “culture,” “law,” and “human nature.” Unlike the claims of past theorists, here we see that English empirical materialism, when applied to social life by economists, was not simply a direct observation of natural perceived substance, but was rather **the comprehension of social phenomena in terms of something which went beyond perceptual observation**. Here, perceptual phenomena include the material objects of social life, the objective activities and events (production, economic activity, and political struggle) of mankind, as well as theoretical and cultural phenomena. This new comprehension of social phenomena already represented a significant change in theoretical direction from English empiricism.

At this point, I must pose an extremely important question of principle: what standard would we use to evaluate classical economics? In discussing the history of the theories of political economy, the vast majority of Soviet, East European, and Chinese theorists (most of them economists) have used Marx’s critical standard (especially the commentary he wrote after 1857) to judge classical economists. This method may be perfect for discussing the scientific laws of political economy, but by rigidly adhering to Marx’s critiques, we forget that Marx **never systematically criticized classical economics from a philosophical standpoint**. Before 1845, he did not and could not correctly identify the philosophical methodology of classical economics; following 1845, after he and Engels had established historical materialism, Marx had already begun to stress the perspective of political economy while gathering evidence for his theories. Therefore, between Marx’s early philosophical perspective of classical economics and his later economics perspective, we find a vacuum of reciprocal deficiency in his elucidations of the theoretical

¹¹Preface, Richard Jones, *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation* (London: Oxford University, 1831), p. xix (Chinese transl.: *Lun caifu de fenpei*, pp. 11–12).

¹²Preface, *ibid.*, p. xv (Chinese transl.: *Lun caifu de fenpei*, p. 9).

¹³Preface, *ibid.*, p. xv (Chinese transl.: *Lun caifu de fenpei*, p. 9).

logic of classical economics. Therefore, as we **utilize Marx’s economics critiques to judge the nature of the philosophical methodology of classical economics**, we must remember that it is impossible to seamlessly, scientifically integrate all of his qualifications of classical economics. This is Professor Wu Yifeng’s error. Though he correctly suggests the crucial importance of the philosophical methodology of classical economics, in discussing philosophical questions, he simply transplants the economics discourse of Marx’s middle and later years into his analysis.

Astute readers will discover that I have not used Marx’s method of categorization, which was based on the logical progression of economics. Marx rigidly separated classical economists such as Petty from vulgar economists such as McCulloch. I have chosen not to follow Marx’s delineation, because in terms of philosophical basic methodology, the two schools are homogenous. Differences between them only appear after analysis has reached a certain level of profundity, a level that is not necessary for our current purposes.

1.1.2 The latent social materialist premise in the methodology of early political economy

Let us continue our analysis of the matter at hand. In light of my research, another economist worthy of our attention is the French economist Jean-Baptiste Say — a man who Marx criticized using the scientific standard of economics.¹⁴ Of the early bourgeois economists, Say was one of the few who consciously and systematically explained research methodology of economics. Let us first turn to a discussion and analysis of the research methodology of political economy described in the introduction of Say’s most famous work, *A Treatise on Political Economy*.

Say believed that the methodology of political economy was actually taken from the natural sciences of the latter half of the 18th century. *He did not understand that economists such as Petty and Smith were directly linked to English materialist philosophy.* In his opinion, Smith “has applied to political economy the new mode of scientific investigation, namely, of not looking for principles abstractedly, but by ascending from facts the most constantly observed, to the general laws which govern them.”¹⁵ Say wrote that political economists wanted “to consult the nature and course of things, as actually existing in society.”¹⁶ In commentating on the characteristics of the field of political economy, Say’s view was similar to that of Petty and others; he also believed that political economy “does not rest upon hypothesis, but is founded upon observation and experience.”¹⁷ Say asserts that political economy was as much a science as physics, because they both “consist in only admitting facts carefully observed, and the consequences rigorously deduced

¹⁴Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832) was a French economist. His most important works are *A Treatise on Political Economy* (1803), *Petit volume contenant quelques aperçus des hommes et de la société* [A Small Volume Containing Observations of Men and Society] (1817), and *Cours complet d’économie politique pratique* [A Complete Course on Practical Political Economy] (six volumes, published between 1828–1830).

¹⁵Jean-Baptiste Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, trans. C. R. Prinsep (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, / Company, 1855), p. xxxix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 38).

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. xlv (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 43).

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. lii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 49).

from them,”¹⁸ this appears to be a shared methodological premise. The difference is, facts are divided into existing facts and occurring facts. *This is similar to the relationship between the pre-established and the generative proposed by Husserl and Heidegger.* The former are “**objects that exist.**” These “must be seen exactly as they are, under every point of view, with all their qualities.” The latter are “**events that take place.**” These “consist of the phenomena exhibited when we observe the manner in which things take place.”¹⁹ To use today’s language of cognitive science, these are the different perspectives of synchronicity and diachronicity. For Say, scientific truth is not simply a general observation of phenomena, but rather primarily a grasp of the nature of things: “The manner in which things exist and take place, constitutes what is called **the nature of things**; and a careful observation of the nature of things is the sole foundation of all truth.”²⁰ As such, science can be divided into two broad categories: “**narrative science,**” which gives us correct knowledge on the nature of things; and “**experimental science,**” which explains how events happen. In the natural sciences, botany is a narrative science, where chemistry and physics are experimental sciences. In the social sciences, statistics is a narrative science, where political economy is an experimental science. This is an interesting differentiation.

Say continues his analysis, identifying two angles from which experimental science could consider occurring facts: “either as **general or constant,** or as **particular or variable.**” Though particular facts result from the nature of things, “they are the result of several operations modified by each other in a particular case.” General facts “are the results of the nature of things in all analogous cases.”²¹ Say asserts that political economy is a branch of experimental science that studies general facts. Of the characteristics of political economy, Say writes:

It shows what facts are constantly conjoined with each other; so that one is always the sequence of the other. But it does not resort for any further explanations to hypothesis: from the nature of particular events their concatenations must be perceived; the science must conduct us from one link to another, so that every intelligent understanding may clearly comprehend in what manner the chain is united.²²

Along these same lines, Say accuses Smith’s works of being “an immethodical assemblage of the soundest principles of political economy, supported by luminous illustrations; of highly ingenious researches in statistics, blended with instructive reflections.”²³ From the perspective of philosophical methodology, Say’s criticisms have a certain element of truth to them, but from a deeper, economics level of philosophical reflection, he either misread or was unable to understand Smith. This is the next issue for us to discuss.

¹⁸Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, p. xvii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 17).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. xvii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 17).

²⁰*ibid.*, p. xvii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 17).

²¹*ibid.*, p. xviii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 18).

²²*ibid.*, xviii–xix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, pp. 18–19).

²³*ibid.*, p. xix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 19).

When confronted with the argument advanced by some natural scientists that absolute truth only exists in the natural sciences, Say emphatically refuted the following two primary prejudices. The first is the notion that when confronted with social phenomena, it is impossible for the different views produced by social knowledge to lead to a consensus. *In fact, this is a question of values; the values of natural science were not clearly elucidated until the work of British scientific philosopher Michael Polanyi in the 1940s, in his book Science, Faith and Society.* In support of his position, Say points to the ongoing debate within the fields of physics and chemistry, writing that “the same facts are, indeed, observed by both parties, but are classed and explained differently by each.”²⁴ The debate between the two fields did not hinder the establishment of these disciplines as science. *A profound discussion and reflection on this question was opened by the American scientific philosopher Thomas Kuhn in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. In it, he describes with his theory of non-commensurate scientific paradigms developed in the 1960s.* The second prejudice is the issue of whether or not the social sciences are based on objective reality. Here natural scientists have a similar misunderstanding; they often argue that the natural sciences study visible things and objective laws, while the social sciences focus on products of man’s imagination. In response to this accusation, Say emphasizes that the basis of the social sciences is also objectively existing general facts. Of social science researchers, Say wrote that:

Through accurate observation, [they] can establish the existence of these general facts, demonstrate their connexion, and deduce their consequences. They as certainly proceed from the nature of things as the laws of the material world. We do not imagine them; they are results disclosed to us by judicious observation and analysis.²⁵

I believe that this nearly touches on an important regularity of **social existence**. Say asserts that political economists should not merely rely on methods of statistics in analyzing social phenomena. This is because in social life there exist the unmeasurable “influence of human talents, needs, and desires”; by choosing to simply use statistics in analysis, we would “lose the original complexity” of social phenomena through our “calculations,” causing political economy to become an “abstract theory.”²⁶ I believe that in terms of the materialist premise of bourgeois political economy, the point Say makes here has a certain degree of intuition, though this is not a truly intuitive consciousness in terms of philosophical methodology.

Say’s analysis, which we have discussed here, is representative of the methodology of early political economists. It further shows that the methodology of early political economy that focused on events that occur in reality was not simply equivalent to English empirical materialist philosophy. Furthermore, this methodology was not even the positivist methodology in a sociological sense. Rather, the methodology of the political economists was a **particular materialist framework**

²⁴*ibid.*, xxiv–xxv (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 24).

²⁵*ibid.*, p. xxv (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 25).

²⁶See *ibid.*, xxvi–xxvii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, 26–27, footnote 2).

existing in social life that carried strong abstract connotations from its inception.

*I believe that in the field of economics, this theoretical methodology **unconsciously** established the materialist standpoint that the interpretation of social history was the most fundamental issue. In 1845, Marx expounded on this definition of political economy in *The German Ideology*: “Political economy, however, had already given expression to the fact that the chief relations of exploitation are determined by production in general, independently of the will of individuals, who find them already in existence.”²⁷ Here Marx’s important theoretical differentiation demonstrates that in early bourgeois political economy there already existed a form of materialism that affirmed material production and objective economic relationships in social life!*

To demonstrate the existence of this form of materialism, let us first examine the principles of objective existence in social life that determine consciousness, as established within the realm of economic theory. I believe that this was a brand new **social economic determinism**, distinct from past naturalist-materialist determinism based on philosophical materialism. In the development of bourgeois political economy, the emphasis had shifted from mercantilism (circulation in economic activity) and physiocracy (agricultural production) to Ricardo (large-scale machine production). During this process, the social economic facts (events) that took place formed the foundation for political economic ideas and theories; they also comprise the very foundation of social life, a seemingly self-evident premise. In other words, the supremacy of objective economic reality seemed to be the starting point for political economists. *However, the historical truth that economists of the time were unable to understand was that the emergence of this economic supremacy was a **product of history**; this economic supremacy would become the logical basis for Marx’s transcendence over classical economics in the context of historical materialism.* To further demonstrate the emphasis placed on objective economic reality by the political economists, McCulloch asserts that if a theory is different from **consistent** and **commonly occurring** facts, then it must be the theory that is in the wrong. In *The National System of Political Economy*, List goes on to suggest that “the best book of political economy that we can read is real life.”²⁸ In *A Treatise on Political Economy*, Say analyzes the relationship between the development of objective historical reality and the development of political economic theory: “In every branch of knowledge, example has preceded precept.”²⁹ On this point, Say used the example of Portugal and Spain in the 15th century; in these countries, the continued emergence of new businesses raised the interest of economists towards theories of wealth, and formed the earliest motivation for the study of wealth. While the conception of wealth at that time was limited to precious metals, in the early 18th century about 50 years before François Quesnay,

²⁷Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, vol. I/5 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 1)* (Frankfurt am Main, [1845–1846] 1932 1970), p. 391 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 483).

²⁸Friedrich List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, ed. Eugen Wendler (Baden-Baden: Nomos, [1841] 2008), p. 59 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue de guomin tixi*, p. 7).

²⁹Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, p. xxix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue gailun*, p. 29).

Sallustio Bandini was able to criticize mercantilism by observing new evidence regarding government interference in food production.³⁰ Of the paucity of evidence upon which the mid-18th century physiocrats, led by Quesnay, constructed their arguments, Say makes the following critique:

Instead of first observing the nature of things, or the manner in which they take place, of classifying these observations, and deducing from them general propositions, they commenced by laying down certain abstract general propositions, which they styled axioms, from supposing them to contain inherent evidence of their own truth. They then endeavoured to accommodate the particular facts to them, and to infer from them their laws; thus involving themselves in the defence of maxims evidently at variance with common sense and universal experience.³¹

Say's was a pertinent criticism. He was against pitting theory and practice against one another, because in his opinion, theory and practice ought to be a unified relationship. He wrote, "What is theory, if it be not a knowledge of the laws which connect effects with their causes, or facts with facts? And who can be better acquainted with facts than the theorist who surveys them under all their aspects, and comprehends their relation to each other?"³² Similarly, if one had theories without practice, if one used methods without knowing how they worked or why they worked, then what would come of them? Nothing but a dangerous "empiricism."³³ As such, Say was opposed to establishing ethics and political necessity upon empty theories. For instance, Say pointed out that Rousseau's discussion of social phenomena (such as the social contract and inequality) was based solely on the issue of rights, causing his theories to devolve into empty theories "without much practical use." Furthermore, Say advocated using economic facts as the foundation for ethics and political necessities.³⁴

Here I wish to make an important comparative analysis: in Western analyses of social history, which appeared before the advent of political economy (such as the social political studies of ancient Greek thinkers and the discussion of theological and social issues in the Middle Ages), as well as the critiques of social history made by the French Enlightenment philosophers which emerged at approximately the same time as political economy, the vast majority of theorists **approached social reality from the perspective of theoretical logic**. Employing this approach was what enabled them to intuitively identify the heterogeneity between natural phenomena and social historical phenomena. Among these philosophers are those who were able to uphold general materialism (Diderot and Helvetius) in their understanding of natural phenomena; however, as they began social historical analysis, they unwittingly lost their perceptual materialist starting point. *Delving deeper,*

³⁰*ibid.*, p. xxx (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, pp. 29–30).

³¹*ibid.*, p. xxxiii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 33).

³²*ibid.*, p. xxi (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 21).

³³*ibid.*, p. xxi (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 21).

³⁴*ibid.*, p. xxxiv (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, 34, footnote 2).

this materialist understanding of natural phenomena was actually still a form of historical idealism. (Refer to chapter 6.1 on page 299 of this book for Marx's criticism of Feuerbach's natural materialism.) Why did they lose this starting point? Because objective reality in social history does not primarily exist as material substance, but rather as **social life with human activity as its subject**; more specifically, as **objectively existing inter-human social relationships**. I have remarked that with the exception of early political economists, the vast majority of thinkers before the emergence of Marxism were unable to face this **non-substantial** materialist existence. Materialist philosophers, for whom material substance was a theoretical premise, all turned to a simple idealism as soon as they began studying social historical phenomena. This is an important fact that cannot be contested. Political economy, on the other hand, began with the premise of perceptual economic facts, arriving at an understanding of the nature (relationships) of social life through perceptual observation. In terms of philosophical methodology, this is an extremely vital difference between materialist philosophy and political economics.

The second evidence that demonstrates the existence of this form of materialism, **one that affirms material production and objective economic relationships in social life**, lies with the beliefs of early political economists. Whether consciously or unconsciously, early political economists believed that social material production was the **basis** of all social life. In addition, they based their studies on the **laws, abstracted from social activity, that governed social relations**. *This basis on laws of social relations was the real theoretical foundation upon which Marx and Engels established historical materialism.* In terms of these laws, there are two important theoretical points that we need to discuss: material production and social relations abstracted from social life. The former is the theoretical shift that occurred during the transition from mercantilism to physiocracy (from circulation to production), which is also the premise of Smith and Ricardo's theoretical foundation. It is their premise because for all classical economists, the fundamentality of material production is linked to labor theory of value. A more thorough analysis of material production will be given later on in this book; here, however, we will content ourselves with an investigation of abstracted social relations, the second theoretical point.

In terms of abstract social relations, let us briefly turn our attention back to Petty, the economist discussed at the beginning of this section. Many past historians of economic history, basing their analyses on Petty's own statements, have categorized him as an empirical materialist who stressed visible facts. I have come to understand that the word "visible" requires further analysis. In other words, we must ask ourselves, what were those **visible** social historical phenomena of which Petty wrote? Were they elements of the substantial natural environment, or were they concrete, material, man-made things? To answer these questions, let us look at an example. When explaining the inequalities in 17th century Ireland, Petty calculated the number of chimneys on each house as concrete evidence. Of the 200,000 dwellings in Ireland, there were 160,000 without fixed chimneys, 24,000 with only one chimney, 16,000 with more than one chimney, and one (Dublin Castle, the residence of the governor of Ireland) with 125 chimneys! Here Petty was not merely citing the statistical number of visible objects (chimneys), but was

rather using visible, material substance to reveal the inequality of a **immaterial** social relationship. This was an **invisible social relationship abstracted from visible, intuitive phenomena**. From this, we see that it was Petty's goal to use visible life-based facts to explain a social fact that could not be directly observed. This was the true origin of the premise of classical economic philosophy. Therefore, when we say that Petty stands completely on the side of the materialists, we must ask ourselves, what is the true nature of the methodology of his form of materialism?

To answer this question, let us look at another one of Petty's views. He suggests that the real basis of the political struggles between Ireland's different political parties was not democratic or religious, but rather was centered on the distribution of land. Unlike land in nature, landed property represents a relationship of economic ownership; therefore, distribution becomes more of an economic activity and a social relationship. These economic relationships are impossible to directly observe, and as such, they can only be understood **abstractly**. *Marx makes this point clear in Grundrisse*. In Petty's *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, he emphasizes the necessity of discovering the relationship between political structures and their components within the political process. He calls this the "way of natural law," which exists in the dynamics of social phenomena. These "natural laws" are, in fact, the objective laws in the dynamic of social history. Furthermore, as McCulloch points out in *Principles of Political Economy*, we cannot only concern ourselves with facts in our observation of political economy; we must also know "the relationships between facts."³⁵ Meanwhile, the French economist Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot³⁶, a representative figure of the physiocracy movement in the late 17th century, had already clearly identified the "economic relations"³⁷ within social activity in his book *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth*. Say went even further by profoundly recognizing that the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle had already suggested that there was an inevitable relationship between the various modes of production and their ensuing results. *Of course this was only a political opinion, because the modern economic life upon which political economy depended for existence did not yet exist at that time*. Say believed that these natural laws of modern economic life cannot be obtained from directly observed phenomena, but rather have to be based on general facts. This is because general facts are based on selected observation of individual facts; only from general facts can we discover general laws. Of course, as we are confronted with the complexities of social life, general laws will "be disturbed in some particular cases, [but] will resume its entire force the moment the causes of its interruption have ceased to operate."³⁸ *Moreover, the "natural order" discussed by physiocracy which we will touch on in the following paragraphs is similar to Smith's "invisible hand;" it also reveals a law of social dynamics which objectively takes place in human economic life*.

³⁵McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 12).

³⁶**Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de Laune** (1727–1781) was a French economist. His most important work was *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth* (1766).

³⁷See Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth* (London: E. Spragg, 1793) (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu caifu de zingcheng he fenpei kaocha*).

³⁸Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, p. xxi (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 20).

The third evidence in classical economics of materialism that affirms material production and objective economic relationships is the limited **historical** and **concrete** characteristics already manifested by early political economists. These characteristics are an important element of the social historical dialectic in economics research. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx would later remark that to bourgeois economists, the past was always history, while everything since the emergence of bourgeois society had become eternal, natural law.³⁹ *I would like to remind readers that in this section, all citations of Marx's views on bourgeois political economy are strictly limited to his post-1847 scientific treatises.* This means that in describing past economic social development, classical economics can still have a certain historical point of view. Let us continue to review what the economists said themselves.

First, let us consider Steuart's⁴⁰ sense of history. In Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*, he asserts that mankind's social development is a historical progression. Steuart divides this development into three separate stages: the nomadic economy, agricultural economy, and modern exchange economy. In the first economic configuration, people are dependent on the grace of nature; they exist in a society that is naturally free. Under the increasing pressure of population growth, people are obligated to produce a certain amount of surplus food, leading to the development of the second economic configuration. This also led to relationships of force between people who obtained differing outcomes of production, such as the relationship between master and slave. The third economic configuration developed from an agricultural economy; it marked the advent of an exchange system that sought after surplus products, implying the establishment of bourgeois social economic relations. In Steuart's opinion, this is a liberating system, because it uses real incentives to replace force, creating a truly socially contracted society through the production exchange that takes place in commerce. Most importantly, Steuart argues that the development of the social economy was a logical, evolutionary process.

Steuart was not the only early economist to maintain a certain view of history. In Turgot's economics research as well, it is not difficult to see that there was a clear historical perspective implied. In Turgot's famous work *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth* (1766), the title of the 10th section is "Progress of society; All lands have an owner." Though on the surface this appears to be an affirmation of the system of private ownership, when we delve deeper into Turgot's analysis, we discover that he is attempting to explain how as production develops, social history gradually moves from the slave system of ancient society to the modern (bourgeois) system. This understanding of historical progression is commendable, even more so that Turgot consistently bases his discussion of historical development on human material production; however, he

³⁹Refer to Karl Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky," in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. I/30 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2011), p. 299 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 154).

⁴⁰**James Denham-Steuart** (1712–1780) was an English bourgeois economist, also the last representative of mercantilism. His most important work was *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*.

still mistakenly views agricultural production as the only true production. He contends that material production (agricultural production) determines the survival and development of society; accordingly, he divides society into two classes, the “**productive class**, or class of cultivators, and the **stipendiary class**, including all those members of society who receive wages.”⁴¹ In Turgot’s view, while these two classes both labor industriously, through labor, the first class is able to produce wealth from the land and “provide subsistence to society;” in contrast, the second class processes that which has been produced, transforming it into a form more suitable for human use. Turgot asserts that only the production of the first class forms the true foundation of society. On the other hand, Turgot calls the slavery system the result of unjust violence, a conclusion he reaches after reflecting on the methods of land cultivation. Here his brilliance lies in his realization that the end of the slave system would come because “cultivation by slaves cannot exist in great societies” (This is the title of the 22nd section of his book). Only after the complete destruction of slavery can society gradually develop into a “civilized nation.” Turgot further stated, “slavery annexed to the land, succeeds to slavery properly so called” (this is the title of the 23rd section of his book). Following this, “vassalage” and the “metayage system” would replace “slavery annexed to the land.”⁴² It is important to remember that this is an exposition of the developmental progress of social history **based on production**. I have further noticed that Turgot’s analysis of currency and capital also contains important historical elements. Beginning his investigation with the historical emergence of commerce, Turgot analyzes the principles of value evaluation in exchange, the idealized money produced by value measures (“mean valuations”), as well as the advent of metal money. Finally, Turgot explains the truth that “the use of money has much facilitated the separation of different labors among the different orders of society” (this is the title of the 48th section of his book). As money is more and more able to represent all goods, each member of society is able to specialize in one form of work, concluding that, “The use of money has prodigiously hastened the development of society.”⁴³ It is most astonishing that in his discussion of the development of industry and the “re-separation” of society, he clearly advances the following viewpoint:

Thus the whole class employed in supplying the different wants of society is subdivided into two classes. [...] The one, of the undertakers, manufacturers and masters, all proprietors of large capitals, which they avail themselves of, by furnishing work to the other class, composed of artificers, destitute of any property but their hands, who advance only their daily labour, and receive no profits but their salaries.⁴⁴

These are the two great classes of which Marx later wrote: the bourgeois class and the proletariat class.

⁴¹Turgot, *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu caifu de xingcheng he fenpei kaocha*, p. 21).

⁴²*ibid.*, pp. 24–27 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu caifu de xingcheng he fenpei kaocha*, pp. 28–31).

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 51 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu caifu de xingcheng he fenpei kaocha*, p. 46).

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 65 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu caifu de xingcheng he fenpei kaocha*, pp. 54–55).

Similar to Turgot's view on the two classes in society is Jones' discussion of the historical change in the relations of production. In *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation*, he contends that human society, after attaining a certain level of advancement in civilization and wealth, began the shift from agriculture to industry; at this time, "control of the production of the country" fell into the hands of a group of individuals distinct from past lords and laborers: capitalists. In this stage of development, laborers were "supported and employed" by capitalists, and after "laborers enter into contractual relations with capitalists," the erstwhile "dependence on lords was abolished."⁴⁵ This was a historic shift from one social relation to a new social relation.

Additionally, the views of two German economists, Wilhelm Roscher and Johann Karl Rodbertus⁴⁶, are worthy of our attention. As the founder of the German Old Historical School, Roscher was the first to implement the historical methodology used by Friedrich Karl von Savigny for legal research to the field of economics. He cogently argued that political economy could not be like physiocracy and socialism, always discussing what the ideal state of affairs **ought to be**; rather, it should truthfully reflect the historical developmental process of the true nature of things. *This is a logic rooted in reality*. Accordingly, in *Grundrisse zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirtschaft nach geschichtlicher Methode* Roscher refers directly to philosophy as an "abstract system, removed from all time or place that blindly searches for concepts or judgments." He goes on to advise economists that they "describe real life as faithfully as possible, that they search to record the relationships and progress of mankind."⁴⁷ In Roscher's opinion, the primary task of political economy is to explain "how and why the economic system changes from rational to irrational, from a system that 'promotes happiness' to one that 'brings misery.'"⁴⁸ This is an understanding of incredible perspicacity. In *Zur Erkenntniss unserer staatswirtschaftlichen Zustände*, Rodbertus goes one step further, suggesting that "a nation's highest endeavors are inextricably linked to its economic life; as productivity increases, the spiritual and artistic life of the nation becomes richer and more abundant."⁴⁹ *This was the logical precursor to Marx's metaphor of the economic foundation determining the relations of the structure built upon it*. Rodbertus asserts that "as laborers acquire new skills, they will reveal new sources of goods, namely the specific method of production that ac-

⁴⁵Jones, *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation*, pp. 186–189 (Chinese transl.: *Lun caifu de fenpei*, pp. 132–134).

⁴⁶**Wilhelm Roscher** (1817–1894) was a German economist. His principal works include *Historical Lessons of the Great Sophists* (1838), *Compendium of Lectures on Public Economics according to the Historical Method* (1843), and *Principles of Political Economy* (five volumes, 1854). **Johann Karl Rodbertus** (1805–1875) was also a German economist. His principal works include *On the Economic Situation of Germany* (1842), *Overproduction and Crisis* (1871), and *Explanation and Remedy of the Current Economic Difficulties of Landowners* (1871).

⁴⁷Wilhelm Roscher, *Grundriß zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirtschaft. Nach geschichtlicher Methode* (Göttingen: Druck und Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1843), p. 1 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi fangfa de guomin jingji jiangyi dagang*, p. 11).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. v (Chinese transl.: *Lishi fangfa de guomin jingji jiangyi dagang*, p. 8).

⁴⁹Johann Karl Rodbertus, *Zur Erkenntniss unserer staatswirtschaftlichen Zustände*, vol. I/1 of *Gesammelte Werke und Briefe*, ed. Th. Ramm (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, [1842] 1972), p. 110 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu Deguo guojia jingji zhuangkuang de renshi*, pp. 112–113).

companies an increase in productive efficiency.”⁵⁰ Rodbertus also points out that “only with the establishment of modern cities, with the legalization of delineations between rural and urban districts, with the majority of industry becoming the privilege of cities (with the consequence that the inevitable raw products **must be** easy to master), will there gradually be established a unique capitalist class, will there be the formation of the concept of capital.”⁵¹ Rodbertus argues that in the early stages of societal development, the influence of nature played a predominant role. But as production itself develops, “social productivity becomes the sole result of man’s activity and talent. The activity of man exerts influence through the occupational division of labor, the optimalization of the production process, and improvements in tools and machinery.”⁵² Further on in his text, Rodbertus describes in greater detail:

The evolution of these social means (though not social institutions), namely the process of their transformation from their present state in terms of both their nature and effect. This transformation is like the change in social relations, beginning from those originally based on natural necessity, subject to the control of nature, and based on natural fact, then gradually developing into the realm of human freedom. Throughout this process, the continual development of social means is guaranteed by the new creators of history — human beings themselves.⁵³

We cannot help but admit that Rodbertus’ views on the “modes of production,” the historical generation of the concept of capital, and the transformation of social relations into the realm of human freedom are all very profound.⁵⁴

Even more exceptional than the views of Roscher and Rodbertus was McCulloch’s assertion that the scientific research of a true economist “should be focused on men in different environments.” His research should be able to explain the reasons for the acceleration or retardation of the progress of civilization. In *Principles of Political Economy*, McCulloch writes that a true economist “should mark the changes which have taken place in the fortunes and condition of the human race in different regions and ages of the world; he should trace the rise, progress, and decline of industry; above all, he should carefully analyze and compare the effects of different institutions and regulations, and discriminate the various circumstances wherein an advancing and declining society differ from each other... these are the laws which regulate the movements of human society.”⁵⁵ *This view is*

⁵⁰*ibid.*, pp. 112–113 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu Deguo guojia jingji zhuangkuang de renshi*, p. 114).

⁵¹*ibid.*, pp. 117–118 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu Deguo guojia jingji zhuangkuang de renshi*, p. 118).

⁵²*ibid.*, p. 185 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu Deguo guojia jingji zhuangkuang de renshi*, p. 169).

⁵³*ibid.*, pp. 204–405, footnote (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu Deguo guojia jingji zhuangkuang de renshi*, p. 184, footnote 1).

⁵⁴In the late 1800s, Rodbertus accused Marx of plagiarizing his economic ideas. This led to the emergence of the joke that Rodbertus was the founder of “scientific socialism.” Refer to his letter to J. Zeller, printed in *Zeitschrift für die gesammte Staatswissenschaft*, Tübingen, 1879, p. 219.

⁵⁵See McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 14).

obviously very similar from the historical dialectic context constructed by Marx, in which he conducted specific analysis of concrete problems under specified historical conditions. McCulloch further explains that political economy was not concerned with specialized research into fields such as agriculture or industry, but rather confines itself to studying, “the means by which labor in general may be rendered most productive, and how its powers may be increased in **all** departments of industry.”⁵⁶ He also points out that “the art, science, and capital of one generation become the heritage of the next. These are improved and increased by the rising generation, giving them additional power and efficacy.”⁵⁷ McCulloch also remarks on the relationship between mechanical inventions and historical progress, writing that inventions “give us ships for canoes, muskets for slings, steam-engines for clubs, and cotton-mills for distaffs.”⁵⁸ He came close to suggesting that science and technology are forces of production, writing that “the inventions and creations of science are important elements of industrial production and that science and education form the foundation for societal progress.”⁵⁹ I have discovered that McCulloch’s ideas on this subject are not common among the bourgeois political economists of his day. Another example can be found in McCulloch’s rebuttal of the argument that workers become machine parts in mechanized production. In the rebuttal he compared workers with farmers, concluding that workers had a broader range of abilities than farmers, and that workers enjoyed a more comfortable living standard. These were not arbitrary statements, but rather carefully formulated conclusions based on meticulous analysis and comparison of the actual circumstances of workers and farmers. From a bourgeois perspective, McCulloch’s position was both objective and scientific.⁶⁰ In addition, besides having a scientific appraisal of economics, the first chapter of McCulloch’s *Principles of Political Economy* also discusses the history of political economy. I believe that aside from his vulgar economic logic, McCulloch is a profound historical philosopher who is deserving of our study.

Based on the preceding analysis, we can be certain that early bourgeois political economists paid great attention to observation and empirical evidence in their study of modern social economic life. We can further conclude that their attention to these areas was not a simple extension of the direct observational methods of natural phenomena conducted by English empirical materialists. Through perceptual observation, early political economists were able to determine the objective, non-substantial, existence of social material. This existence is composed of economic (material) activity, social relations, and a limited historical idea manifested in their study of past social life. Thus I believe that in understanding the economic analyses of the political economists, we can identify a new materialist philosophical methodology *that was completely latent and unconscious during their time*. I will refer to this latent historical philosophical perspective in political economy as **social materialism**, as distinguished from natural materialism and Marx’s historical ma-

⁵⁶McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 74 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 44).

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. 41 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 66).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 41 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, pp. 66–67).

⁵⁹See *ibid.*, p. 41 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, pp. 69–70).

⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. 125 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 93).

terialism. As we study early bourgeois political economists, social materialism is an important element of philosophical theoretical logic that has been consistently veiled.

1.1.3 Social materialist principles in the progression of the theoretical logic of classical political economy

Up to this point, our analysis has been confined to a principled, direct identification of theory, while in fact the establishment of a certain theoretical logic must be supported by the most important theoretical structural ontology in its field of study. In terms of the classical political economists, this structure is the progressive theoretical logical construct of Smith and Ricardo's **classical** economics theory, as differentiated from the mercantilism and physiocracy of vulgar economics. In simply beginning at the general starting point and methodological characteristics of political economy, we are unable to grasp the underlying theoretical logic of social materialism that I discussed in the previous sub-section; I argue that this philosophical framework of social materialism exists more within the theoretical structure of classical economics. In the following paragraphs, we will change our theoretical point of view for a moment to uncover the unconscious philosophical logic hidden within the historical progression of this economic theoretical structure. This will permit us to see the **second stratum** of the latent social materialism which existed in classical economics. This deeper investigation is also beneficial in providing theoretical support to our discussion of social materialism in political economy.

In the history of political economic theory, it is well-known that mercantilism marked the commencement of European bourgeois classical economics.⁶¹ However, up until today, the historical philosophical ramifications of this fact have yet to be understood. These ramifications can be seen by observing the mercantilist movement in 17th century Holland, which was centered on charter joint-stock companies. As both a philosophy of economics as well as an economic policy, mercantilism was widely accepted in its time, protecting the growth of capitalism's

⁶¹**Mercantilism** was an early bourgeois economic theory. Its representative figures include English economists John Hales, William Stafford, Thomas Munn, and the French politician Colbert. The word "mercantilism" was first coined by Adam Smith in *On the Wealth of Nations*. For the most part, mercantilism developed in the early period of capital accumulation in Europe, reflecting the interests and demands of trade during this period of time. From a historical perspective, mercantilism abandoned the doctrinal and ethical norms of Western European feudal scholasticism. Mercantilists viewed the world in secular terms, relying on the experience of commercial capitalists to observe and explain socio-economic phenomena. Early mercantilism began between the 15th and 16th centuries. In terms of foreign trade, it emphasized importing as little as possible from foreign countries. Mercantilists advocated employing administrative means to control the flow of money in order to amass as much money as possible. For this reason it has also been called the theory of money balance, or "bullionism." Late mercantilism, influential during the first half of the 17th century, emphasized selling as much as possible. It allowed for the flow of capital out of the country, maintaining that as long as the amount of money spent buying foreign products was less than the amount of money made by selling a country's own products, it would guarantee a net increase in money. In order to ensure that exports exceeded imports, the mercantilists of this period implemented protective tariffs. Because late mercantilism strove to control or regulate the flow of products and develop the artisanal manufacturing industry, it has been referred to as the theory of trade balance.

newly developed industry and commerce. I believe that the emergence of mercantilism actually marked an important change in the **dependent relationship between man and the world around him**. Simply put, in the direct material conditions of human survival, mercantilism causes a shift in social material conditions, from the **natural** material conditions of a natural economy (with agriculture as its guiding production model) to the **societal** material conditions of a commodity economy (with industry as its guiding production model).⁶² This point is made clear in the new understanding of mankind's material wealth reached by merchants and economists in the 17th century. Due to the limits of the particular social historical conditions of the time, mercantilism, the representative of commercial capitalist theory, based its study of wealth on the principle of "buy less, sell more," in economic circulation ($G - W - G'$). According to mercantilists, money in the form of precious metals was the only source of wealth in a country's foreign trade. This is known as "chrematistics" in economics jargon. Of course, in considering the theoretical heights later attained by classical economics, this is only a **pseudo-wealth**, because economists at the time still viewed wealth as a substantive material (precious metal). They failed to realize that the nature of money had already become an **objective abstract** in social economic relations (the metaphysical "one"). In terms of social reality, this was because commercial capitalists had exploited labor without directly organizing labor in production; therefore, they did not and could not discover the true source of social wealth: industrial production and the new concept of social labor. As such, they were not able to see through the relations of exchange, the façade of economic activity, missing a deeper level of the nature of society: relations of production. Despite failing to recognize this deeper level of social life, mercantilism still began with the cause-effect relations between "man-made things" in social life, a relationship which did not exist in the natural economy, focusing in particular on man's secular economic profit. Mercantilism theoretically established the **economically deterministic** principle that in social life, "profit is more important than morality." In fact, this is the first time that economists contemplated the fact that economic life determines political life, thus freeing bourgeois ideology from the medieval **viewpoint of the supremacy of politics**. In terms of philosophy, mercantilism paved the way for the latent social materialism of early bourgeois classical economics.

Let us take our theoretical analysis one step further. In past economic research, it was commonly understood that the first step away from mercantilism came in the form of a viewpoint first established by Petty. Namely, that wealth does not exist in circulation, but rather in production. *To use Marx's later scientific economic words in Capital to express this concept: "The real science of modern economy only begins when the theoretical analysis passes from the process of circulation to the process of production."*⁶³ This concept represents an important step away from mercantilism's economic determinism. I have realized that the transition from circulation to production in economic determinism not only

⁶²Refer to the introduction of *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*.

⁶³Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie. Dritter Band*, vol. II/15 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, [1894] 2004), p. 329 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 376).

carries a great deal of economic significance, but also has important philosophical connotations. This transition to production was a monumental shift from **social phenomena (relations of exchange) to social essence**; it established for the first time the decisive, fundamental role of material production in social life.

In the second step, Petty goes on to clearly differentiate between social wealth and natural wealth. In *Political Arithmetic*, he defines “social wealth” as goods that are of actual use or value to nations and societies.⁶⁴ I believe that the concept of wealth itself contains profound philosophical significance. For Petty, the foundation of social wealth, unlike that of natural wealth, is based on handicraft and production skills. In support of this point, he clearly and meticulously expounds the relationship between Holland’s economic development and its industry.⁶⁵ It is evident that from the perspective of philosophical history, the establishment of the link between social wealth and new material production (industry) was an improvement was a more profound understanding than the link between agricultural goods and natural production conditions.

Thirdly and most importantly, Petty directly identified the relation between this new form of social wealth and labor. In *Verbum Sapienti*, he writes: “It seems reasonable, that what we shall call the Wealth, Stock, or Provision of the Nation, being the effect of the former or past labor, should not be conceived to differ from efficiencies in being, but should be rated alike, and contribute alike to the common necessities.”⁶⁶ In the history of political economic theory, this was a precursor to the labor theory of value. In terms of historical philosophical logic, Petty’s labor theory of value was the first affirmation of the **human subjectivity** of labor in production, as well as the first **scientific abstraction** of the nature of social wealth. This abstraction inevitably led to Petty’s conclusion that the great and ultimate products of industry are not tangible, concrete goods, nor are they wealth localized in time or space such as grain, or meat; rather, the ultimate product of industry is money. Money is “universal wealth” that is “not perishable, nor so mutable as are other Commodities, but is wealth at all times and in all places.”⁶⁷ If we integrate Petty’s labor theory of value, this general theory of wealth incites deep reflection. Petty proposes four progressively increasing qualifications: social wealth, production, labor, and money in general. These rules form closely intertwined, mutually dependent relations: from circulation to production, from natural wealth to social wealth, from agriculture to industry, from labor to money in general, from natural prices to political prices. From the perspective of the larger logic of philosophical history, Petty’s progress beyond classical economics was also a great leap forward in terms of the perspective of philosophical history. Though his progress felt abstract and somewhat crude, it glittered with the brilliant light of truth.

Finishing our discussion of Petty, let us now turn to an investigation of physiocracy. We are familiar with the fact that Marx called the French physiocrats “the

⁶⁴Petty, *Political Arithmetic*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi suanshu*, p. 89).

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 26 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi suanshu*, p. 79).

⁶⁶William Petty, *A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (London: N. Brooke, 1662) (Chinese transl.: *fushuilun. Xian gei Ying ming renshi. Huobi luelun*, p. 104).

⁶⁷chapter 1, section 19, *ibid.* (Chinese transl.: *fushuilun. Xian gei Ying ming renshi. Huobi luelun*).

true forbears of modern political economy.”⁶⁸ He was correct: in fact, physiocracy first appeared as a criticism of mercantilism. The theoretical contributions of the physiocrats can be summarized into two points. First, they opposed the theory of mercantilism that emphasized the determining role of circulation, claiming instead that wealth originated directly from the labor in agricultural production. Second, they were opposed to the mercantilist (and medieval), artificial meddling in economic life. They proposed an objective “natural order” in economic activity. In terms of their first contribution, the physiocrats, based in economically backward France, described for the first time the foundational nature and, as Marx put it, the “various material components” of material production. The problem with their conclusions, however, was that they only identified the nature of production as the material growth of natural crops; this was a visible “more.” They claimed that the commerce valued by the mercantilists was not production and that industrial production was only a kind of processing, without a creating a natural, material “more.” Therefore, according to the physiocrats, only labor in agricultural production produced “net products,” the only source of wealth in nature. The physiocrats, limited by France’s relatively backward economy in the mid 18th century, were unable to differentiate between natural wealth and the [new] social wealth produced by the **man-made reorganization** of society. Thus, in this area, their views were far inferior to Petty’s.

In my research I have noticed that when McCulloch criticizes the physiocrats for believing that agriculture is the only source of wealth, he clearly explains that they completely misunderstood the nature of production. He states that this misunderstanding is especially clear in their assumption that wealth is matter. This is a profound analysis. In *Principles of Political Economy*, McCulloch further points out that “the **labor** required to appropriate matter, and to fit and prepare it for our use, is the only means by which it acquires value, and becomes wealth.”⁶⁹ Therefore, he believes industry and commerce are additional means by which wealth can be produced. On this point, McCulloch’s judgement is absolutely correct. *To cite Marx’s later scientific exposition, physiocracy “transferred the inquiry into*

⁶⁸**Physiocracy** was a school of thought within French bourgeois political economy that existed from the 1750s to 1770s. With the concept of natural order as their highest credo, physiocrats viewed agriculture as the sole source of wealth and the foundation for all social income. They asserted that protection of property rights and individual economic freedom were necessary elements in ensuring social prosperity. **Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours**, a prominent physiocrat, published a compendium of the writings of François Quesnay (1694–1774) in 1767 entitled *La Physiocratie: Ou constitution essentielle du gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre humaine*, in which he suggests the word “physiocracy” for the first time. Derived from Greek, the word means “the rule of nature.” As the principal founder of physiocracy, Quesnay’s representative work, *Tableau Economique*, contains thorough summary of this theoretical system. Between the 1750’s and the 1770’s, Quesnay gradually attracted a good number of followers and disciples, not only forming a comprehensive theoretical system and a school of thought with common beliefs, but also a political and scholarly group with a clear platform and excellent organization. The physiocrats organized periodic scholarly conferences, even publishing their own journals: *Journal d’agricultures, du commerce et des finances* and *Ephémérides du Citoyen*. After Quesnay, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1721–1781) became the representative of physiocracy. His most important economic work was *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses* [Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Riches]. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁶⁹McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 29).

the origin of surplus-value from the sphere of circulation into the sphere of direct production, and thereby laid the foundation for the analysis of capitalist production."⁷⁰ However, the physiocrats' mistake lay in believing that wealth (value) was composed of "material things — land, nature, and the various modifications of these material things," when in reality, value was determined by a "definite social mode of existence of human activity (labor)."⁷¹

In terms of the second contribution of the physiocrats, they referred to economics as "the science of the natural order," a name that also carried important significance in terms of philosophical theory. In opposing mercantilist economic intervention, they applied the French Enlightenment concept of **natural law** to economics research, advocating the respect of the **natural order**, rather than the "artificial order" of feudal society in economic life. This so-called natural order was an idealized objective law of bourgeois society.

In promoting adherence to the natural order and in opposition to France's interventionist national policies, the physiocrat Boisguillebert was the first to advocate "not hindering nature from handling matters," proposing a free economic "natural law" theory. *According to McCulloch's research in Principles of Political Economy, Pont de Nemours' work, On the Origin and Progress of a New Science, was the first to propose the concept of "ordre naturel" or "natural order."* McCulloch writes that the natural order is defined as **freedom of exchange, freedom of trade, and the freedom to use one's riches** McCulloch also identifies Pont de Nemours as the first to propose that a country's legal authority was the result of implementing and applying the natural order.⁷² For Quesnay, on the other hand, the natural order is an objective law, one not determined by human will. He argues that if economic activity were controlled by the natural order, then it would necessarily be a measurable, objective progression. We must be careful to differentiate one point, which is that the natural order spoken of by the physiocrats is not Kant's "intention of Nature" (though it is true that the intention of Nature was sometimes described in theological or feudal terms).⁷³ Rather, the natural order is an objective law, which **exists in the economic activities of inter-human relationships; however, it is not determined by human will**. Thus, the natural law is spontaneously realized through free competition between individuals. For instance, free competition can distribute the correct proportion of labor to various production departments, creating a natural organization of reasonable proportions. This naturalness is formed through the spontaneous links in human activity; in other words, without unconscious links between individuals in economic activity, it is impossible to achieve the natural order. This is exactly what Hegel would call "civil society." *In Theories of Surplus Value, Marx would later identify the "great*

⁷⁰Karl Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert. Erster Band*, vol. II/3.2 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, 1977), pp. 404–405 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di yi ce*, p. 95).

⁷¹*ibid.*, pp. 341–342 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di yi ce*, p. 19).

⁷²See McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, pp. 47–49 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, 30–31, footnote 1).

⁷³For more information on Kant's concept of the "intention of Nature," please refer to my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

contributions” of this viewpoint. He argues that the viewpoint of the physiocrats on natural order explains how the forms of production “arise from the natural necessity of production itself, forms that are independent of anyone’s will or of politics, etc. They are material laws, the error is only that the material law of a definite historical social stage is conceived [by the physiocrats] as an abstract law governing equally all forms of society.”⁷⁴ I again remind my readers that this is the foundational beginning in economics of the bourgeois ideology of “natural” and “eternal.”

Of special note is the fact that Quesnay recognized an “artificial order,” implemented by certain countries, which existed in conjunction with the natural order. Only when the artificial order conforms to the natural order is it logical; if not, it is both illogical and contrary to man’s inherent nature. In Quesnay’s assertion that the natural order determines the artificial order, we are actually seeing the precursor to the Hegelian argument that civil society determines State and Law. *Soon we will see a completely inverted theoretical exposition in our analysis of Hegel.*

1.1.4 The essence and laws of modern society revealed through the lens of scientific abstraction

In the first page of Adam Smith’s⁷⁵ *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (abbreviated below as *Wealth of Nations*), he wrote, “The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes.”⁷⁶ With this remarkable statement, he opened a new and important theoretical age. Smith is honored as the first economist to establish the **system** of classical political economy, primarily because in his research and theoretical work, he was the first to lay a complete scientific theoretical foundation for political economy. In past economic analysis of Smith’s methodology, the focus has primarily been on Marx’s method, which proceeds from abstract to concrete. However for the most part, we have so far neglected to dig deeper in our investigation of the **philosophical significance** of this “abstract.”

We can surmise that the “wealth of nations” of which Smith spoke was a wealth founded on products of bourgeois society. We can also see that Smith based his

⁷⁴Refer to Marx, *Mehrwert I*, p. 338 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di yi ce*, p. 15).

⁷⁵**Adam Smith** (1723–1790) was a British economist and the true founder of classical economics. On June 5, 1723, Smith was born in Kirkcaldy, in the county of Fife in Scotland. Smith’s father, also named Adam Smith, was a lawyer, a judge-advocate, and the superintendent of customs in Kirkcaldy. Smith’s father passed away just months after his birth, and as such, Smith maintained a close to his mother; Smith never married. From 1737–1740, Smith studied at the University of Glasgow before attending Oxford from 1740–1746. In 1751, Smith became a professor of logic and Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. From 1787–1789, Smith occupied the honorary position of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow. Adam Smith passed away on July 17, 1790 at the age of 67. Before his death, he completely destroyed all of his manuscripts. Smith’s most important works are *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1768). (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁷⁶Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London: Methuen / Company, 1776), vol. 1, p. 1 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 1, p. 1).

research on a more scientific, abstract rule. In his famous statement, “The annual labor of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes,” the labor of which he writes here means **all** labor, as opposed to labor in a particular sector.⁷⁷ While Smith abandons all the concrete rules governing this activity, thereby demonstrating the essence of labor as **abstract and general**, mercantilism and physiocracy were unable to abstract the concrete form of wealth-producing activities. For the moment, we will not investigate the real foundation of this abstract essence, but will rather analyze the historical relevance of Smith’s theory. As a representative of the capital interests of bourgeois production (industry), Smith was able to observe the relationship between the theoretical limitations of the French physiocrats and agricultural production in the real world. In physiocratic theory, agricultural production does not have divisions of labor as understood in the modern sense of the word, and all goods needed by humans are produced by humans themselves. As such, there is no exchange as we understand it. What they describe here, of course, is an extremely backwards and closed-off natural economy. In the industrial (artisanal) production which had existed in England, “when the division of labour has once been thoroughly introduced, the produce of a man’s own labour can supply but a very small part of his occasional wants.”⁷⁸ Therefore, the individuals in either agricultural labor or industrial labor would have to use exchange to obtain the products they needed. In agricultural production, the labor of nature and man seem to be linked, while, “in [manufacture] Nature does nothing; man does all.”⁷⁹ Later, in his book *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy, the vulgar economist Nassau William Senior*⁸⁰ would write that, “**To produce is to occasion an alteration in the condition of the existing particles of matter, for the occasioning of which Alteration, or for the things thence resulting, something may be obtained in exchange.**”⁸¹ Because in production, industry is able to exceed natural limitations, unlimited development is made possible. Therefore, people did not exchange natural things, but rather **labor**, which, according to Smith, “does all.” In fact, with this statement Smith had already abstracted **exchange value** from commodity price, determining that exchange value was based on general labor. From this he was able to clearly state that the labor of any department of the economy was a source of wealth. This established the concept of general **social labor**, the foundation of the labor theory of value. Furthermore, in Smith’s theory, capital is formed by the continual accumulation and shifting of abstract social labor, which allowed Smith to scientifically confirm Petty’s general principle for the first time. On this subject, McCulloch would later write in *Principles of Political Economy*, “A commodity, or product, is

⁷⁷*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 327 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 1, p. 252).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 327 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 1, p. 252).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 442 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 1, p. 334).

⁸⁰**Nassau William Senior** (1790–1864) was an English economist. His principal publications include *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy* (1836) and *Letters on the Factory Act, as it affects the cotton manufacture* (1837).

⁸¹Nassau William Senior, *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy* (London: W. Clowes / Sons, 1836), p. 149 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue dagang*, p. 81).

not valuable, merely because it is useful or desirable; but it is valuable when, besides being possessed of these qualities, it can only be procured through the intervention of labour."⁸² *Therefore, political economy does not study general, natural things, but rather the production and distribution of wealth as it gains value through labor. This was an "exclusive field."*⁸³ *On this point, these two vulgar economists were correct.*

As a matter of fact, only through industrial production is this social labor able to become an objective "common state" in social life. This idea is the real-life foundation of Smith's concept of general labor (even if Smith's theory was still based on artisanal production). Only in division of labor and exchange — especially as labor becomes hired labor (separation of labor and means of production) — does there objectively appear non-individual social labor in the modern sense. Social labor thus became a social relationship system of economic activity, made up of inter-human, cooperative activity. The result of these new relations was a new "bourgeois society" mode of production, composed of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption. The reason Smith was able to assimilate the economic knowledge of the time into an integrated whole was because a social economic totality that was both new and complete had already appeared in objective reality. *Perhaps for this reason, in Elements of Political Economy James Mill*⁸⁴ *summarizes the objects of study in political economy into four great categories of laws: those that regulate the production of commodities, those that distribute commodities produced by social labor, those that govern the exchange of commodities, and those laws that regulate consumption.*⁸⁵ From the perspective of philosophical history, Smith's theories of production, division of labor, exchange, and labor were the first investigations into the ontology of **modern** society. These investigations were made possible because, **for the first time**, industry had revealed the non-substantialness of society. By doing so, it explained that the existence of society is composed of human activity. This objective existence cannot be perceived intuitively; it can only be revealed through abstraction. A fortiori, the essence of social existence (relationships) and the laws that govern it can only be seen abstractly. Ultimately, Smith's labor theory of value, derived from exchange relationships, is in fact a **theory of the essence of social existence — a theory of social relations**. *Later, Marx expounded upon Smith's idea when he intuitively realized that socialized abstract labor was objectively realized in industrial progress and commodity market relations.*

Here I must remind my readers that because the social foundation of Smith's theories in reality was still confined to the early artisanal production of bourgeois society, because the bourgeois socio-economic system in his time was still in the structural progression phase of early market exchange. As such, social relations had not yet become thoroughly socialized and materialized. Beginning with the

⁸² McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 2 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 4).

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 6 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 6).

⁸⁴ James Mill (1773–1836) was a Scottish economist. His major publications in the field of political economy include *Commerce Defended* (1808) and *Elements of Political Economy* (1821).

⁸⁵ James Mill, *Elements of Political Economy* (London: Henry Bohn, 1844) (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yaoyi*).

division of labor, Smith focused on direct labor exchange relationships and on the identification of the “subjective nature of wealth.” This was an inevitable description of history.⁸⁶ *Smith’s theoretical limitations seen here would directly affect a large number of early economic theories, including Marx’s tentative affirmation of the scientific premise of political economy presented in his 1845 The German Ideology.*

Let us next consider Smith’s concept of the “invisible hand.” As we have already discussed, in the opinion of bourgeois economists, the feudal economy (including mercantilism) artificially intervened in the economic developmental process. This violated the natural order and was not in conformity with man’s innate nature. Physiocracy, on the other hand, opposed artificial economics by advancing the concept of the natural order. Physiocrats further established the notion that bourgeois social economics was most in accordance with human nature, because it was founded on the laissez-faire economic activity of individuals. This particular law of social economic life is objectively realized in the course of free competition. Because of this concept, Smith was even more ardently opposed to all things that obstructed the free flow of labor and capital.⁸⁷ He asserts that “Agriculture, even in its rudest and lowest state, supposes some sort of fixed habitation; it is supported by fixed land, fixed dwellings, and a necessarily fixed life.”⁸⁸ For the first time in the production carried out by bourgeois society, industry created the potential and freedom of **destroying all fixed things** in economics. This is because only in this manufacturing industry where “all is made by man” do people obtain a kind of free space in production. This free space exists above man’s free activity, naturally forms the objective economic laws that characterize civil society.

We know that in Smith’s theoretical framework, the free, self-interested “economic man” forms the starting point of civil society. This viewpoint was heavily influenced by David Hume’s view of human nature.⁸⁹ Smith concurs with Hume’s view that human nature is self-interested; in other words, from the time he is born, man possesses a deep desire to survive. It is to this end that he is willing to engage in labor production under conditions of resource scarcity. The fundamental nature of the **economic man** is self-interested and full of material desire. In contrast to the medieval concept of the moral man who controls his carnal desires, Smith proposes that man indulge his material desires, thus allowing himself to freely develop. *Smith’s proposal is also one of the main concepts expressed in the spirit of bourgeois enlightenment thinking (such as in Rousseau’s Confessions).* In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Smith writes that “all systems, either of preference or of restraint, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free

⁸⁶See also Bokui Sun and Shunliang Yao [孙伯鏊姚顺良], “Makesi zhuyi zhexue,” 马克思主义哲学史 [Philosophy of Marxism], ed. Huang Nansen 黄楠森等, (Beijing 北京) 2 (1991): vol. 2, p. 118.

⁸⁷Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 1, p. 169 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 1, p. 129).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 294 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 2, p. 252).

⁸⁹Refer to Hume’s work *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, Section III.

to pursue his own interest his own way.”⁹⁰ According to Smith, in free economic activity: “It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which [the individual] has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.”⁹¹ Thus in bourgeois civil society, it is not the altruism of the baker or the tailor that we should thank for our food and clothes, but rather their self-interested, materialistic impulses. Consequently, divisions of labor and exchange in the market occur because though the needs of each individual are diverse, his labor can only create a limited number of things. Thus, under the regulation of market demand, the needs of civil society as a whole are formed (a **non-artificial** objective social ties). For Smith, the economic man of civil society appears to act freely and to seek after his own interest. However, in reality, “He is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.”⁹² We can approach Smith’s statement both from a synchronic as well as diachronic perspective. First, from a synchronic perspective, self-interested impulses in free competition form bourgeois society’s **totality of economic relations**. Second, from a diachronic perspective, **objective laws of economics** in bourgeois society naturally form the basis of the dynamic orientation of reproduction.

Thus, we can finally conclude that in terms of the logic of philosophical historical perspective, Smith’s **invisible hand** was the **first time that objective laws and socio-economic structures that were not based on man’s will, were established in the modern socio-economic process**. The establishment of this theory led to the development of two important aspects in the bourgeois ideology of naturalness: the physical and just nature of the free economy and the natural and eternal character of bourgeois social production relations.

1.1.5 Ricardo and the underlying context of social materialism

In the field of bourgeois classical economics established by Adam Smith, David Ricardo⁹³ was the only man to attain the pinnacle of theoretical logic. In contrast

⁹⁰Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 2, p. 289 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 2, p. 247).

⁹¹*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 2, p. 25).

⁹²*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 35 (Chinese transl.: *Guofulun*, vol. 2, p. 27).

⁹³**David Ricardo** (1772–1823) was a famous British political economist. He made systematic contributions in the realm of economics theory after Adam Smith. Marx referred to Ricardo as the greatest classical economist. On April 18, 1772, Ricardo was born to a bourgeois family of Jewish immigrants in London, England. He did not receive much formal education in his youth, beginning to work with his father at the London Stock Exchange at the age of 14. By the time he was 16, he was already a well-known figure on the British financial scene. In 1799, Ricardo happened to read Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*; this was his first contact with economics, and it piqued his interest in political economy, causing him to begin research of economics questions. Ricardo’s work at the London Stock Exchange had made him extremely wealthy, allowing him to retire in 1814, at the age of 42. In 1819, Ricardo purchased a seat in the British Parliament, representing Ireland. He would hold the post until his death on September 11,

to Smith's "prehistoric period that reflected large-scale industry" based on the artisanal industry, Ricardo represented the interests of production capital in a time of large-scale industry. I believe that **the logical depth of the historical perspective of society that Ricardo reached in his economics was the true starting point for Marx's 1845–1857 scientific philosophical revolution.** Here it should be pointed out that in the past, scholars of philosophical history veiled this important theoretical perspective, treating Ricardo's theories simply as economics. In reality, Ricardo's historical perspective of society was part of a completely new perspective in the history of philosophy. Ricardo's theoretical logic was the central component of the representation of the cultural logic of treating industrial progression carried out under the context of bourgeois social modes of production as instrumentally rational. At the same time, since the Renaissance in the West, this was the highest theoretical point to which bourgeois ideology would climb in the 19th century. *On this peak stood two great masters: Ricardo in economics and Hegel in philosophy. In Adorno's opinion, this position was shared with Beethoven in the realm of music.* Through Ricardo, the social materialism of classical economics was further deepened, forming the new context of the third stratum.

In our discussion of Ricardo, let us first identify the important methodological differences between him and all the other early bourgeois political economists. In our earlier discussion, we have described the general methodological characteristics of the early political economists and their philosophical significance, beginning with Petty and culminating with Smith. We can see that, as Marx writes in *Theories of Surplus Value*, this methodology "takes the external phenomena of life, as they seem and appear and merely describes, catalogues, recounts and arranges them under formal definitions."⁹⁴ In terms of social phenomena, its nature is that of "one in many"; in terms of social activity, it is a law of [situations remaining] "unchanging in change." Even though we have already remarked that this abstract methodology is distinct from natural materialist empiricism, it is still fundamentally an empirical inductive abstract. Therefore, in this sense we can let pass the vulgar economists acting under this methodology. In his specific discussion of Smith, Marx wrote,

He sets forth the connection as it appears in the phenomena of competition and thus as it presents itself to the unscientific observer, just as to him who is actually involved and interested in the process of bourgeois production.⁹⁵

In Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value*, he writes that Smith consistently "expresses the thoughts of the agent of capitalist production and presents things boldly and comprehensively, as they appear to and are thought of by the latter, as

1823, at the young age of 51. His most important publication was *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁹⁴Karl Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert. Zweiter Band*, vol. II/3.3 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, 1978), pp. 816–817 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 182).

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 816 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 182).

they influence him in practice, and as, indeed, they appear on the surface.”⁹⁶ Also because of this, Say was able to superficially and systematically summarize Smith’s thought in the pages of one textbook. However, Smith’s analysis unconsciously manifested a new methodology, that of incisively studying the essentially abstract logic of the internal relations within the bourgeois economics system. There is a logical paradox in Smith’s writings between his methodology and that of the research methods that had once been dominant. *On a related note, Marx pointed out the unconscious polyphony in Smith’s methodology.* In terms of methodology, many of Smith’s successors were vague and ambiguous; for the most part, they either consciously or unconsciously aligned themselves with the previously dominant methodology. In the 19th chapter of *Capital*, Marx would later lament, “Classical Political Economy nearly touches the true relation of things, without, however, consciously formulating it.”⁹⁷

Living in a new era of bourgeois society defined by large-scale industry, Ricardo, developed his scientific methodology from Smith’s methodology, which was based on the internal relations within the bourgeois economics system. In doing so, he reached a new methodological level of classical economics: a truly **scientifically abstract methodology**. According to Marx’s later scientific understanding as found in *Theories of Surplus Value*, “Ricardo’s method is as follows: He begins with the determination of the magnitude of the value of the commodity by labor-time and then **examines** whether the other economic relations and categories **contradict** this determination of value or to what extent they modify it.”⁹⁸ We can further see evidence of Marx’s high opinion of Ricardo by looking at another of his statements from the same section of *Theories of Surplus Value*:

But at last Ricardo steps in and calls to science: Halt! The basis, the starting-point for the physiology of the bourgeois system—for the understanding of its internal organic coherence and life process—is the determination of **value** by **labor-time**. Ricardo starts with this and forces science to get out of the rut, to render an account of the extent to which the other categories—the relations of production and commerce—evolved and described by it, correspond to or contradict this basis, this starting-point; to elucidate how far a science which in fact only reflects and reproduces the manifest forms of the process, and therefore also how far these manifestations themselves, correspond to the basis on which the inner coherence, the actual physiology of bourgeois society rests or the basis which forms its starting-point; and in general, to examine how matters stand with the contradiction between the apparent and the actual movement of the system.⁹⁹

⁹⁶Marx, *Mehrwert II*, p. 864 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 243).

⁹⁷Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie. Erster Band. Hamburg 1890*, vol. II/10 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, [1890] 1991), p. 485 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 589).

⁹⁸Marx, *Mehrwert II*, p. 816 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 181).

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 817 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 183).

As such, in the first two chapters of Ricardo's work, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, he focused on expounding the essence of the inhuman, materialized production relations of bourgeois society which had developed during the era of large-scale industry. Next, he integrated this essence of bourgeois production relations with its various outward manifestations. Marx writes in *Theories of Surplus Value* that Ricardo "presents the whole bourgeois system of economy as subject to one fundamental law, and extracts the quintessence out of the divergency and diversity of the various phenomena."¹⁰⁰ Thus Ricardo criticizes all of past political economy, "break[ing] with the contradiction that pervades Adam Smith's work, with its esoteric and exoteric method of approach, and, at the same time, because of this critique, produc[ing] some quite new and startling results."¹⁰¹ *Also because of this, Marx remarks sarcastically that in the face of this new method, the vulgar economist Say, whose philosophy went no further than the study of surface movements and expressed forms, would be furious.* Ricardo was able to extricate himself from the fetters of past philosophy and step onto a completely new scientific realm. In the addendum to the third part of *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx writes that Ricardo "seeks to reduce the various fixed and mutually alien forms of wealth to their inner unity by means of analysis and to strip away the form in which they exist independently alongside one another."¹⁰² We can see that this is a scientific, gradual process of change, from a phenomenological "many" to an essential "one."

Furthermore, Marx was conscious of the fact that Ricardo's methodology was a scientifically abstract method of social materialism because it more profoundly reflected social historical life. *According to Zeleny, Ricardo's methodology contains three aspects: the first is the differentiation between surface phenomena and essence in experience, the second is a view of essence as unchanging, and the third is a reliance on more summarized (quantifiable) forms.*¹⁰³ Here Ricardo grasped the vital essence of a social life based in modern large-scale industrial production: materialized, objectified production relations. He also understood that **these new production relations and their development are the whole starting point of the study of social history.** This understanding allowed his perspective of philosophical history to rise to a new level of perspicacity, and also laid the true methodological foundation for the transformation of Marx's philosophical worldview between 1845 and 1858.

Now that we have identified the important methodological differences between Ricardo and other early bourgeois political economists, we must ask, how were Ricardo's theories able to excel so far beyond those of his contemporaries? The answer is simply that his theoretical excellence was determined by the objective progression of social history. We know that Smith lived in the early developmental stages of bourgeois society, the artisanal era; as such, his theoretical contradic-

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, p. 820 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 186).

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, p. 820 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 186).

¹⁰²Karl Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert (Vierter Band des "Kapitals")*, Dritter Teil. Neunzehntes bis vierundzwanzigstes Kapitel und Beilagen, vol. 26-3 of *Marx-Engels-Werke* (1968), p. 490 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun* (Ziben lun di si juan), p. 555).

¹⁰³Jindřich Zelený, *The Logic of Marx* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1980), p. 10.

tions and logical confusion were inevitable. Only after the large-scale industry of bourgeois society became the subjective foundation of modern economic activity could scholars such as Ricardo truly theoretically identify the modern essence of bourgeois modes of production. This finally allowed them to fully expose, as Marx put it, the “universal light” of bourgeois social materialized production relations that shone on every aspect of life. Only in the large-scale production which Ricardo was able to observe can there be the necessary standard of **labor-time** that allows commensurability between all fields of labor. This is the highest abstraction of the further objective integration of productive labor. On the foundation of the world market (world history), which was produced from capital, Ricardo ultimately realized the transition from **man to material** (capital relations), using the objective **development of forces of production** as his first standard, “producing for the sake of producing, getting rich for the sake of getting rich” (Marx’s words). Thus we see that Ricardo was not seeking to satisfy the needs of man, but rather the objective needs of bourgeois social modes of production; or in other words, the advancement of the principles of limitless “subjectless” capital growth and profit maximization. Ricardo’s emphasis of the needs of social modes of production over the needs of man prompted Marx to write in *Theories of Surplus Value*, “it is also quite immaterial to him [Ricardo] whether the advance of the productive forces slays landed property or workers. If this progress devalues the capital of the industrial bourgeoisie it is equally welcome to him.”¹⁰⁴ According to Marx, in Ricardo’s theory the subjectivity of man is ultimately extinguished, and like pack animals or commodities, workers become **appendages** to machines. At this stage, capital “does not belong to **us** [(i. e. workers)] or **them** [(i. e. capitalists)],” and the **subjectivity** of “them,” the capitalists, is destroyed. As Marx writes in *Theories of Surplus Value*, the “real political economy à la Smith treats the capitalist only as personified capital, $M - C - M'$, agent of production.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the civil society of mankind, originally described by Smith as being founded on the self-interested activity of human subjects, ultimately becomes a new system, one dominated by a truly economically materialized structure. To quote Marx’s later words, for Ricardo, Smith’s economic man ultimately becomes an inhuman “hat.” Not until this point did the scientifically confirmed, principal object of Marxism’s political economy first appear: the **doctrine of capitalism**.¹⁰⁶

At this point, we can argue that the labor theory of value developed in pre-Ricardian classical economics theory and upon which social materialism relied went no further than the realization of commodity value. However, categorizing the theory as such is only the beginning of an in-depth analysis and expansion of the issue. To accomplish a deeper analysis, we must begin from a more specific explanation of the labor theory of value. In the general usage of the term “labor theory of value,” we commonly ignore the fact that it scientifically contains three theoretical levels. In the first level, labor is the element that creates the value

¹⁰⁴Marx, *Mehrwert II*, p. 768 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di er ce*, p. 125).

¹⁰⁵Marx, *Mehrwert I*, p. 590 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di yi ce*, p. 278).

¹⁰⁶It was not until the 1850s that Marx clearly identified “capitalist modes of production.” Prior to this time, he uses words such as “bourgeois society,” “modern private property.” We will discuss this point in greater detail further on in this book.

of commodities. In the second, labor is the element that determines the value of commodities. Lastly, in the third level, labor is the element that realizes the value of commodities. For all political economists beginning with the physiocrats, there has been no question as to the first point, though differences exist in the different levels of emphasis accorded to the second and third points. More specifically, Smith's labor theory of value was constructed from the coexistence of the second and third points. On one hand, he defined the labor theory of value from the value determining level (2nd level), while on the other hand, he defined it from the value realizing level (3rd level). In terms of value realization, the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of labor for which it can be exchanged. We can thus see that this reliance on two levels of definition is the origin of Smith's contradictory, double labor theory of value. This conclusion was inevitable in Smith's day, because one philosophically important difference between the era of "bourgeois society" artisanal industry and Ricardo's "bourgeois society" era is that the former was concerned with the production and accumulation of wealth, whereas the latter was concerned with the accumulation of capital. Therefore, even though Smith began pondering on the value determining aspect of labor, he was unable to explain the value of a commodity without referring to the amount of wealth that could be obtained in exchange for it. Subscribing to this way of thought is what caused his labor theory of value to be bound down by the chains of vulgar economics. Specifically, Smith was constrained by vulgar economics because the artisanal industry of his time had not yet provided him with the objective conditions needed to free himself from these restrictions.

Ricardo's greatest contribution was that he was able to accurately summarize the conditions of his time (bourgeois large-scale industrial production). Doing so freed him from the opinion that commodity value must be viewed in terms of the amount of labor that went into creating a certain amount of wealth in exchange. Consequently, he was able to define a labor theory of value based wholly on the intrinsic value of the commodity. Ricardo developed this definition because in his time, the productive forces of bourgeois society had already experienced great development during the Industrial Revolution. As the representative figure of the interests of the bourgeois production capitalists of his time, his concern was not for the production of wealth, but rather the answering of questions caused by the distribution of wealth, such as the objective progress of society, and capital accumulations. Therefore, Ricardo was no longer interested in studying the amount of wealth that could be exchanged for a certain amount of labor. He focused instead on the intrinsic value of commodities — the value determining level of analysis. The labor theory of value defined in terms of commodity exchange is, in fact, only its third level. Smith's theory was unable to achieve greater accomplishments because it did not pass this level; Ricardo's genius laid in his severing of this constraint. The mistake made by the later vulgarizers of Ricardo's theory, such as James Mill, McCulloch, Prevost, and de Tracy, was that they once again allowed themselves to be constrained by the third level. *Our discussion here of economic theory is enhanced by professor Tang Zhengdong's research.* Thus, if we only understand the social relations abstracted by economists in terms of value exchange, not only are we unable to differentiate between vulgar economists and

Smith, but we also cover up much of the significance of Ricardo. Therefore, as we uncover social materialism, we must be sure to differentiate these three levels of understanding, making special note of the important differences between the third level and the first two. Turning from a materialism of objective, intuitive, natural things to the social materialism of social relationships is a defining characteristic of economists after Steuart. This common thread can be traced all the way from the vulgar economists (Say, McCulloch, de Tracy, etc.) to Smith's "half," as they all developed their theoretical analysis from the perspective of value realization. One person's commodity can only become a true commodity through social exchange; as such, the importance of the social relationship level of analysis begins to become clear. However, this form of social materialism was an "empirical abstraction," the most fundamental level of social materialism (the first and second levels). Smith's "other half," along with Ricardo's theories, formed the new basis of social materialism, creating a scientific abstraction of the essence of society.

Strictly speaking, it was on this level that classical economics moved from Smith to Ricardo's logical line of thinking. On this level, social relations no longer correspond to the links formed between people through commodity exchanges, nor do they correspond simply to the level of inter-human relationships; rather they correspond to the **completely materialized** characteristics of the relations of production inherent in capital itself. This is **the true, complete, modern social existence, revealed by modern bourgeois social civilization**. This existence is further explained in Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, where he corrects the lack of thoroughness in Smith's labor theory of value, correctly differentiates wealth from value, and criticizes Say's obfuscation of value in exchange and value in use.¹⁰⁷ Ricardo focuses on the investment and diversion of capital in the production process, as well as the objectively formed equilibrium of profits.¹⁰⁸ In addition, he provides proof for the materialized, objective relationships that appear in the development of capital production. Professing to study relations of distribution, he was, in fact, intent on uncovering the relations of production that were most appropriate to the needs of bourgeois social development. He wanted to demonstrate that this form of productive relations was the objective force that unified all of world history. He wrote, "It distributes labor most effectively and most economically, while, by increasing the general mass of productions, it diffuses general benefit, and binds together by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal society of nations throughout the civilized world."¹⁰⁹ *This was the most important modern declaration of bourgeois society's hegemony of world history* (or "globalization," in today's vernacular). Therefore, for Ricardo, relations of distribution are actually a veiled metaphor for relations of production.¹¹⁰ I do not believe that this profound understanding of social relationships could even

¹⁰⁷David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (London: John Murray, 1817), pp. 377–397 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue ji fushui yuanli*, pp. 232–245).

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 83 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue ji fushui yuanli*, p. 73).

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, pp. 156–157 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue ji fushui yuanli*, p. 113).

¹¹⁰Refer to Marx's discussion of this matter: Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, vol. II/1.1 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1983), p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 43).

have been attained by Adam Smith or the vulgar economists such as Say. *It is at this level that we find important parallels to Marx's concept of historical materialist relations of production, a notion that he would not explicate until 1857–1858. In his 1854–1846 The German Ideology, Marx did not attain this level of depth. (This complex argument will be further discussed in chapter eight of this book).* Marx's scientific relations of production did not refer to the relations of commodity exchange carried out between people in economic activity, but rather to the foundational relations of production in the actual production process. It is not hard for us to see that Ricardo's veiled metaphor for the relations of production referred to the relations of productive value capital. Only as a **relationship** does capital generate value. This understanding is fundamentally dissimilar to the assertion found in the first two levels of social materialism, that social relations are made up of relations of exchange. We must understand this point of distinction in terms of theoretical depth.

Another extremely important logical identification of which we must be conscious is this: Ricardo's social materialism and economic determinism are the most important basis for the three great fetishisms found in bourgeois ideology. In the third chapter of *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx later wrote, "Crass empiricism turns into false metaphysics, scholasticism, which toils painfully to deduce undeniable empirical phenomena by simple formal abstraction directly from the general law, or to show by cunning argument that they are in accordance with that law."¹¹¹ This caused "even the best spokesmen of classical economy to remain more or less in the grip of the world of illusion which their criticism had dissolved, as cannot be otherwise from a bourgeois standpoint, and thus they all fall more or less into inconsistencies, half-truths and unsolved contradictions."¹¹² The **ultimate point** of this social materialist conception of history would become an important pillar in Marx's 1845–1846 establishment of historical materialism. It would later become the mark which he surpassed in his expansion of historical materialism and establishment of historical phenomenology.

Thus, I am able to conclude that the **social materialism that existed within classical economics was the true, critical basis for Marx's shift to historical materialism.** *Chinese scholars such as Zhao Zhongying and Xiong Ziyun have already attempted to connect Marx's political economic studies with historical materialism, but they failed to delve deeper into the text to validate this correct viewpoint. In particular, they did not show the latent philosophical framework of early bourgeois political economists.*¹¹³ It is especially important to distinguish Marx's historical materialism from social materialism in the realm of economics, as well as from the theory of economic determinism put forward by the theorists of the Second International. *Jakob Stern's*¹¹⁴ *economic materialism was not founded on general*

¹¹¹Marx, *Mehrwert I*, p. 381 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di yi ce*, p. 69).

¹¹²Marx, *Das Kapital III*, p. 805 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 939).

¹¹³See Zhongying Zhao [赵仲英], *Makesi zaoqi sixiang tanyuan*, 马克思早期思想探源 [Marx's Early Thought Exploration] (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe 云南人民出版社 [Yunnan People's Press], 1994) and Ziyun Xiong and Xiangdong Zhang [熊子云张向东], *Lishi weiwuzhuyi xingcheng shi*, 历史唯物主义形成史 [A History of the Development of Historical Materialism] (Chongqing 重庆: Chongqing chubanshe 重庆出版社 [Chongqing Press], 1988).

¹¹⁴**Jakob Stern** (1843–1911) was a German orthodox jew, rabbi and journalist who later converted to

material, but rather was a philosophical theory based on the forces of society and economics. This, in fact, was only the philosophical framework of early bourgeois political economy. When J. Stern asserted that Marx's historical materialism was simply a kind of economic materialism, he opened an intense and unscientific interpretive orientation of Marx's philosophy.¹¹⁵ This was the tragic beginning of the economic determinist framework proposed by the vulgar economists of the Second International. Early Western Marxism, established by Lukacs and Gramsci in the 20th century, correctly criticized Marx's historical materialist interpretation as an economic materialist mistake, but was never able to truly analyze and explain the philosophical historical roots of this problem.¹¹⁶ I have always been intent on resolving the significant logical misunderstandings brought on by this complex theoretical problem.¹¹⁷

1.2 The Second Hidden Clue: Hegel's Affirmation and Transcendence of Classical Economics

That Hegel's philosophy is an important foundation for young Marx's thinking is not a new contention. However, it was not until after the 1940s that a new research perspective began to gradually form, that of connecting the historical logic of Hegelian philosophy and classical economics at a profound level. With economics in his subsidiary awareness, Hegel and his philosophy provide another hidden clue to our understanding of the development of Marx's philosophy. Furthermore, this clue will be of vital importance to us in our interpretation of young Marx's theoretical texts later in this book. Therefore in this section, we will concentrate on explaining the economics clues found in the early theoretical research of young Hegel, as well as logic traces these elements have left in his philosophical framework.

1.2.1 Hegelian philosophy and classical economics

I believe that we must study the whole of Hegel's philosophical logic with renewed diligence and thoroughness. This rededication to the study of Hegel should

free-thinking socialism. After his dissociation from orthodox judaism he became an influential social democrat. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

¹¹⁵Refer to Jacob Stern's "Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus."

¹¹⁶In his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci repeatedly connects the emergence of historical materialism with Ricardian economics, though he does not provide a thorough, systematic explanation of this viewpoint. Refer to Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 400 (Chinese transl.: *Yu zhong zhaji*, pp. 485–487).

¹¹⁷In the 1995 edition of *Subjective Dimension*, I suggested the concepts of quasi-naturalness and material enslavement. It was not until then that I was able to begin to carefully delineate, in terms of philosophical logic, between economic determinism (along with its logical variants) and Marx's historical materialism and historical dialectic after 1845. In *Back to Marx*, I will more profoundly reaffirm the fundamental heterogeneity between these two broad theories, analyzing their relation from perspective of the interconnectivity of Marx's economics context and philosophical discourse. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

not take the form of the “new theories” (those that insist on magnifying ever-smaller theoretical details) of the traditional philosophical research framework. Rather, we must approach the issue from a completely new angle. In my opinion, Hegel’s philosophy is, in fact, a continuation of the concept of “One” developed in the Eleatic School and Plato’s theory of ideas; it was also a theoretical re-writing of medieval Christian theology using German rhetoric. With Hegel, mysterious theological language was replaced by rational language that was speculative, yet understandable. This is an extremely important identification of Hegel’s logic. In Hegel’s philosophy, God, that most supreme being, is internalized into a most abstract, objective spirit. In the philosophical logic of Hegel’s critical phylogeny, he identifies an inherently true “other world,” hidden behind the mutable, perceptual existence (“Many”) faced by the individual consciousness. However, as opposed to Christian theology, Hegel refers to the Creator (the absolute “One”) as the Absolute Idea (From the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the *Science of Logic*). Hegel explains that as the veil of perceptual illusion is torn, the voyage and return in *The Odyssey*, as well as Faust’s tragic submission to material desires, are both given a kind of twisted inevitability and profound nonlinearity, being replayed again and again on the great stage of history. However, the creation that Hegel describes begins with an intangible, spiritual god expressing Himself through nature. This is the first step of the so-called spiritual alienation (a concept suggested first by Fichte). It was also the second stage of the process of the self-realization of the Absolute Idea; this concept was expounded in *Natural Philosophy*. Thus ideal species-essence is realized through objectification into material existence. Though the spirit “falls,” becoming natural material, this self-alienation of the ideal subject is only a transitory stage of self-affirmation. Thus alienation is equal to objectification. The transcendence of the process of natural reification is realized as the gradual, historical unfolding of scientific reason. In the third stage of the transformation of the Absolute Idea, man’s “passions” in reality become tools in the hands of the Creator (the process described by the “Cunning of Reason” in *Philosophy of Mind*). Therefore, the resulting process of alienation is the objectification of the consciousness of man as the product of his labor, and the Objective Spirit is objectified and externalized as the “invisible” laws of civil society. On a historical level, the subjectivity of man is reified into production and ownership of social property (the second nature), representing the emergence of a new round of deeper alienation in the Kingdom of Necessity. Finally, Absolute Reason, in the form of State and Law, rises above civil society — bringing to pass a new, spiritual, Kingdom of Freedom.

With regard to this incredibly broad and profound philosophical framework, in the past we tended to focus on the mature works of Hegel, those in which he clarifies his philosophical system, in order to forge a broad speculative logic system. However, in so doing we ignored the historical, formative process of this discourse system; namely, the profound cultural and historical research carried out by young Hegel (between the Tübingen and Jena periods), and especially his study of European history and life, centered on the **French Revolution** and the **Industrial Revolution** in England. Simply put, he sought for the internal relation between Napoleon on horseback and the Absolute Spirit, as well as Smith’s “invisible hand”

and “the cunning of Reason.” Of these, the subject most apposite and important to the discussion of this book is the **relationship between classical economics, as the theoretical reflection of industrial progress, and Hegel’s philosophy**. This is the critical issue which we will be discussing at this point.

Large amounts of Hegel’s early writings began to be published in the 1920s and 1930s,¹¹⁸ attracting the attention of a number of Western scholars, especially neo-Hegelians. According to the texts which we have already read, Lukacs was one of the first to identify the relationship between Hegel’s philosophy and classical economics. In his book *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics* (abbreviated below as *Young Hegel*), he concluded that the essence of Hegelian philosophy was a theoretical reflection of the French Revolution and classical bourgeois economics. In Lukacs’ words:

It is not only the case that he made the greatest and fairest German assessment of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. In addition, he is the only German thinker to have made a serious attempt to come to grips with the **industrial revolution** in England.¹¹⁹

In Lukacs’ opinion, during the Bern period, Hegel’s historical-philosophical theoretical framework was established on the foundation of an analysis of the French Revolution. During the Frankfurt period, his philosophy began to develop into studies directly based on English classical economics, even extending his research to the actual economic development of England. Lukacs’ goes on to suggest that by the Jena period, in the course of further economics study, Hegel had proposed the “problem of objective essence of bourgeois society.” I believe that this argument by Lukacs is both important and enlightening. *I notice that Professor He Lin, well-known Chinese philosopher and the Chinese translator of Hegel’s The Phenomenology of Spirit, rejects Lukacs’ opinion in this matter. He contends that we cannot be sure that Hegel used philosophical dialectics to summarize and criticize English political economy before Marx. It seems as though Professor He Lin worries that by judging Hegel too highly, we will belittle Marx. These fears are in fact, unwarranted.*¹²⁰ After the 1960s, as studies of Hegel’s early works and manuscripts became more and more in-depth, research on young Hegel as well as

¹¹⁸Hegel’s works are too numerous to be listed here completely. For the purposes of this book, only the following should be mentioned: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. H. Nohl (Tübingen, 1907), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1931–1932) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vol. 9 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1980) (translated into Chinese as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [Ge’ao’erge Weilian Fulidelixi Heige’er 格奥尔格·威廉·弗里德里希·黑格尔], *Jingshen xianxiangxue*, 精神现象学, trans. He Lin 贺麟 and Wang Jiuxing 王玖兴, 上、下 vols. (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1979)).

¹¹⁹Georg Lukacs, *The Young Hegel. Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p. xxvi (Chinese translation: Georg Lukács [Qiaozhi Lukaqi 乔治·卢卡奇], *Qingnian Heige’er*, 青年黑格尔, trans. Wang Jiuxing 王玖兴 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1963), p. 23).

¹²⁰See the “Translator’s Note” by Prof. He Lin for the Chinese translation of *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (in: *Jingshen xianxiangxue*, pp. 38–40).

analysis of the micro-theoretic origins of Hegel's philosophy became a hot topic in modern Western Hegelian philosophical research. The relationship between Hegel and classical economics also became an important topic of discussion during this time.¹²¹ Recently, various Chinese scholars have begun to become conscious of the important significance of this question and have undertaken a more serious investigation of it.¹²² This has provided a firm foundation for our further theoretical research.

In relation to the progression of European social history, the final establishment of Hegelian philosophy took place at the same time as the British industrial revolution. In terms of Western philosophical history, the formation of Hegel's philosophical system took place during the most flourishing time in bourgeois classical economics. Historical data suggests that after the 1776 publishing of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, nearly all of Europe's scholars (including its politicians) became obsessed with political economy, to the point that historians have said they were immersed in a political economic "tidal wave." An astute philosopher, Hegel was naturally drawn to study the new viewpoint on the historical development of the economic system of bourgeois society proposed by the political economists: civil society. This close contact with economics (which was actually historical reality), caused Hegel to descend from the idealistic realm of theology (idealization) to the material and economic foundation of actual history. This caused the further development of his rational logic to be established on the **highest point** of actual development in European history. *Therefore, the appraisal of several Chinese scholars is completely correct, in their statement that Hegel was one of the few scholars at the time who can be compared to Ricardo in terms of his understanding of the true significance of political economy.*¹²³

Hegel first began to be interested in economics while he worked as a tutor in Frankfurt. In *Fragments of Historical Studies*, he writes that "in modern countries, the protection of private property is the hub around which all legislation turns."¹²⁴ *This is similar to the theoretical discoveries made by young Marx in his first historical study, Kreuznach Notes. For more on this topic, refer to the discussion in the following chapter.* In the document translated by Hegel in 1798, *Vertrauliche Briefe über das vormalige staatsrechtliche Verhältnis des Waadtlandes (Pays de Vaud) zur Stadt Bern*,¹²⁵ we find a direct reflection of his interest in political

¹²¹Paul Chamley, *Économie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel* (Paris: Dallos, 1963).

¹²²See the introduction: Yongji Liu and Yufen Wang [刘永信王郁芬], *Shengyu jiazhi faxian shi*, 剩余价值发现史 [A History of the Discovery of Surplus Value] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Beijing University Press], 1992).

¹²³See the summary by Li Guanglin in Guanglin Li [李光林], "Heige'er de zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu he Makesi," 黑格尔的政治经济学研究和马克思 [Hegel's research of political economy and Marx], *Makesi Engesi yanjiu* 马克思恩格斯研究 [Marx-Engels Research], no. 19 (1994).

¹²⁴Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Fragmente historischer und politischer Studien aus der Berner und Frankfurter Zeit (ca. 1795 bis 1798)," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Walter Jaeschke, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2014), p. 600 (Chinese: Zuliang Song [宋祖良], *Qingnian Heige'er de zhexue sixiang*, 青年黑格尔的哲学思想 [The Philosophical Thought of Young Hegel] (Hunan: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe 湖南教育出版社 [Hunan Educational Press], 1989), p. 170).

¹²⁵Jean Jacques Cart, *Vertrauliche Briefe über das vormalige staatsrechtliche Verhältnis des Waadtlandes (Pays de Vaud) zur Stadt Bern: Eine völlige Aufdeckung der ehemaligen Oligarchie des Standes Bern*, Aus dem Französischen eines verstorbenen Schweizer [Jean Jacques Cart] übersetzt

economy. In early 1799, in the early stages of Hegel's economics research, the first work that he studied in-depth was Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*.¹²⁶ According to the British scholar Raymond Plant, Hegel was able to develop at least three new viewpoints from Steuart's book: first, a historical philosophical framework based on historicism; second, an affirmation of the emergence of freedom and self-development caused by modern "economies of exchange" (civil society) from a historical perspective; third, from the new perspective of modern commercial society, a confirmation of the state in having a conscious effect on actual life.¹²⁷ We can be certain that Hegel's studies of economics never were simple theoretical acquisitions, but rather tended to be **confirmations of the actual history of logical structures**. In fact, historicism and teleology are both what one would expect to find in German rationalism (from Johann Herder to Friedrich William von Schelling), and as such, these were not unfamiliar, alien concepts to Hegel.

Hegel's comprehensive study of classical economics primarily took place during his years at Jena University in the early 19th century. Around 1800, he assiduously studied the works of Smith and other political economists. Between 1803 and 1804, he often made mention of Smith's economic philosophy in his lectures; at this time, the issue of **labor** became one of the principal objects of his thought. Other related issues included the essence of human activity, division of labor, and the civil society, etc. *In the first volume of Hegel's Jenaer Realphilosophie, written during this same time period, he directly cites the famous example of the division of labor in a nail factory used by Smith in Wealth of Nations. This was the same time period to which Lukacs referred when he wrote that this might have been the time when Hegel "saw through to the essence and laws of bourgeois society."*

The theoretical expression of Hegel's entire criticism of political economy appeared in his later *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. In this book, Hegel calls political economy, "One of the sciences which have originated in the modern age."¹²⁸ He believed that in political economy, "The development of science is

und mit Anmerkungen versehen [von Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel], trans. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (Frankfurt am Main: In der Jägerschen Buchhandlung, 1798).

¹²⁶Between February 19 and May 16 of 1799, Hegel read the German translation of Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy* and wrote a good number of notes. These documents have since been lost.

¹²⁷Refer Raymond Plant, "Economic and Social Integration in Hegel's Political Philosophy," in *Hegel's Social and Political Thought. The Philosophy of Objective Spirit*, ed. Donald Phillip Verene (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), pp. 62–63 (Chinese transl.: "Heige'er zhengzhi zhexue zhong de jingji he shehui de zhengtixing," pp. 274–275).

¹²⁸§ 189, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1991] 2003). The text appeared first as *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Umrisse* (Werk, Vollständige Ausgabe, Bd. 8, hrsg. von Dr. Eduard Gans, Berlin 1833). For a modern German edition, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, vol. 14,1 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus and Elisabeth Weisser-Lohmann Grottsch (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, [1833] 2009), for a Chinese translation, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [Ge'ao'erger Weilian Fulidelixi Heige'er 格奥尔格·威廉·弗里德里希·黑格尔], *Fa zhexue yuanli*, 法哲学原理, trans. Fan Yang 范扬, Zhang Qitai 张企泰 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1961). Since *Philosophy of Right* is a highly structured text, individual sections are referred to by their section number much as Hegel did it himself.

of interest in showing how **thought** extracts from the endless multitude of details with which it is initially confronted the simple principles of the thing, the understanding which works within it and controls it (see Smith, Say, and Ricardo).¹²⁹ This “understanding,” if expressed in non-speculative language, can be considered to be essence or law. In Hegel’s opinion, the object of political economy is the non-intuitive necessity in civil society which appears to operate without purpose. Hegel believed that, “... this apparently scattered and thoughtless activity [of the commercial society] is subject to a necessity which arises of its own accord”¹³⁰ He further argued that political economy “finds the laws underlying a mass of contingent occurrences.”¹³¹ He clearly understood that within the movements of modern economics, various economic relationships (“all the interconnections”) help or hinder each other, forming a unique “interrelated phenomenon.” He knew that this was especially true of economic phenomena, which, “seem to depend on the arbitrary will of the individual,” but just like the movements of the solar system, they, “present only irregular movements to the eye, yet [their] laws can nevertheless be recognized.”¹³² We can see that Hegel’s overall understanding of classical economics is correct; he viewed economics as a science that discovered predictable patterns and laws of operation in the midst of market activity which was seen as capricious and random. It should not be difficult for us to see that the thrust of Hegel’s research here approaches the methodological logic of the social materialism of classical economics, the topic of our previous section.

One point that I must emphasize here is that an economics perspective very rarely appears in direct theoretical form during the mid-late period in the development of Hegel’s philosophy. More often than not, it is hidden within Hegel’s philosophical discourse. *Occasionally, he identifies the importance of political economy in philosophical logic, such as in some of the chapters of Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences and Elements of the Philosophy of Right.* Some of the important theoretical rules of classical economics were indirectly represented as vital, logical points linking Hegel’s philosophy to reality. Examples of these points include the questions of **labor** and the **civil society**. *These rules would later become more profound, more direct theoretical links between Marx’s scientific methodology of historical materialism and his economics research.*

1.2.2 Labor: externalized activity by which man creates himself and establishes social history.

In Hegel’s philosophical discourse, “labor” had two critical theoretical meanings. The first can be found in the progression of the individual consciousness in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here, labor acts as the dialectic intermediary between master, slave, and substance, and it is expressed as the individual subject

¹²⁹In the footnote to § 189 of *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel lists Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Say’s *A Treatise on Political Economy* and Ricardo’s *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*.

¹³⁰§ 189, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹³¹§ 189, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹³²§ 189, *Philosophy of Right*.

establishing his own path in the object. The second is the departure of the Absolute Idea from Heaven (*Science of Logic*); after experiencing the natural fall in the process of the total alienation of the Absolute Idea, labor becomes the third stage in the alienation of the subject. This is the necessary means by which the Absolute Spirit realizes itself through the workings of social history. Please note that here I have made an important distinction between labor defined on **the level of the individual, and labor defined on the level of the species.**

According to Hegel, in the process of the total alienation (objectification) of the Idea, labor is first the necessary link by which the spiritual essence of humanity — the Absolute Spirit expressing itself as the secondary master in reality — is realized. According to the macro logic that we have already established in the earlier section, labor is the externalization and alienation of the subjective species-consciousness, because the species-essence of the spiritual man is realized as material activity, and is directly objectified in the form of labor products. Thus labor implies the self-generation of the human race, as well as the subjective self-establishment and self-exaltation of man. The assertion that through labor, subjective humanity creates itself is a direct rejection of the simple, externalized Creation theory. At the same time, through the effect of labor, the natural material that was already alienated before the emergence of human labor, was, in terms of the form of labor, elevated to the level of the products of conscious spiritual creative evolution. This also marked a conscious shift away from the noetic science of general interest in nature embodied by the biblical phrase, “nothing is new under the sun,” and towards subjective, conscious, practical knowledge. The result of this subjective, conscious labor (the social existence of civil society) can be identified as the “second nature” of the form of the Idea materialized at a higher level, as opposed to the original, completely materialized first nature. Please note that here we find an important paradox: through labor, man “assembles” the inorganic sphere and the organic sphere around himself. Labor causes the spirit to become the master of natural matter, this is the process of returning from dead matter to ideal existence, an escape from natural materialization (alienation). However, on a higher level, labor causes the spirit to be enslaved by man-made substance (economic wealth). **The objectification of labor is also a new, deeper form of alienation of the idea in the subjective activity of humans (the process of social history); in other words, the second fall of the subject in the reified market.** Of course, this was an **inevitable** alienation that **cannot be rejected.**

It should be noted that in the past, we most often approached Hegel’s rules of labor from the perspective of philosophy, ignoring the actual source of these labor rules — Hegel’s concrete evidence discovered through economics research. In fact, Hegel’s research and reflection on the question of labor was an important progression in his early economics studies; it was also a critical basis for the profundity of his later philosophical logic. It can be concluded that the formation of Hegel’s historical dialectic was directly related to his comprehension of the question of modern labor. *As such, the following viewpoint presented by Lukacs in The Young Hegel has a certain degree of truth: “All the same, it is highly probable that the study of Adam Smith was a turning-point in Hegel’s evolution. The problem [...] is the problem of work as the central mode of human activity, [...] And it*

*is highly probable that this problem emerges for the first time in the course of reading Adam Smith, [...].*¹³³ More importantly, Hegel's philosophical structure was established on the philosophical foundation of classical economics, though his metaphysical thinking was much more profound than the latter, in particular his critical reflections on modern social relationships.

On this point, let us refer to Hegel's own writings. According to Hegel, political economy, "begins with the above viewpoints [need and labor] but must go on to explain mass relationships and mass movements in their qualitative and quantitative determinacy and complexity."¹³⁴ Here labor is identified as the essence and central element of political economy. *This appears similar to Marx's views in Grundrisse (not the 1844 Manuscripts).* Furthermore, what appears here is not the abstract philosophical speculation which we have seen before, but appears more as concrete economics discourse. Moving our analysis of Hegel's study of labor one step further, then labor can be divided into the following three, gradually more profound, aspects:

The first aspect is the **affect of labor on the self-generation of humankind**. In the course of his studies on political economy, Hegel had discovered that labor was the skilled, agent activity by which man changes exterior objects; the essence of labor was to use objects to re-form objects. "It allows for nature to wear down its place, stands aside and easily dominates the whole — cunning."¹³⁵ On the other hand, labor is the objective activity which allows the construction of the human subject. In the process of labor, man recreates exterior objects, all while establishing himself as a subjective man. Whether considering humans as individuals or a collective, this self-establishment of subjectivity includes both of these aspects. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes:

By the most diverse processes, work specifically applies to these numerous ends the material which is immediately provided by nature. This process of formation gives the means their value and appropriateness, so that man, as a consumer, is chiefly concerned with **human** products, and it is human effort which he consumes.¹³⁶

Please note that Hegel's point of emphasis in relation to rules of labor (work) is not on labor in the natural economy as once stressed by the physiocrats, but rather labor in industrial production. *This understanding is directly related to the definition of labor to which we referred earlier in our discussion of Smith and Senior.* The objectification of the subject is limited in traditional agricultural labor, where the activity of the subject is only an auxiliary element in the natural productive process. Only in industrial labor did human creativity fully manifest

¹³³Lukacs, *The Young Hegel*, p. 172, Georg Lukacs, *Der junge Hegel: über die Beziehungen von Dialektik und Ökonomie* (Zürich, 1948), p. 210.

¹³⁴§ 189, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹³⁵From *Philosophy of the Spirit*, I.b.: "Will," Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe III*, vol. 8 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Rolf Peter Horstmann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, [1803/04] 1976), p. 207.

¹³⁶§ 196, *Philosophy of Right*.

its essential characteristic of “shaping.” This is the true meaning of Hegel’s objectification of labor, and as such forms the objective foundation of the alienation of the human subject on the level of modern social history. *Not until Marx’s The German Ideology in 1845–1846 did he realize the importance of this viewpoint advanced by Hegel.*

This naturally brings us to the second level of discussion. In Hegel’s theories on labor, he did not propose empty, non-historical rules, but rather provided concrete, conclusive evidence based on **modern conditions of commodity production**. Here we can already see the development of the rule of **labor in general**, which was, in fact, social labor formed on the basis of modern division of labor and exchange. *In our previous discussion of the economics of Smith and Ricardo, we already explained the social historical circumstances generated by “labor in general.”* In §§ 524–526 of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, labor and division of labor always appear together.¹³⁷ This means that humans are not only laborers in the process of self-completion, but also, under the division of labor, **recognize each other as independent individuals engaged in collective labor**. Within the economics of Smith and Ricardo, Hegel observed that in the society of exchange under conditions of the division of labor, every individual works to fulfill a certain kind of need. However, as the individual joins the whole of society, he objectively fulfills the needs of many individuals. In fact, Hegel was already conscious of the unique relationship between the social division of labor and the labor of individuals. He writes:

and the work of each and every man is, in consideration of its content, there for a contribution to the needs of all, just as all are there to satisfy all of his needs; thus it has a worth; his work and his wealth are not what they are for him rather what they are for all; meeting needs is a common dependency of all on each other; it is the one need that is common.¹³⁸

Therefore, as Hegel writes in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, **particular individuals**, in their **particular labor**, **unconsciously** accomplish a kind of **universal labor**.¹³⁹ Thus Hegel had virtually identified the concept of **labor in general**. *This appears to be a philosophical explanation of Smith’s economics concepts.* Hegel thus differentiated between the labor involved in manipulating material substance by early humans and the labor involved in modern commodity production. He pointed out that labor, as a phenomenon of modern social economic exchange, is consumed in the labor of the whole object, and this consumed labor is only allocated to labor itself, thus becoming a singular form of labor. The singular form

¹³⁷§§ 524–526, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, (1830), vol. 20 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Hans-Christian Lucas, ed. Unter Mitarbeit von Udo Rameil (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, [1830] 1992), pp. 498–499.

¹³⁸*Zum Organischen und zur Philosophie des Geistes*, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, vol. 6 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Düsing and Heinz Kimmerle (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, [1803/04] 1975), p. 322.

¹³⁹(Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 195 (Chinese transl.: *Jingshen xianxiangxue*, vol. 1, p. 234).

of labor becomes even more mechanized through this allocation. Because of the ensuing diversity, labor becomes even more general, and even more alienated from the totality. Hegel discovered that this general labor was most often represented **in the form of tools**. Hegel recognized that unlike labor products, which are unable to be effective outside their respective realms, tools possess a certain generality. Hegel asserts that the subjectivity of labor becomes general through tools. This is a concept first put forth by Hegel.

Along these lines, Hegel observes:

The individual sets itself apart from general skill, refines itself, becomes more skillful than others and invents better tools. Yet this individual skill is truly universal; it is the invention of something universal. Others learn it, sublimate its distinctiveness, thus transforming it immediately into a common good.¹⁴⁰

Tools of labor are the objectification of general skill; of course, this generality is a realization of the Idea. However, only by virtue of labor are material tools able to participate in the exploitation of the natural world. Without labor, they are nothing but empty, useless substance.

On this point, Hegel gradually arrived at a new level of understanding: the separation of **concrete labor from abstract labor**. This is the third level of meaning in Hegel's rules of labor, and it is also the most important aspect. This is because a movement towards generality (abstract) and the infinite were always the intrinsic logical orientation of Hegel's philosophy. According to Hegel, concrete labor, which is confined to matter, is carried out by people who create rudimentary products; those who labor in close connection with nature, such as the productive labor of farmers who "rise at dawn to clear the wasteland up, and carry back their hoe beneath the moon."¹⁴¹ This is also the form of labor based on the manipulation of substance in the traditional, natural economy of early humankind. However, Hegel made it clear that concrete labor was original labor, because it preserves natural substance. This form of labor, as a whole, was also very crude. Even so, in the result of concrete labor, man was able to preserve his **complete individuality**. *Later, Marx makes mention of this point in Capital and its manuscripts.* But after entering the modern society of exchange, the labor of individuals in the system of social division of labor inevitably transitions to abstract labor. **This is a form of monotonous labor in which the individual becomes a slave to social relationships, in which the individual is relegated to the role of a piece in a machine.** "Because labor exists only to satisfy abstract, self-existing needs, that labor must be abstract." In this kind of labor, man discerns himself — the individuality of his own form — as well as his existence in relation to others, through free, abstract labor. Furthermore, this abstract labor is the commonality of labor; in other words, the

¹⁴⁰ *Zum Organischen und zur Philosophie des Geistes*, Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, p. 320.

¹⁴¹ Here, the poem (*Gui yuan tian ju* 归园田居) "Returning to live in the South (II)" by Tao Yuanming is the source of the author's description of rural life. **Tao Yuanming** (365–427), also referred to as Tao Qian or T'ao Ch'ien, was a famous nature poet, regarded as the greatest poet of the Six Dynasties period. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

commonality of all kinds of labor can be expressed as the least common denominator of all labor. Through this denominator, labor can be compared, and any existing thing or money can be directly transformed into it. Here, Hegel's understanding has obviously already attained the level of Ricardo, because the abstract labor and economic exchanges which he described can only appear in a large-scale, industrial, machine production process. In *Philosophy of Right*, he writes:

The universal and objective aspect of work consists, in that process of **abstraction** which confers a specific character on means and needs and hence also on production, so giving rise to the **division of labour**. Through this division, the work of the individual becomes **simpler**, so that his skill at his abstract work becomes greater, as does the volume of his output. At the same time, this abstraction of skill and means makes the **dependence** and **reciprocity** of human beings in the satisfaction of their other needs complete and entirely necessary. Furthermore, the abstraction of production makes work increasingly **mechanical**, so that the human being is eventually able to step aside and let a **machine** take his place.¹⁴²

The division of labor to which Hegel refers is evidently the Smithian division of labor that takes place in factories. Hegel saw that in this form of division of labor, knowledge was the mediating element of the abstract nature of labor: having a certain degree of knowledge meant being able to transfer certain forms of labor to machines; manipulating the object became more and more formalized. Dull, mechanical labor centered on machines causes laborers to be constrained to work within the confines of that mode of labor in which they are proficient; as labor grows ever more single-dimensional, it becomes ever more perfect. *Later, in Capital and its manuscripts, Marx would conduct a deeper investigation of this point, based on a more scientific theoretical foundation.* I believe that Hegel was able to discern the essence of modern mechanized production with great acuity. Of course, I believe that this is the Absolute Idea revealing itself directly through abstract labor.

At this point, allow me to supplement two points of understanding. First, Hegel saw the advancement of the form of labor, but because he only viewed concrete labor as a traditional form of labor, he was unable to recognize the relationship between concrete labor and abstract labor in **modern labor**. Second, what Hegel identified here already neared the “general” labor of civil society; it was a kind of materialized, passive thing, the objective result of cooperative action, a whole new level of the alienation of both the individual and the species-subject. This is what led to the blindness and spontaneity of the whole of civil society. However, Hegel fully validated the objectively progressive nature of economic alienation caused by the object of labor. In this belief, Hegel was in accord with the classical economists; where he differed was his validation of the **historical impermanence** of economic alienation, while classical economists were concerned with proving its natural and

¹⁴²§ 198, *Philosophy of Right*.

eternal nature. *An interesting contrast is that the young Marx of 1844 began by denying the objectively progressive significance of alienation.*

1.2.3 Blindness and spontaneity of economics: The cunning of reason beneath civil society

Once Hegel comprehended the principle of general labor of exchange and the division of labor, he was able to determine the essence of *civil society* [bürgerliche Gesellschaft].¹⁴³ In Lukacs' *The Young Hegel*, he writes that,

Hegel is the first thinker in Germany to acknowledge that economic life is governed by laws of its own, and for all his illusions about the mitigating influence of the state he never conceives of state intervention in the form of abstract regulations which would do violence to the nature of the economy or attempt, [as Fichte does,] to do away with the laws of capitalism by a simple fiat.¹⁴⁴

This is a profound analysis, from which it is clear that Hegel did not simply validate the reality of a civil society with classical economics as its premise. First, for Hegel — standing upon the peak of actual history — “the creation of civil society belongs to the modern world, which for the first time allows all determinations of the Absolute Idea to attain their rights.”¹⁴⁵ This is an affirmation of **history**. At the same time, in *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel, being a Prussian citizen, started from the farthest possible perspective of the Absolute Idea and defined civil society as, “division and appearance”¹⁴⁶ within the development of ethical substance. This was another transcendent, critical repudiation. Hegel's views are clearly dialectic

¹⁴³The term *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is sometimes translated as “bourgeois society” which is certainly different from the English *civil society*. In Chinese translations of the works of Marx and Engels, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is either rendered as “civil society” or “bourgeois society”, depending on the concrete context of the usage. Most commonly, in all writings before 1844 *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is translated as “civil society” while in writings beginning with and after 1845, the term is in most cases rendered as “bourgeois society” whereas the term “civil society” is kept in a handful of specific contexts. It should also be mentioned that Hegel's thinking on civil society stood under direct influence of Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. However, there are essential differences between the term “civil society” in Ferguson's understanding of the meaning of political rights and “bürgerliche Gesellschaft” in the sense of economic system and basic social structure as Hegel derived them from classical economics. Indeed, there is a twist of irony in the history of thought in that the term *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* became popular in the German-language academic community when Ferguson's work was translated into German at a time when Hegel read and quoted from Ferguson's book. On the other hand, with a second glance at history we have to admit that Hegel's thought on *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* was also influenced by the background of the rise of late medieval citizens (owners of assets) [as opposed to peasants]. In the analytical context of Germany's “civil society” introduced by Kant and Fichte, Hegel absorbed a comprehensive understanding founded on discussions by Locke and Montesquieu about state and “civil society”. For Kant, civil society in itself is the abstract expression of a natural intent of historical development of society. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁴⁴Lukacs, *The Young Hegel*, p. 413, Lukacs, *Der junge Hegel*, p. 458.

¹⁴⁵§ 182, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁴⁶§ 33 (b), *Philosophy of Right*.

here. At this point we have to ask ourselves why Hegel succeeded in developing such a profound understanding.

In Hegel's opinion, civil society was a society of private ownership which had been dispelled and dissipated. This was also an important characteristic of the economic system arbitrarily composed of market relationships. Here the necessity of arbitrariness paves the way towards **anarchy and competition**. Hegel writes in *Philosophy of Right*:

In civil society, each individual is his own end, and all else means nothing to him. But he cannot accomplish the full extent of his ends without reference to others; these others are therefore means to the end of the particular [person]. But through its reference to others, the particular end takes on the form of universality, and gains satisfaction by simultaneously satisfying the welfare of others.¹⁴⁷

This argument appears to be a direct philosophical explanation of Hume and Smith's concept of self-interest. Hegel wrote, "The selfish end in its actualization, conditioned in this way by universality, establishes a system of all-round interdependence."¹⁴⁸ This is because, as Hegel writes in *Philosophy of Right*,

Individuals, as citizens of this state, are **private persons** who have their own interest as their end. Since this end is mediated through the universal, which thus **appears** to the individuals as a means, they can attain their end only in so far as they themselves determine their knowledge, volition, and action in a universal way and make themselves links in the chain of this **continuum** [Zusammenhang].¹⁴⁹

What is this "universal?" It is the **spontaneously formed, objectively materialized "social relationship"** which exists in the exchange market of civil society.

It is clear that by this point, Hegel had already begun to understand two principles of the self-generation of civil society: first, an individual only begins with a concern for his own interest ("each individual is his own end"¹⁵⁰); second, social relationships arbitrarily form between individuals — the belief that, "God is for all" gave way to, "the market unifies all." In Hegel's opinion, the essence of civil society was in fact the utilitarian economic structure of bourgeois social relationships. Hegel pointed out that in this kind of society, each individual appears to seek after his own ends, but in the end, the objective product of human activity forms social relationships that no individual desired from the start. Thus, in the work of each individual, he consciously or unconsciously accomplishes **collective** work, and by the same token, as he accomplishes collective work, he is accomplishing his own private work. The collective becomes the product of the individual, and for this product, the individual is able to sacrifice his self; precisely because of

¹⁴⁷Addition (H,G) to § 182 of *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁴⁸§ 183, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁴⁹§ 187, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁵⁰§ 524, Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, p. 498.

this, he is conversely able to obtain his self. Hegel clearly observed that this self-interested selfishness which appeared on the surface of bourgeois society, along with the ownership of property as well as the labor and use of tools by individuals in order to satisfy their own needs, seemed to separate and make individuals independent from other people. However, in reality, all these objectively form a kind of new social relationship. This is an **objective social relationship formed by human activity but not determined by individual human will**. Here, both social production and humans themselves unconditionally serve those constantly forming social links. *Refer back to my evaluation of Smith's economic theory in the first section of this chapter. It is clear that in his understanding of social relationships, Hegel's views are much more profound and conscious than Smith's.*

Hegel viewed the arbitrarily forming social relationships in civil society as the representation of the social universality (the material form of the Absolute Idea at this historical stratum). In the progression of social history, this was a new development of the absolute "One." As such, Hegel was naturally very active in validating the formation of these social relationships. More specifically, Hegel's validation here can be studied from two perspectives: first, on the structural section of history, these arbitrarily forming social relationships are directly manifested as the essence of modern society. Hegel argues that the uniqueness of man is encapsulated within his needs. The fulfillment of these needs lies in social relations, and social relations are the common wealth that fulfill social relations. However, upon entering into social relationships, individuals are no longer simply controlled by their own wills, but rather more profoundly come under the influence of a universal force. Second, by changing the line of argument and approaching social relationships from the perspective of social history, then what we find is that in the course of social life, these arbitrarily forming social relationships are really the direct representation of "the cunning of reason" within civil society: they form Smith's "invisible hand." The difference between the two is that Smith's "invisible hand" is concrete; it is the spontaneous, adjusting power in the free competition of bourgeois society. Hegel's thinking, on the other hand, is focused on conducting a **broader, historical rational examination that surpasses economics**.

In addition, only after fully understanding Hegel's views on civil society can we continue our analysis of modern labor theories of value and theories of money, both of which are based on Hegel's concepts of the relationships between particular labor and general labor as well as concrete labor and abstract labor. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel remarks that the essence of civil society is, "The mediation of **need** and the satisfaction of the **individual** [des Einzelnen] through his work and through the work and satisfaction of the needs of **all the others** — the system of **needs**."¹⁵¹ In this system, the most critical step is the transformation of the particular labor of the individual to the general labor of society. This is because in the civil society which has exchange as its premise, it is through satisfying one's own needs that labor is "for others." The ultimate result of this labor, whose purpose is exchange, is the establishment of a system of economic dependency among completely materialized relationships. *This harks back to Smith's analogy*

¹⁵¹ § 188, *Philosophy of Right*.

of the selfish baker and tailor. Each individual is only able to engage in social relationships through the exchange of goods on the market. It is also only in the circulation of commodities on the market that the value of the various forms of labor, after being materialized into products, is able to be compared and realized. Thus, social relationships are essentially value relationships under the **façade of material**. Also in Hegel's opinion, relationships of value are the result of the transformation of concrete labor into abstract labor, as well as the result of the replacement of the traditional substantial economy by the market system. In this system, ownership is realized by large numbers of people in exchange; value is the realization of property. This is because in market exchange relationships, the laborer is separated from the material content of concrete labor. "The power of the laborer is in abstraction and analysis, in explaining concrete labor on the basis of abstract elements." In Hegel's opinion, value is the **abstraction** of the equality of two substances; only in the realm of exchange within a modern civil society can this formula that equates two substances appear. The formula only exists because others have things to sell; the internal formula of material is its value. *In Hegel's System of Ethical Life, Hegel explains that value itself is an abstract equation, an ideal measure. The measure of the Absolute Idea was, in fact, price!* Taking one step further, Hegel argued that the multitude of economics studies that viewed need as a substance must realize their own concept: the Abstract. Their common concept should be material itself; but that material should be common: money is just such a concept of substance: it is the potential form of all need, the unification of all material. Thus Hegel transitioned from value to money.

For Hegel, money appears on the following logical level. In the workings of the market, commodities only become money through exchange; it is only through exchange that the **subjectivity** of the owners of commodities obtain the recognition of society. Although money is a common commodity, as an abstract value, it is unable to satisfy any particular need. It is only a common means by which particular goods may be purchased. "The purpose of money is intermediary."¹⁵² Hegel understood that in the civil society, the power of those who control money originates from the material relationship that money is able to guarantee as a commodity in exchange. Thus money also determines the social standing of owners of commodities. In the civil society, money distinguishes itself from commodities; money, as an abstract value relationship, originally only appeared as a "conciliatory element," but at once became a thing that rules all of society. **In fact, money became a true subject!** Though the essence of market exchange is the transformation of "abstract" into a **ruling power** (this is what Hegel was intent on validating), but because this abstract was still represented in material form, so it can only be **manifested as worship of material in an inverted form**. In the whole of Hegel's logical development, the commodity economy is the last form of the alienation of the Absolute Spirit in the progression of social history. At this point, labor has already become **abstract**, general labor; value is already an **abstraction** of the "concept of labor," and money is the material form of the **abstract** concept of value. Man's obsession with money is not only a mistake, but it is also false

¹⁵²Refer to § 204, *Philosophy of Right*.

— a form of alienation. Therefore, as the completely dependent totality created by humankind in social life, money is necessarily represented as the dependency on a new form of material (economy). This point is an important premise for the functioning of classical economics, while Hegel, **who consistently believed in a critical phenomenology of the idea**, categorically refuted it.

On this point, I fundamentally agree that Hegel's judgment of the nature of money represents the highest point of political economy before Marx. *Marx's correct understanding of these theories of Hegel took place after 1845, especially after his 1857–1858 economics research.*¹⁵³ *In the past, we discussed Hegel's influence on Marx's Capital, but this was usually confined to a discussion of the dialectic logic of "from abstract to concrete," in terms of methodology. However, in terms of deeper historical philosophy, Marx's historical phenomenology was also comparable to Hegel's phenomenology of the Idea.*

1.2.4 Inverted philosophical logic and the inverted economic world: Hegel's critique of political economy

We already know that Hegel's philosophy is an inverted worldview, where ideas become the objective essence of the world. In the past, we usually used the critical standards of philosophical materialism to demonstrate the fundamental fallacies in this view of the world; this is a logical thing to do. However, from the level of social historical reality, we did not dig deeper to find the underlying causes of these fallacies. I have discovered that the most important cause that led to Hegel's fallacious thinking was his misunderstanding of the economic process of bourgeois society. It is interesting that on a certain level, Hegel truly recognized that **bourgeois civil society was an inverted society!** This recognition took place because: first, in bourgeois civil society, **the abstract (general labor — value — money) became dominant in reality.** In reality, this seems to further confirm the high point of Hegel's abstract determinism of the idea. This objective idealism was an incorrect understanding of Ricardo's notion of large-scale industry in an advanced economy that uses money. Second, because the power by which the universality (money) becomes dominant is **spontaneously realized though blind economics processes** in civil society, so Hegel necessarily refutes this form of economic inevitability, because he expects the emergence of a **free kingdom** based on the universal ethics of the Absolute Idea (State and Law). Third, determinism of the idea in the civil society is represented through the inversion of the substance of commodities and money. Hegel naturally continued to oppose the inverted sinking of the spirit into social property, in order to reject any form of fetish.

I would like to point out that Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is really a form of phenomenology based on individual consciousness (the common experience of the masses). On the basis of Kant's cognitive phenomenology, Hegel's was a rational, critical progression from the presence of common experience to a philosophical consciousness. He wanted to use criticism to reduce the world (*Verkehrte Welt*) that had been inverted by commonly accepted knowledge. Hegel's *Phänomenolo-*

¹⁵³Refer to the eighth chapter of this book.

gie des Geistes is a re-inversion of the inverted image within the individual consciousness.¹⁵⁴ In it, Hegel tries to tell us that the perceptual, material world which we observe with our eyes is, in fact, false. This is because it is formed from self-consciousness relying on rational concepts. *Phenomenology of the Spirit* describes the process of phenomenon falsification which moves from particular to special to general (objective perception — self-consciousness — idea) and from an individual “many” to a general “one.” However, the overall logic of Hegel’s philosophical system is still a Species subjective (Absolute Idea), phenomenology of self-identification. The “Eden” in logic (species concept noumenon) is portrayed as material nature in an alienated and inverted way. Furthermore, social history — the second nature — causes the alienation of actual people through the objectification of labor. This happens especially when civil society is an actually inverted world. This is a movement from general to particular (abstract to concrete): the civil society (relationships) which is formed arbitrarily between individuals (respectively) is only the specifically represented as the materialization into economics of conceptual relationships (the abstract general concept); labor — value — money (credit). This is the “One” as it exists in reality. Of course, the inversion of which Hegel speaks is the opposite of what we understand it to mean. In his opinion, concepts are the essence of the world, but they are inversely represented as substance. The rational goal of self-consciousness is the law of history itself, but it is inversely represented as the realization of the unconscious universality in blind movement of infinite individual subjectivities (passionate self-interested men). Thus Hegel maintained a critical attitude towards civil society and its theoretical manifestation: political economy. At the same time, in terms of methodology, because readiness is a premise rejected by phenomenology, while accepted as a foundational principle by bourgeois classical economists (this is the epistemological source of the non-historical, non-critical nature of classical economics, as well as its underlying idealist foundation), Hegel’s transcendent **criticism** of classical economics was a logical necessity.

To summarize the points I made in the preceding paragraphs, for Hegel, the civil society is an arbitrary union of exchange. Man’s labor does not provide aid to society for altruistic reasons, but rather exceedingly selfish ones. Need is not directly derived from people who have need, but rather created by people who try to obtain profit from it. This view seems to be a simple copy of Smith’s similar argument. This is because in classical economics, individuals, under conditions of private ownership of property, arbitrarily form mutual relations in free competition. Individuals are passive; only then can there be natural economic laws. Smith’s economic man works for his own individual gain, but objectively increases the welfare of the whole of society. This occurs after individual intentions, as people are controlled by the “invisible hand.” This appears to be a reappearance of the idea of “everyone for himself, God for everyone.” At the same time, the arbitrary social organization brought on by the invisible hand is not the external,

¹⁵⁴Refer to the second chapter of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Hegels Dialektik. Fünf hermeneutische Studien* (Chinese transl.: Hans-Georg Gadamer [H•G•Jiadamo’er 伽达默尔], *Jiadamo’er lun Heige’er*, 伽达默尔论黑格尔, trans. Zhang Zhiwei 张志伟 (光明日报出版社 Guangming ribao chubanshe, 1992)).

coercive “organization of others” as in the feudal economy, but rather the spontaneous force of the economic operation of bourgeois society in free competition. Though individuals do not know and do not care, in fact they are in the process of creating a totality. On the surface, it appears as though Hegel approves of Smith when he uses the words “the cunning of reason.” But in terms of the essence of the issue, Hegel is more deeply opposed to this point.

What then are the grounds for Hegel’s opposition? Looking from a distance, Hegel is opposed to the individualist views of natural law proposed by modern bourgeois enlightenment. *This is the theoretical starting point which Smith inherited from Hume.* In reality, the value coordinates of Hegel’s Absolute Idea point towards a collective, universal theory — conscious, absolute good. However, as Hegel points out in *Natural Law: The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law*, this system of need and labor fundamentally appears as a refutation of universal ethics in civil society. Hegel writes in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, “There is a notion [Vorstellung] that, in relation to his needs, man lived in freedom in a so-called state of nature in which he had only so-called natural needs of a simple kind and in which, to satisfy these, he employed only those means with which a contingent nature immediately provided him.”¹⁵⁵ This notion is the essence of Smith’s civil society. But Hegel, on the other hand, argued that “Needs and labour in this common good comprise an extraordinary system of commonality and common dependency in a large people; a life of its own of death, that through its blind and elementary movement this way and that, like like a wild animal, requires constant, strict mastery and taming.”¹⁵⁶ This is because material gain becomes the purpose of individuals; the Absolute Idea is only able to exert a latent effect on humans who exist in a state of blind “passion” and material lust. The Absolute Idea fundamentally loses subjectivity through the submission of individuals to materialized relationships through mutual rejection (struggle of competition) and the “limitless evil” of the quest for material, quantifiable possessions. As Hegel states in *Natural Law: The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law*, “As this system of reality resides wholly in the negative and infinite, thus follows its relationship to positive totality, that it be treated as completely negative by the same and must submit to its rule.”¹⁵⁷ This is still a form of inversion! This inversion of spirit and social possessions inevitably leads to this situation described by Hegel in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*: “Just as civil society is the field of conflict in which the private interest of each individual comes up against that of everyone else, so do we here encounter the conflict between private interests and particular concerns of the community.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, civil society appears to be a form of social order, but is rather composed of universal hatred; within the net of this hatred, every individual tries to control all that he is able to control. Though this order is subject to

¹⁵⁵§ 194, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁵⁶*Zum Organischen und zur Philosophie des Geistes*, Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, p. 324.

¹⁵⁷Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften*, vol. 4 of *Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag), p. 450.

¹⁵⁸§ 289, *Philosophy of Right*.

progress in general and outwardly demonstrates constant improvement, but this improvement is nothing but a false universality, like a beautiful robe which “inside is full of lice.”

Secondly, in civil society, “manufactories and workshops base their existence on the misery of one class.” Hegel referred to this as the process of “dehumanization of the worker.” He writes,

[...] but the value of labour sinks to the same degree to which the amount produced rises; the work becomes ever more dead, it becomes machine work, the dexterity of the individual is infinitely more limited, and the factory worker’s consciousness is degraded to stupor, and the relation between the unique nature of labour and the infinite nature of needs will become obvious, as will a blind dependency, so that a distant operation will often suddenly constrain and render an entire class of people’s work, through which they meet their needs, curbed, superfluous and useless.¹⁵⁹

This is because material wealth is a center of attraction; it sucks up all within its range of control, just like a large fish swallows a smaller one. Whoever has wealth will have more and more of it. At the same time, his pursuit of further wealth leads to a situation in which, “despite an excess of wealth, civil society is not wealthy enough — i. e. its own distinct resources are not sufficient — to prevent an excess of poverty and the formation of a rabble.”¹⁶⁰ Hegel realized that if there was no intervention made, then the tendency of civil society was towards self-destruction. “The important question of how poverty can be remedied is one which agitates and torments modern societies especially.”¹⁶¹

In Hegel’s opinion, the “invisible hand” in civil society is really the economically materialized absolute spirit. He ultimately attempts to demonstrate the “invisible hand” of the absolute spirit. As such, Hegel did not simply rise above Smith in terms of philosophy, but also profoundly transcended and criticized Smith. On one hand, Hegel fully validated the external force and blind necessity revealed by classical economics in substance (commodity economy — civil society). On the other hand, he demanded a form of subjective, conscious freedom. This is because in Hegel’s opinion, all living things are subjects, though subjects themselves only have the *possibility* of attaining spiritual being. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel asserts that humans are different from other living organisms:

A person is a subject which is aware of this subjectivity, for as a person, I am completely for myself: the person is the individuality of freedom in pure-being-for-itself... it contains this unity of the infinite and the utterly finite, of the determinate boundary and the completely unbounded.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ *Zum Organischen und zur Philosophie des Geistes*, Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, pp. 323–324.

¹⁶⁰ § 245, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁶¹ § 244, *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁶² Addition (H) to § 35 of *Philosophy of Right*.

Therefore, in human existence, the natural inevitability of civil society is only the prehistoric developmental state of spiritual subjectivity; man ought to walk towards the free realm of full self-consciousness. Of course, on a societal level, this freedom and self-consciousness is not realized through human individuals, but can only be realized through State and Law, the representatives of self-conscious, universal ethics. Hegel writes in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*:

The state in and for itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of freedom, and it is the absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual. The state is the spirit which is present in the world and which consciously realizes itself therein, whereas in nature, it actualizes itself only as the other of itself.¹⁶³

It is plain to see that State and Law demonstrate the overall true consciousness of the absolute spirit. This is because only State and Law have the possibility of filling in the negative ethical cracks in civil society. This is the only way to prevent these cracks from leading to greater differences and inequality. Doing so will finally eliminate the blindness in production and social life, intuitively realizing the unification of particular matter and universal matter. *Some scholars, such as Wilhelm Raimund Beyer in Hegel's Concept of Practice, have suggested that Hegel's views here actually "approach the philosophy of a **planned economy**."*¹⁶⁴ *This is also an important reason why Hegel was opposed to the seemingly materialist historical perspective advanced by classical economists that **civil society determines State and Law**. However, as a citizen on Prussia's soil, Hegel uses caricatures to identify feudal nations in opposition to absolute ethics.* Of course, through art, religion, and philosophy, Hegel was finally able to attain the Absolute Idea, the freedom and absolute infinity of non-objectification. This was the final philosophical resting place for Hegel, who experienced endless changes in philosophy and inversion after inversion: objective idealism and the greatest historical idealist theory.

The link between Hegel and classical economics is worthy of our careful study. Even though Antonio Gramsci's claim that Marx's historical materialism "equals Hegel plus David Ricardo" is too simplistic and exaggerated, a meticulous analysis of this hidden theoretical clue will deepen our understanding of the context of Hegel's philosophical discourse.¹⁶⁵ Even more importantly, in so doing, we are able to clearly differentiate for the first time the **important heterogeneity** in Marx's critiques of Hegel; how before 1845, Marx directly rejects Hegel from a philosophical premise, where after 1845 (especially in works such as *Grundrisse* and *Capital*) he confronts and re-accepts Hegel's historical dialectic.

¹⁶³Addition (G) to § 258 of *Philosophy of Right*.

¹⁶⁴Wilhelm Raimund Beyer, "Der Begriff der Praxis bei Hegel," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 6, no. 5 (1958): p. 754 (Chinese transl.: "Heige'er de shijian gainian," p. 9).

¹⁶⁵See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: *Yu zhong zhaji*, p. 476).

1.3 The Third Hidden Clue: Economic Philosophical Logic in Direct Opposition to Bourgeois Society

In the previous section, we observed Hegel's theoretical transcendence and overall rejection of classical economics; this was an objective historical criticism based in rationalism. In this section, we will unveil another critique of bourgeois social economic relations, one that originates from a different, complex viewpoint. Here we will discover that both in terms of the perspective of the criticism as well as the political position of its discourse, it establishes an important heterogeneous context. Though proponents of this viewpoint correctly rejected the eternal nature of bourgeois society, in terms of the underlying logic of a philosophical conception of history, these critiques take a great step backwards relative to the theories of economics we studied in previous sections. As we move along the logic of the critiques of bourgeois society in this section, we will draw nearer to young Marx's early forays into economics.

1.3.1 The subjective judgment of economic romanticism

The first personage we will discuss in this section is the well-known French economist Jean Charles Sismondi.¹⁶⁶ In the early 19th century when Sismondi published *On Commercial Wealth*, he could still be considered a follower of Adam Smith, but by 1819 when he published *New Principles of Political Economy*, he had already become an opponent and critic of classical economics. According to Marx, Sismondi brought an end not only to French classical economics, but also to all of classical bourgeois economics. In *Historical Notes on the Analysis of Commodities*, part of his *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx writes: "Whereas Ricardo's political economy ruthlessly draws its final conclusion and therewith ends, Sismondi supplements this ending by expressing doubt in political economy itself."¹⁶⁷ Upholding the position of the petty bourgeois, Sismondi revealed the internal social contradictions of the modes of production of bourgeois society. This prompted Marx to write in *Theories of Surplus Value*, that in recognizing these contradictions, Sismondi had begun a new era in the history of political economy.

However, there is a related issue that we must confront here: just as researchers have often ignored the philosophical framework of the methodology of classical economics, so too have they overlooked the important philosophical discourse implied in Sismondi's economics. Consequently, the philosophical intentions hidden in Sismondi's economics have been concealed. In general, Smith and Ricardo's science studied only material. Ultimately, their science viewed economics as a theory of "personal enrichment." In contrast, Sismondi asserted that political economy should be centered on humans, a "theory that seeks the welfare of mankind."

¹⁶⁶Jean Charles Leonard de Sismondi (1773–1842) was a French economist. His most influential publications include *Tableau de l'agriculture toscane* (1801), *De la richesse commerciale* (1803), *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique* [New Principles of Political Economy] (1819), and *Études sur l'économie politique* (1837).

¹⁶⁷Marx, "Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie," p. 46 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan," p. 51).

Specifically, as the founder of the theoretical foundation of political economy, Sismondi was an idealized small producer. Sismondi's theoretical intentions are **profound but reactionary**. Because of his opposition to bourgeois enlightenment thinking, Sismondi's intentions resemble those of the French theologian Pascal. Furthermore, in Sismondi's observation of the starting point of social history and his rejection of the standards of bourgeois society, he **once again returned to the subject**. In contrast to Hegel, who used the objective progression of **historical inevitability** (what **is**) to criticize bourgeois society, Sismondi's critique was rooted in the **subjective ethics** (what **should** be) of a narrow, petty bourgeois individual subjectivity. Classical economics viewed bourgeois society as a natural institution, whereas Sismondi argued that only the petty bourgeois was a truly natural institution. Where Ricardo moved from modern, social, objective labor towards materialized social structure and laws of operation, Sismondi moved from individual subjective labor towards philosophical abstraction. From the perspective of philosophical history, Hegel's criticism of classical economics targeted the **objectivist and self-criticizing** nature of classical economics, while Sismondi's critique of Ricardo can be seen as the **struggle between subjectivism and objectivism**. Ricardo analyzed the internal relationships between the economic activities of bourgeois society and the structure of this society, endeavoring to discover what those relationships **were**; Sismondi, on the other hand, strove to show what those relationships **ought to be**. *This was the object of Roscher's critique*. Sismondi's internal logic is a **value postulate established on subjective ethical principles**. Because of this, the philosophical perspective of history supporting Sismondi's study of political economy lagged far behind his that of his contemporaries; in comparison to the social materialism of bourgeois political economy, it was a **latent idealist conception of history** in terms of the logical methodology of political economy. Though this issue has largely been one of which Chinese economists have not been conscious, Sismondi's conception of history is critical to our correct understanding of young Marx's philosophical context in 1844.

Let us first look at Sismondi's theoretical starting point and methodology. Sismondi found it necessary to differentiate between Smith, Ricardo, and other political economists. In terms of methodology Sismondi writes in *New Principles of Political Economy* that, "Unlike his predecessors, Smith did not invent *a priori* a theory to which he proceeded to reconcile existing fact; rather, he recognized that the science of government is experimental, that it can only be founded upon the history of diverse peoples, and that only by careful observation of fact can principles be induced."¹⁶⁸ Sismondi praises Smith for "observing each fact in the context of its social position, and never losing sight of the diverse circumstances to which it is linked, as well as the results by which it would influence the happiness of the nation."¹⁶⁹ His assertion here is correct. However, Sismondi felt that political economy should not be too caught up in counting numbers. As a "social science," the problems that political economy attempts to solve are much more complex than those faced in the natural sciences; at the same time, Sismondi argued that the

¹⁶⁸ John Charles Leonard Sismondi, *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique, ou de la richesse dans ses rapports avec la population* (1819), p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 43).

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 57 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 47).

resolution of these issues required conscience as much as it required reason. From this we can see that even though all of these thinkers have discussed the complexity of the social sciences, Ricardo and even Say all emphasized the objective nature of social life, while Sismondi emphasized the role of the human conscience. An important characteristic of Sismondi's theories is their **theoretical projection of the ethical values of human subjectivity** onto economics. This is the cause of the fundamental difference in **starting point** between Sismondi and bourgeois political economists.

Beginning with this subjective critique of the bourgeois economy, Sismondi strangely calls bourgeois classical economics "a thought system of philosophers." As Sismondi writes in *Studies on Political Economy*, Smith's followers had caused a philosophy that once had some degree of humanist consideration (moral sentiment and the economic man) to become an abstract, material theory.¹⁷⁰ *The targets of Sismondi's criticisms are basically those that we have reviewed in earlier sections: Ricardo, Say, McCulloch, and Senior etc. It is also safe to say that Sismondi was unable to distinguish between classical economics and vulgar economics.* Sismondi especially criticizes Ricardo, who he calls "Smith's bad student," accusing Ricardo of "completely abstracting man, proposing as purpose of [political economy] only the unlimited growth of wealth."¹⁷¹ Sismondi caustically comments that Ricardo "plunges into abstractions that cause man, to whom wealth belongs and who is the primary beneficiary of it, to completely disappear from view."¹⁷² In Sismondi's opinion, human consumption should be the purpose of economic life. Production is only the material means by which consumption is satisfied, while distribution acts as an intermediary between production and consumption. Sismondi argued that **consumption determines production**. *This assertion was radically put forth in a different form more than a century later by Jean Baudrillard.* Thus, we see that in contrast to Ricardo's objectivist theoretical base of "production for the sake of production," Sismondi bases his analysis on the consumption carried out by human subjects. Sismondi argues that in leaving human subjectivity, Ricardo causes Smith's theories to become **abstract**. Objectively speaking, this is an apt criticism.

For Sismondi, "abstract" is a pejorative term. It implies "indifference," "material," and even "anti-human" or "inhuman." *It is important for us to remember this point, because when we begin our study of Marx's Paris Notes, we will see the reemergence of this opinion towards the term "abstract."* Sismondi accuses political economists such as Ricardo of being members of an inhuman "Chrematistic school." He writes in *New Principles of Political Economy* that their theories were "only concerned with abstractly searching for an increase in wealth." To Sismondi, they only viewed society as stacks of wealth, "fixing their gaze on the abstract nature of things," ignoring the human subjects who make up society. Sismondi wrote that using the standards of the "Chrematistic school," would lead to the

¹⁷⁰See John Charles Leonard Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1837), vol. 1, p. 62 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 46).

¹⁷¹Sismondi, *New Principles*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 479).

¹⁷²*ibid.*, p. 55 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 47).

belief that “wealth is everything; man is nothing.”¹⁷³ As Sismondi summarizes in *Studies on Political Economy*, these theorists “only see material and cannot see man.”¹⁷⁴ *Sismondi’s objections to “the Chrematistic school” cause me to reflect on similar words written by Mao Zedong in his annotation of the Soviet Political Economy Textbook. It may be that this is not coincidental duplication.* For the sake of material, the chrematists viewed individuals to be as insignificant as ants, which could be casually sacrificed and carelessly trampled, claiming that the sacrifice of the individual is necessary for the “greater abstract.” For Sismondi, theories of political economy that care for humans should be concrete (subjective), whereas theories that emphasize the objective material conditions of human social life are “abstract.” *He appears unable to realize that his own views use a subjective philosophical abstract to oppose an objective scientific abstract.* In regards to the inverted logic validated by Ricardo of man/material and production/consumption, Sismondi angrily asks: “In forgetting man and replacing him with things, has not England sacrificed the ends for the means?”¹⁷⁵ Sismondi believed that any theoretical structure constructed upon the foundation of this inverted logic would be flimsy. He also believed that if this theoretical structure is called science, then it can only be a “science of deception.”¹⁷⁶ This is an abstract science that sacrifices its roots to grow its branches. According to Sismondi, humans are the “roots” of science, and material can only be the “branches” (tools and means) that exist to serve humans.

Now that we have analyzed Sismondi’s theoretical starting point and scientific principles, let us delve deeper into the actual content of his economics theories; this will allow us to see the fundamental opposition between Sismondi and the classical economists. Unlike the “Chrematistic school,” Sismondi also tried to start from facts, though the “facts” to which he accorded attention were “related to men and not to wealth.”¹⁷⁷ Returning to the social historical reality of the time in *Studies on Political Economy*, Sismondi admits that “in terms of industry, man has made tremendous progress, applying this progress to science, he is capable of lording over nature.”¹⁷⁸ Humankind had already completely conquered nature, changing the face of the Earth; in this process, the development of the ability of humans to produce and accumulate wealth “has never before come so far in past centuries.”¹⁷⁹ *These words were later echoed by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto.* In this sense, it seems as though the “Chrematistic School” was already victorious. However, Sismondi was very clear “that the many results of the industrialized world were not the creations of economists, who can only observe and explain these phenomena.”¹⁸⁰ It can be said that with this assertion,

¹⁷³*ibid.*, p. 314 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 457).

¹⁷⁴Sismondi, *Études sur l’économie politique*, vol. 1, p. viii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 5).

¹⁷⁵Sismondi, *New Principles*, p. ix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 9).

¹⁷⁶See Sismondi, *Études sur l’économie politique*, vol. 2, p. 4 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 3).

¹⁷⁷*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 46 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 37).

¹⁷⁸*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. viii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 6).

¹⁷⁹See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. viii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 6).

¹⁸⁰See *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 210–211 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 125).

Sismondi succinctly grasped the non-critical, all-validating mono-dimensional nature of the methodology of bourgeois classical economists. In other words, in the face of great economic progress as we turn our gaze from the material towards the human, we will begin to have new suspicions. Specifically, that though wealth has increased and production has developed, are all people really any happier? Sismondi's answer to this important question was an unequivocal "no."

There are three aspects to Sismondi's argument. First, in terms of the labor theory of value, Sismondi analyzed the economic structure of the rejection of **subjectivity**. In Sismondi's opinion, expressed in *New Principles of Political Economy*, Smith's labor theory of value was worthy of validation: "we agree with Adam Smith that labor is the only source of wealth, and that economizing is the only means by which it is accumulated."¹⁸¹ Note that Sismondi identifies and understands Smith's labor theory of value from the perspective of human subjectivity. Sismondi emphasizes the **subjectivity** of wealth, believing that labor is the source of all material enjoyment: for Sismondi, **only labor creates wealth**. Sismondi argues that because "only labor produces, refines, and gathers natural things, it is the only source of wealth."¹⁸² He clearly points out that "exchange does not fundamentally alter the nature of wealth."¹⁸³ Sismondi's understanding of this point is very clear, but he also wants us to realize that labor is done by **humans**, and wealth is the result of **human** labor, created to meet **human** needs. As such, wealth must serve humans and all people should enjoy the fruits of their labor; this is a complete and logically sound induction. Sismondi argues in *Studies on Political Economy* that, in social economic life "everything originates with man, everything is related to man, everything is related to inter-connected men."¹⁸⁴ By this same logic, production is the condition for improvements in human life, while wealth is only the means by which social happiness is obtained. This means that we cannot inverse the relationship and falsely believe that humans live for wealth. "The object of the study of political economy is shared material wealth among all people."¹⁸⁵ Sismondi argues that we must work for the progress of mankind and not of things, and political economy must be used to increase the happiness of mankind and not simply for increasing wealth.¹⁸⁶ At this point, Sismondi has begun to argue in philosophical terms. We can truly say that Sismondi's perspective of political economy actually constitutes a form of philosophical economics — **a form of humanist ethics of economics**. This is the premise of his understanding of the labor theory of value. Also, because of this understanding, Sismondi is clearly opposed to the fetishisms of bourgeois political economy. However, Sismondi, whose opposition is expressed very differently from Hegel's, is also distinct from the later socialist economists who began with objective logic and inverted

¹⁸¹Sismondi, *New Principles*, p. 51 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 45).

¹⁸²Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 1, p. 155 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 105).

¹⁸³Sismondi, *New Principles*, p. 67 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 51).

¹⁸⁴Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 1, p. viii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 6).

¹⁸⁵*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. ix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 6).

¹⁸⁶*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 4 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 3).

Ricardo's theories in order to oppose bourgeois society. *Refer to chapter five of this book for a further discussion of this point.*

With the internal logic of his philosophy thus rooted in humanism, Sismondi was naturally able to discover things that **should not** have happened in the reality of social history. In bourgeois society, the actual result of the creation of wealth by labor is **anti-human**. Sismondi points out that ever since human society has had occupational divisions of labor and commerce to facilitate market exchange, individuals no longer labor for themselves, but rather labor for society. Thus, individuals expect to receive compensation for their labor from society (market exchange), and the result of this expectation is that price estimation based on exchange value replaces price estimation based on goods. Although labor, and not exchange, is what creates wealth, labor, under conditions of division of labors and market exchange, is social labor. In *New Principles of Political Economy*, Sismondi writes that "once man becomes a member of society, an abstract being," he becomes separated from his labor; this is the separation between isolated man and social man, between individual labor and social labor.¹⁸⁷ Sismondi continues, arguing that "isolated man works so he can rest, while social man works so someone else can rest."¹⁸⁸ To make matters worse, exchange spontaneously generated the value of social price estimation. Sismondi contends that "social ideas of value replace individual ideas of value; beyond that, abstract ideas replace concrete ideas."¹⁸⁹ As such, the needs of value replace the true needs of individuals and abstract material replaces their true labor. This separation of man and labor is the precondition of plundering the product of labor. It is precisely in this separation that capitalists are able to categorize land, capital, and labor as three forms of product. In the name of profit and rent, it allows capitalists to exploit the laborer; this necessarily leads to the phenomenon that in the creation of value by labor, the laborer is unable to possess wealth in exchange. Thus, we see that bourgeois society is truly inhuman.

The second aspect of Sismondi's argument begins with humans. Sismondi is inevitably opposed to the industrialism that forms as a result of the unrestrained pursuit of profit by bourgeois society. Consequently, in facing the reality of bourgeois society, Sismondi proposed a subjective criticism based in humanism, using logic that was the polar opposite of the empirical "Chrematistic school." Of course, as we have already discussed, this criticism was still based on an idealized image of the subjectivity of the petty bourgeoisie. Taking his logic even further, we are not surprised to see that he was opposed to "technological advancement at the expense of humans," as well as the replacement of the artisanal industry by large-scale industry.¹⁹⁰ This is because he believed that large-scale industry was the reason behind the perpetuation of poverty. Sismondi thus condemns Ricardo's whole-hearted validation of the liberal economics of bourgeois society's large-scale industrial development, calling it "industrialism." Industrialism takes no thought

¹⁸⁷Sismondi, *New Principles*, pp. 66-67 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 54).

¹⁸⁸*ibid.*, pp. 79-80 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 61).

¹⁸⁹Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 2, p. 375 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 219).

¹⁹⁰See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 33-34 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 29).

for its evil consequences: the theft of workers' jobs by machines, the weakening of the legitimate interest of labor by full-blown competition, and the inability of uncontrolled production to bring wealth to the poor. Rather, production was strangling the poor to death. Sismondi argues that "as industrialism moves inexorably forward, production continues to increase, and the plight of the producer becomes ever more grave." In *Studies on Political Economy*, Sismondi questions whether or not as industrialism "exerts itself to increase material wealth, only seeing things and not people, will the result not merely be a mass of impoverished people?"¹⁹¹ As industrialism seeks to prove the victory of man over nature, perhaps it is in reality "proving the victory of man over man."¹⁹² *This critical logic was later made more profound by the instrumental critique of reason by the Frankfurt School. Refer to the Dialectic of Enlightenment by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.* In this industrialized society where production takes place for the sake of production, any instance "where things replace progress, man must suffer."¹⁹³ In *New Principles of Political Economy*, Sismondi argues that it is precisely the improvements in industry that "tend to increase the inequality of men. The more advanced one nation is in the arts and manufactures, the greater the gap between the fate of those who labor and those who enjoy the fruits of their labor."¹⁹⁴ Of course, Sismondi is sure to point out that this is not due to the use of machines in and of itself, but rather "due to the social organization that enslaves workers."¹⁹⁵

The third aspect of Sismondi's argument is his opposition to Smith's concept of laissez-faire and his ensuing condemnation of civil society itself. Of course, what Sismondi was suggesting was not simply a regressive view of history; he was able to objectively see a certain amount of progress in historical development. He placed the "liberal institutions" of slavery, feudalism, and bourgeois society on successively higher planes in the developmental progression of humankind, because, as he writes in *Studies on Political Economy*, they "were each regarded in turn as successful creations, the progress of civilization."¹⁹⁶ Though the institution of slavery appears so despicable in our eyes, it was at least an important improvement over the savagery of prehistoric society. Compared with slavery, feudalism also had its "moment of glory;" feudal rulers were at least able to "replace the whip with relations of protection, buying, and selling." However, "feudal lords later yet again clamped the chains of bondage on the poor, rendering feudalism unbearable;" this paved the way for the liberal system of his day, one that "broke the chains that had fettered the poor for so long."¹⁹⁷ However, approaching the matter from another perspective, Sismondi argues that before forming bourgeois

¹⁹¹Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 1, p. 45–46 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol 1, p. 36).

¹⁹²*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 74 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 43).

¹⁹³*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 220 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 131).

¹⁹⁴Sismondi, *New Principles*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, p. 61).

¹⁹⁵John Charles Leonard Sismondi [Rang Sha'er Lie'aona'er Ximeng de Xisimengdi 让·沙尔·列奥纳尔·西蒙·德·西斯蒙第], *Zhengzhi jingjixue xin yuanli*, 政治经济学新原理, trans. He Qin 何钦 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1964), p. 450, footnote 1.

¹⁹⁶Sismondi, *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 1, p. 93 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 64).

¹⁹⁷*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 93 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 64).

society, though “man did not know what his goal should be in labor each person knew what he needed. In contrast, after men formed society and began to trade, the predominant thinking was no longer to search for mutual benefit, but rather, from that time forth, to pursue individual gain.”¹⁹⁸

Sismondi believed that because every individual is only concerned with the pursuit of his own personal profit in production, this necessarily causes the **anarchic state** and **blind development** of liberal bourgeois society in economic life. In reality, this is the precondition of laissez-faire and free competition, principles so praised by the chrematists. The chrematists postulate that society will be able to objectively regulate the self-interested activity of individuals, and “spontaneously repair the damage it suffers as a result of it.” Sismondi argues that this assumption is unrealistic. As Sismondi argues in *Studies on Political Economy*, this is because in the market, people are faced with the following actual situation: first, “under conditions of unlimited growth, growth is not determined by the market;” second, “when production surpasses the demands of consumption, difficulties and suffering arise and the market becomes blocked; when a surplus of wealth is produced, all those who participate in its creation are rewarded with misery.”¹⁹⁹ More dangerously, this will lead to the **economic crisis of surplus production**. Sismondi remarked that in the developmental process of bourgeois social economics, the frequency of these crises that were so destructive to productive forces was greatly increasing; in the past, they might occur once every several years, but before long, they had begun to occur once every few months or even every few weeks.²⁰⁰ For this reason, Sismondi proposed that **nations** concern themselves with **regulation and guidance**, even suggesting a theory of limited production. As Sismondi writes in *Studies on Political Economy*, “if, through the continual perfection of technology and tools, the force of production continues to grow, then it will reach a point where further increases in quantity should be replaced by increases in quality.” However, the improvement of quality is also limited: “production is thus limited, and these limits should not be crossed.”²⁰¹ Please note that Sismondi’s views here are fundamentally different from those of Hegel: the former is concerned with limiting the expansion of production from the needs and interests of the petty bourgeoisie in order to attenuate conflict, while the latter consciously resolves conflict through further objective historical development. This is an important comparison of their differences in logic. *In this complex context, we are able to more clearly see logical precursors to Marx’s theory of a socialist planned economy.*

It is important to point out here that though Sismondi did not exert direct influence on Marx, his theories lay an important foundation for Proudhon’s thought. It was later, around 1844, that Proudhon would influence young Marx to read Sismondi’s works.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 73–74 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 53).

¹⁹⁹ See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 114 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 79).

²⁰⁰ See *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 219 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 2, p. 130).

²⁰¹ See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 140 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yanjiu*, vol. 1, p. 95–96).

1.3.2 Proudhon's socialist critique of political economy

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon²⁰² was a 19th century French petty bourgeois socialist and economist, as well as the first philosopher to directly associate with young Marx. Marx's association with Proudhon began in 1844–1845 while he was living in Paris; this was also the first time young Marx began researching economics. *According to historical records, Proudhon was active in Paris from February to April of 1844, then again in September of that year until February of 1845. During this time, he primarily associated with Ruge, Bakunin, Grün, and young Marx. When they gathered together, they often listened to Beethoven's symphonies and discussed Hegel's philosophy (they did not discuss economics). At these meetings, it was not uncommon for young Marx and Proudhon to engage in fierce debate that lasted through the night.*

Proudhon's fame began with his 1840 work, *What Is Property: Or, An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* (abbreviated below as *What is Property*). According to Franz Mehring, "The French considered Proudhon to be their most outstanding representative, and in a certain sense his book *What is Property* is the earliest outpost of socialism in Western Europe."²⁰³ In the beginning, young Marx fully endorsed this work. *This attitude continued until Marx's The Holy Family*. As for the relationship between Proudhon and Marx, Chinese philosophers have primarily focused on Marx's criticisms of Proudhon, ignoring the early influence that the latter had on the former. Even when Chinese philosophers make note of this influence, they still accord too much attention to the effect of Proudhon's socialist views on young Marx. In this area, the research of foreign scholars is, in fact, more advanced. Cornu believes that before 1845, Marx was in full agreement with Proudhon's critique of the concept of bourgeois property, as evidenced by his repeated praising of Proudhon as an excellent French socialist. Meanwhile, the concepts found in two of Proudhon's works were of great influence to young Marx: first, the idea that "the economy is the foundation of history" as suggested in Proudhon's *What is Property*. Second, the notion in Proudhon's 1843 work *The Creation of Order in Humanity* that social development depends on economic laws; as such, any reckless attempts at intervening in this process are doomed to fail. Additionally, Proudhon's anti-religious stance provided

²⁰²**Pierre-Joseph Proudhon** (1809–1865) was born in Besançon, France, to a family of peasants and artisans. His family's financial difficulties forced Proudhon to leave home and make a living at the age of 12. He worked as a tavern-boy and then an apprentice printer, even opening his own small press with some other young printers, though the venture eventually failed. In 1837, he wrote *Essai de grammaire générale* (*Essay on General Grammar*), which won him a bursary of 1500 francs a year for three years from the Academy of Besançon. With this money, he was able to move to Paris and begin theoretical writing. His principal publications include *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* [*What is Property?*] (1840), *La Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité* (1843), *Philosophie de la misère* (1846), *Solution du problème social* (1848), *Idée générale de la révolution au XIX^e siècle* [*General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century*] (1851), *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'Eglise* [*Of justice in the Revolution and the Church*] (1858).

²⁰³See Franz Mehring [Fu Meilin 弗·梅林], *Makesi he Engesi shi kexue gongchan zhuyi de chuangshiren*, 马克思和恩格斯是科学共产主义的创始人 [Marx and Engels Are the Founders of Scientific Communism], trans. He Qingxin 何清新 (Beijing 北京: Sanlian shudian 三联书店 [Joint Publishing], 1962), p. 91.

a direct philosophical challenge to Marx.²⁰⁴ We can see that these important concepts were already beginning to develop into **prior factors** in philosophical historical theory. I believe that this is very important. *In fact, it is almost a universal consensus that before 1845, Proudhon's philosophy was of direct influence on Marx. For instance, Marx's great-grandson Robert Jean Longuet, pointed out that, "Marx was attracted by Proudhon because the latter was not an utopian. Proudhon attempted to prove that a society system based on private ownership (the foundation of capitalist society) was the cause of workers' poverty. He also considered religion an important barrier on the path of the progress of science. On these two points, Marx and Proudhon shared their opinions."*²⁰⁵ *I am in agreement that Proudhon greatly influenced Marx before 1845, but exactly what in Proudhon's philosophy influenced Marx before 1845, and how much it influenced him, are both points that require further discussion.*

In *What is Property*, Proudhon discusses the important concept of **[mutualism in] society**. This is a principle that was greatly emphasized by French socialists, and as such, formed the background of Proudhon's philosophy. Proudhon writes, "Man, then, is an animal living in society. Society means the sum total of relationships; in short, a system. Now, all systems exist only under certain conditions."²⁰⁶ *This concept directly influenced Marx. Marx's views on the subject were similar to Proudhon's until Marx's letter Marx to Annenkov.* Furthermore, according to Proudhon, the difference between man and animal arises because "human society is **complex** in its nature."²⁰⁷ This complexity is one that encompasses all three levels of society: social relations, justice, and fairness. At the same time, Proudhon emphasized that studies of social history should focus more on the economic relations in society. This is because economic relations in society are like the systems and organs of the human body; they are functions of historical development. As such, studying social history is similar to studying the human body. Elucidating on this point, Proudhon points out in *A Letter to M. Blanqui*, "As is the property of a nation, so is its family, its marriage, its religion, its civil and military organization, and its legislative and judicial institutions."²⁰⁸ This seems to be an establishment of a principle of social materialism. In his letter to M. Bergmann on October 24, 1844, Proudhon writes:

Association, morale and economic relations must all be researched objectively in their substance if any arbitrary conclusion is to be avoided. Any subjective stance hitherto taken by philosophers and legislators is

²⁰⁴ Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1954–1968), vol. 2, p. 73 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 2, pp. 79–80).

²⁰⁵ *Karl Marx, mon arrière-grand-père*, p. xxx (Chinese: *Wode waiceng zufu Ka'er Makesi*, p. 72).

²⁰⁶ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Qu'est ce que la propriété? Ou recherches sur le principe du droit et du gouvernement* (Paris: Librairie de Prévot, 1844), p. 242 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 240).

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 271 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 263).

²⁰⁸ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Lettre à M. Blanqui, professeur d'économie politique au conservatoire des arts et métiers, sur la propriété* (Paris: Librairie de Prévot, 1841), p. 83 (Chinese transl.: Pierre-Joseph Proudhon [Bi'ai'er Yuesefu Puludong 比埃尔·约瑟夫·蒲鲁东], *Shenme shi suoyouquan*, 什么是所有权, trans. Kong Shubing 孙署冰 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1963), p. 381).

to be abandoned, and the quest for the objectively given laws which enable us to study the social relations created by economic facts must go beyond the vague conceptions of *just* and *good*.²⁰⁹

Cornu believes that here, Proudhon's philosophy has come under the influence of Marx. Chinese philosopher Zhao Zhongying does not agree with this judgment, arguing that at this point in time, young Marx had not yet developed such a clear philosophical argument. I agree with Mr. Zhao's assessment.

At this point, I would like to clarify several points. First, Proudhon's views on property that **approach social materialism (but not historical materialism)** are not his independent theoretical creations, but rather the inevitable result of the influence of political economy. Nevertheless, his arguments, whether in terms of methodology or fundamental logic, are all far below the level reached by classical economics. Second, Proudhon's exposition of his views on property in his early books is not a comprehensive principle of theoretical logic; rather, his theoretical discourse at this point in time is primarily centered on the logic of political rights. Third, these social materialist views were not the primary arguments that externally influenced young Marx; at this time, Marx was also more concerned with Proudhon's criticism political rights in bourgeois society. We can see that Marx had not yet consciously begun to be concerned with **how** to conduct this criticism. In the following paragraphs, we will look at the specific elements of Proudhon's philosophy that inspired Marx.

In his book *What is Property*, Proudhon puts forth his now-famous slogan: "property is robbery." (*"la propriété, c'est le vol"*). Proudhon directly confronts the assumptions made by the defenders of the system of privately owned property, refuting them one by one. To the assertion that "the establishment of property is man's most important institution," Proudhon retorts, "Yes, just as monarchy was man's most glorious institution." To the claim that property "is the application of justice," Proudhon stresses that any justice without equality of wealth will only be a balance with false weights. To the assumption that property "is completely moral," Proudhon replies, "a hungry stomach knows not morality." To the argument that property "is an eternal principle," Proudhon responds, "all institutions and laws based on property will all perish."²¹⁰ In summary, Proudhon asserts that though property is "the corner-stone of all which is, [it is the] stumbling-block of all which **ought to be**."²¹¹ This is a rejection and criticism of property based on the logic of legal rights. *These eloquently expressed contrasting sentences were in line with Marx's cognitive structure at this time.*

How, then, was Proudhon able to reach these revolutionary conclusions? After his initial validation of the bourgeois revolution that overthrew feudalism and despotism, Proudhon begins his critique with the views on natural rights held by bourgeois society. This was the starting point of Proudhon's theory, as well as the entry point for his analyses. In *What is Property*, he discovered that the assertion

²⁰⁹A. M. Bergmann, Paris, 24 October 1844, in *Correspondance de P.-J. Proudhon*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Internationale A. Lacroix et Ce., Éditeurs), p. 166.

²¹⁰Proudhon, *Qu'est ce que la propriété?*, pp. 81–82 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, pp. 106–107).

²¹¹*ibid.*, pp. 81–82 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, pp. 106–107).

of bourgeois Enlightenment thinkers that all men are created equal before the law was only an abstract definition of rights; in reality, “It implies an inequality in fortune and station incompatible with even a shadow of equality in rights.”²¹² This is a profound and penetrating insight. In his analysis of the four fundamental rights contained in the “Declaration of Rights,” (liberty, property, security, and security) Proudhon set his sights on “property.” Proudhon believed that if the wealth of each individual is really the wealth of society and if all individuals are really equal, then any member of society ought to be able to control any portion of the wealth of society at his whim. In this sense, property cannot help but contradict itself. As Proudhon writes in *What is Property*, the right of individuals to own property is necessarily anti-social, a thing that exists outside of society.²¹³ Proudhon elaborates on the anti-social nature of property, writing that, “The French Revolution may be defined as **the substitution of real right for personal right**; that is to say, in the days of feudalism, the value of property depended upon the standing of the proprietor, while, after the Revolution, the regard for the man was proportional to his property.”²¹⁴ This is a profound insight.

In *What is Property*, Proudhon writes that during an earlier age in the development of the human race, “Men lived in a state of communism; whether positive or negative it matters little. Then there was no property, not even private possession.”²¹⁵ In such a community, the laborer is the owner of the product of his labor; thus, the man who does not work, cannot live. However, it was precisely the development and accumulation of labor that later produced private ownership — property. Proudhon exclaimed that **property is the product of labor**, which property began human inequality. Taking our analysis one step further, we can see here that Proudhon accepts the labor theory of value proposed by classical economics, even though he misunderstands it. In *What is Property*, Proudhon recognizes certain differences between the physiocrats and the post-Smithian classical economists. He writes: “According to Quesnay and the early economists, all production comes from the land. Smith, Ricardo, and de Tracy, on the contrary, say that labor is the sole agent of production.”²¹⁶ While Say asserts that land, capital, and labor are all productive, Proudhon argues that only through the cooperation of these three equally necessary elements can production be carried out; land, capital, or labor in and of themselves are “sterile and unproductive.”²¹⁷ In this argument, Proudhon was correct. In response to Say’s utility theory of value, Proudhon writes:

Elsewhere Say says, and repeats, that value being based on utility, and utility depending entirely on our needs, whims, customs, &c., value is as variable as opinion. Now, political economy being the science of values, of their production, distribution, exchange, and consumption, —

²¹²*ibid.*, p. 27 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 59).

²¹³Refer to *ibid.*, pp. 47–48 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 77).

²¹⁴Proudhon, *Blanqui*, p. 78 (Chinese transl.: Proudhon, *Suoyouquan*, pp. 377–378).

²¹⁵Proudhon, *Qu’est ce que la propriété?*, p. 69 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 96).

²¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 175 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 185).

²¹⁷Refer to *ibid.*, p. 175 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 186).

if exchangeable value cannot be absolutely determined, how is political economy possible? How can it be a science?²¹⁸

Proudhon understands that the same product in a different time or place might require more or less time and cost to produce — making value a seemingly variable quantity. Nevertheless, in *What is Property* he argues that through changes in product or monetary expression “the price of every product in demand should be its cost in time and outlay — neither more nor less.”²¹⁹ This means that “the exchangeable value of a product, [is] measured neither by the opinion of the buyer nor that of the seller, but by the amount of time and outlay which it has cost.”²²⁰ Though Proudhon’s manner of expression is imprecise, we can still see that his basic line of thinking is towards the labor theory of value. *Later, we will see that in 1844, young Marx did not accept Proudhon’s validation of the labor theory of value.*

In *What is Property*, Proudhon also criticizes the system of commodity exchange in bourgeois society. According to the political economists, commodity exchange is a voluntary, equal exchange between free persons. However, they fail to realize that “the civilized laborer who bakes a loaf that he may eat a slice of bread, who builds a palace that he may sleep in a stable, who weaves rich fabrics that he may dress in rags, who produces everything that he may dispense with everything, — is not free.”²²¹ Thus, we see that there is no free, inherently equal exchange; rather, “it is an economical law that **labor must be balanced by product** and it is a fact that, with property, production costs more than it is worth.”²²² At the same time, if the precondition of all exchange is the equal value of products, then profit is not only impossible, but it is also unjust. Given this constraint, how do things in reality happen? Proudhon points out that the labor of workers already creates a kind of value; as such, this value is their property. However, they had not sold this value, nor had they exchanged it; as for the capitalist, he had not expended any energy in obtaining it. How was it then that this property, created by workers, had fallen into the pockets of the capitalists? Proudhon wrote: “Wages [are] the cost of the daily maintenance and refreshment of the laborer. You [the capitalist] are wrong in calling it the price of a sale.”²²³ Here, Proudhon points out that the wages paid by capitalists to workers are not equal to the value of the commodities being produced. The capitalist not only fails to pay the laborer his full daily wage, but “he has paid nothing for that immense power which results from the union and harmony of laborers, and the convergence and simultaneousness of their efforts.”²²⁴ Therefore, what appears to be an equal exchange before the law, is in fact “robbery and deceit.” I believe that the critical analysis of bourgeois society conducted here by Proudhon carried a great deal of

²¹⁸Proudhon, *Qu’est ce que la propriété?*, p. 145 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, pp. 157–158).

²¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 146 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 160).

²²⁰*ibid.*, p. 156 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 168).

²²¹Refer to *ibid.*, p. 140 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 155).

²²²*ibid.*, pp. 239–240 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, pp. 237–238).

²²³*ibid.*, p. 118 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 136).

²²⁴*ibid.*, p. 121 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 139).

weight in its day. Of all the content in *What is Property*, these points were likely the ones that found Marx's greatest approval.

In spite of these critiques, Proudhon was not a communist, nor was he even a conscious socialist. In *What is Property*, he declares: "The old civilization has run its race; a new sun is rising, and will soon renew the face of the earth."²²⁵ Nevertheless, he rejected communism even as he prophesied that humanity would soon welcome new gods of freedom and equality in his criticism of the system of privately property. Proudhon believed that in a society governed by principles of privately owned property, the weak are exploited by the strong; however, in a society governed by principles of communism, the strong are exploited by the weak.²²⁶ As such, he repeatedly expressed his opposition to Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon. His goal was to create a synthesis of private property and communism: a free society, which for him was an egalitarian, anarchic, diverse, human society. *Marx, of course, was unable to accept this point; perhaps this was one of the questions that he and Proudhon debated in their all-night deliberations?*

1.3.3 Hess: The economic alienation of bourgeois society revealed on a philosophical level

Our investigation is bringing us steadily closer to young Marx's economics research of 1844. I have already analyzed in some detail the somewhat complex philosophical background of Marx's research in a few of my earlier works, however, this is not the primary object of this book.²²⁷ Here I would simply like to highlight one new aspect of this background: the reason young Marx's philosophical logic was unable to stand on its own between 1843 and March 1845 was the micro-theoretical subsidiary awareness that exerted a more direct influence on him during this period. Though this issue is important, it has been the object of constant neglect by Marxist philosophers. Furthermore, I would like to point out the important role of the other young Hegelian thinkers on young Marx, particularly the influence of the communist philosophy of Hess and young Engels, two thinkers who had just begun to enter the realm of economics research.

As a member of the Young Hegelians, a group that formed in the fragmentation of Hegel's philosophy, young Marx's philosophy not only included Feuerbach's materialism and the macro-background of Hegelian idealism (from which this materialism was derived), but his direct theoretical matrix was also composed of the complex, interconnecting philosophies of the Young Hegelians. *I bring this point up to avoid the mistake made by traditional philosophical explanatory frameworks that "Hegel and Feuerbach" = dialectic + materialism.* I believe that this was a complicated process of philosophical interaction. At first, the Young Hegelians were interested in eliminating Hegel's dominant idealism serving as logical axis around which self-consciousness winds; however, later, under the influence of Feuerbach, many of them began to uphold a general theory of materialism, though there were

²²⁵*ibid.*, p. 312 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 297).

²²⁶*ibid.*, p. 283 (Chinese transl.: *Suoyouquan*, p. 272).

²²⁷See the first chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

still a few Young Hegelians who were unable to settle on either idealism or materialism. Regardless of their individual circumstances, the intellectual activity of the Young Hegelians, either directly or indirectly influenced Marx. In the following section, we will first discuss a few of the ideas that had a lesser influence on Marx before turning to more important thinkers.

The first idea is the concept of “praxis” from August Cieszkowski’s action theory. Early on, August Cieszkowski²²⁸ became dissatisfied with Hegel’s idealist dialectic, feeling that it was too focused on the past. He turned instead to an emphasis of the action of the subjective will — praxis. This was, naturally, a rule derived from Hegel’s philosophy. Cieszkowski believed that a theory of action allowed humans to no longer be unconscious tools of the Absolute Spirit, making them masters of their own destinies. He proposed using “should” to counter actual existence (the “to be” of inevitability). Cieszkowski argues that, “Practical philosophy, or rather, the philosophy of praxis, — its most concrete influence on life, social order, and the development of truth via concrete activity — this is the future destiny of philosophy as such.”²²⁹ The connotations of Cieszkowski’s qualifications on the concept of praxis are very ambiguous; through the lens of idealism, the concept has even been interpreted as a judgment of will. Although it is hard to say exactly what direct influence this theory had on Marx, it did directly influence Hess’ action theory, itself a pioneer of Marx’s philosophy. The important point for us here is that **non-materialist praxis philosophy was not a patent of Marxism** — it was not even developed by young Marx! *The praxis philosophy of which we speak here is the “progenitor” of the monism and practical humanism suggested by scholars such as Gramsci who claimed to be able to strip these trailings from materialism.*

The second idea is Bruno Bauer’s²³⁰ philosophy of humanist self-alienation. Bauer applied Hegel’s self-alienation of the Absolute Idea to self-consciousness, further extending it to a criticism of religion. Though his views were idealist, in terms of theoretical logic, his conclusions were much more profound than Feuerbach’s. In his 1842 work *Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit* (*The*

²²⁸ **Count August Cieszkowski** (1814–1894) was a German philosopher. His most important publication was *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (1838).

²²⁹ August Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (Berlin: Veit, 1838), p. 129.

²³⁰ **Bruno Bauer** (1809–1882) was a German philosopher and theologian. In 1834 he began to teach at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin as a licentiate of theology. In 1839 Bauer was transferred to the theology faculty at Bonn after publishing a pamphlet criticizing his orthodox colleague and former teacher Hengstenberg. From 1840 to 1842, he published a number of books including *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte des Johannes* (1840), and *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*, 2 vols. (1841). These books were written in opposition to David Strauss, and sharply criticized religious theology. Bauer played a significant role in the Young Hegelian movement, becoming one of the leaders of the organization. In August of 1841, Bauer was dismissed from his teaching position at Bonn University for critical remarks against religion that infuriated government authorities. After 1843, Bauer became more and more detached from real-life, sinking into purely theoretical critiques. Between December, 1843 and October, 1844, he published articles for the *Literatur-Zeitung*, openly rejecting his previous, radical bourgeois position and unabashedly advocating subjective idealism and a conception of history as determined by heroes. Marx and Engels caustically criticized Bauer in *The Holy Family*. His most important publications include *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*, 2 vols. (1841) and *Philo, Renan und das Urchristentum* (1874).

Merits of Freedom and My Own Work), Bauer counters Feuerbach's claim that religion is a shadow of man's essence and that all one must do is return to man the object (God) created by oneself. The alienation of the self-consciousness of man is much more complex than the simple "return" described by Feuerbach. Alienation is caused by human nature — the corruption of self-consciousness itself. As such, God, having been externalized into an abstract substance by this corrupted self-consciousness, must also be corrupted. Unless the nature of man undergoes a profound change, simply returning this twisted God to humans themselves will not be able to thoroughly eliminate alienation. *This is the forerunner of both Stirner's philosophical critique of the concept of "species" as well as Nietzsche's slogan "God is dead."* Bauer's criticism of Feuerbach is very important. This is an theoretical insight from outside into those philosophies that simply "invert" Marx's idealism into a general theory of materialism. From Bauer's work we see that reflection and reconstruction of Feuerbach were not independently carried out by Young Marx. In fact, simple differentiation and criticism of Feuerbach did not necessarily lead to the emergence of Marxist philosophy. We will address this point more fully in our discussion of Stirner later on in this book.

Lastly, the third idea is the humanized critique of labor proposed by Arnold Ruge²³¹ as taken from Hegel. Even before Marx, Ruge accepted Feuerbach's philosophy, though he goes on to suggest, "Labour creates the world; by making history, man makes himself."²³² He also argues, "Man is labor, is activity, is his self-realization, exploitation of man for purposes other than his own brings forth slavery."²³³ Ruge's thoughts on the relationship between the alienation of labor and the slave system were developed before Marx; for a period of time after 1842, these thoughts had a certain impact on Marx's own philosophy. Ruge and Marx maintained a close correspondence that continued into the latter half of 1843. If we believe that the theory of labor alienation and the elimination of private property constitute the formation of communism and the birth of Marxism, then we must consider Ruge to be the founder of "Marxist philosophy." In Ruge's 1842 essay *Hegel's Philosophy of Right and Modern Politics*, he points out that Hegel's philosophy of right had deviated from the actual development of history, naively examining state and law from a speculative perspective; thus causing state and law, this result of history, to become something eternal and absolute. At the time, this model of thinking was a profound philosophical crystallization.

²³¹ **Arnold Ruge** (1802–1880) was a German philosopher and political writer. While young, Ruge was arrested for participating in the "Free Germany" movement (Burschenschaft, founded in 1815). He was released during the July Revolution of 1830, then worked as a philosophy professor from 1832–1841. During this time, he established the official periodical of the Young Hegelians, the *Hallesche Jahrbücher für deutsche Kunst und Wissenschaft* (1838–1841). Ruge continued as editor after the name of the publication was later changed to *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (1841–1843), and was as such a central figure in the Young Hegelian movement. After *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* was discontinued, Ruge founded the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* with Marx in 1844, though his philosophical thinking never went past liberalism and democracy. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²³² Arnold Ruge, *Zwei Jahre in Paris. Studien und Erinnerungen* (Leipzig: W. Jurany, 1846), vol. 2, p. 373.

²³³ *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 373.

In addition to Cieszkowski, Bauer, and Ruge, there are two additional thinkers whose philosophical contributions paralleled those of young Marx: **Moses Hess** and **young Engels**. These are two critical figures in the life of young Marx who exerted an especially great influence on him after the three developed the basic framework of general materialism. It is important to note that in 1844 (before Marx began serious economics studies) the thinking of Hess and Engels was **much more profound** than Marx's at the time. Traditional Marxist philosophical research accords a great deal of attention to young Engels. However, while traditional scholars are willing to accept the influence that Marx had on Engels, under the weight of orthodox thinking, they disregard the critical influence that Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* had on Marx during an important formative period in his philosophical development. In fact, Engels' work was an important factor in Marx's decision in 1843 to study economics in defense of the cause of the proletariat. Additionally, an important figure whose influence is often neglected is Moses Hess: a man whose contributions are often lumped by traditional Marxist research with the other Young Hegelians as an "introduction" or a "background" to Marx. Even more than young Engels, Hess' influence on young Marx has been consciously or unconsciously veiled. There are two reasons for the flaws in traditional research. The first is that in Engels' discussion of the historical background of Marxist philosophy in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, he primarily discusses the works of Hegel and Feuerbach. The second and most direct reason is that traditional scholars did not read the "equation" of philosophical history that could be found in the early works of Marx and Engels as Lenin proposed.²³⁴ The reality is that Hess was the only thinker whose theories followed the same path as young Marx and Engels. It may be surprising to note that the close cooperation between Marx, Engels, and Hess during the years 1843–1846 lasted until the writing of *The German Ideology! Hess was responsible for writing two chapters of The German Ideology: a chapter criticizing Ruge in the first volume, and a chapter criticizing Georg Kuhlmann in the second volume.* The first chapter was also published in the August 5, and August 8, 1847 editions of the *Deutsche Brüsseler-Zeitung*, numbers 62–63. Its title at the time was *Studien und Erinnerungen von A. Ruge*. It was not until February of 1848, when the latent humanist ideology within Hess' philosophical logic clashed with the internal logic of Marxism's scientific worldview, that Hess parted ways with Marx and Engels. For this reason, it is evident that we should not minimize the importance of Hess' role in the philosophical history of Marxism. I believe that confirming Hess' contributions to the thinking of young Marx and young Engels — especially

²³⁴Refer to Lenin's *Karl Marx* and *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*. In these books, Lenin is clearly of the opinion that young Marx only underwent **one major philosophical shift** in the development of his philosophical thought. Lenin correctly remarks that in Marx's 1841 doctorate thesis on Epicurian natural philosophy, he still maintains an absolutely Hegelian idealist viewpoint. However, Lenin argues that beginning with the articles that Marx published for the *Rheinische Zeitung*, we can already see his shift from idealism to materialism, and from revolutionary democracy to communism. Lenin continues, asserting that this transformative process was completed while Marx co-edited the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Please refer to Lenin's *Karl Marx*, as well as my own book on the subject, *Back to Lenin*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

his socialist philosophy **based on an economic criticism** of bourgeois society — is of critical importance to our understanding of the essence of the philosophical revolution that Marx and Engels experienced in 1845. Thus, let us now turn our attention to an analysis of Hess.

Young Engels once referred to Moses Hess as Germany's first communist.²³⁵ Hess was quick to praise Cieszkowski's *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (*Prolegomena to a Historiosophy*), proposing not only that “the philosophy of the act” be used to revive the subjectivity of man, which had disappeared from Hegel's philosophy, but also that it be linked to communism. In Hess' 1837 essay *Die heilige Geschichte der Menschheit* (*The Sacred History of Humanity*) we can find his earliest criticisms of bourgeois society. *David McLellan believes that this essay represents Germany's first communist document.*²³⁶ In Hess' writings, he argued that bourgeois society was an “animal world” in which selfish individuals cared only for personal profit. He points out that “ever since free trade and industry have risen to preeminence, money has become the sole lever of society. As trade and industry improve, money becomes ever more powerful.”²³⁷ In Hess' 1843 work *Die europäische Triarchie* (*The European Triarchy*), Hess explains how the experience of the French Revolution had “built a bridge,” returning the speculative thinking of German philosophy from heaven back to earth. Also in *Die europäische Triarchie*, Hess set the target of revolution as the bourgeois society, in which the wealthy become wealthier while the poor expend their blood and sweat in a vain effort to survive. In the June 26, 1842 edition of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, while discussing the social catastrophes taking place in England in 1842, Hess writes:

The causes of these disasters were not political. Industry had been snatched from the people and given to the machines of the capitalists, that trade, once carried out by a large number of small capitalists, was now being concentrated in the hands of a few large capitalists or

²³⁵ **Moses Hess** (1812–1875) was a German socialist theorist. His most important works include *A Holy History of Mankind* (1837), *European Triarchy* (1841), *Philosophy of the Act* (1843), and *On the Essence of Money* (1844). Beginning in the early 20th century, Western philosophical historians have accorded a great deal of attention to his relationship with Marx, confirming the important influence that Hess' early philosophy had on young Marx, even suggesting that young Marx and young Engels were true Hessian socialists. Scholars from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, have been opposed to this argument. Chinese scholars have also begun to pay more attention to this issue of late. See the following books: Emil Hammacher, “Zur Würdigung des ‘wahren’ Sozialismus,” ed. Carl Grünberg, *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig) 1 (1911): 41–100, Edmund Silbner, *Moses Hess. Geschichte seines Lebens* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), Horst Lademacher, *Moses Heß in seiner Zeit* (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1977), E. Mit [Мит, Э.], *Istinyi Socializm, Истинный Социализм [True Socialism]* (Moscow, 1959), Herwig Förder, *Marx und Engels am Vorabend der Revolution* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960) and Cai Hou [侯才], *Qingnian Heige'er pai yu Makesi zaoqi sixiang de fazhan*, 青年黑格尔派与马克思早期思想的发展 [The Young Hegelians and the Development of Marx's Early Thought] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社 [Chinese Social Science Press], 1994).

²³⁶ David McLellan, *Karl Marx. Leben und Werk* (München: Edition Praeger, 1974), p. 61 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi zhuan*, p. 59).

²³⁷ Moses Hess, “Die heilige Geschichte der Menschheit. Von einem Jünger Spinoza's,” in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, Zweite, bearbeitete Auflage, ed. Wolfgang Mönke (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, [1837] 1980), p. 62.

opportunists. Inheritance law allowed large amounts of capital to be amassed by the nobility and accumulated by great families.

In Hess' opinion, these were all causes of social disaster.

It has always been clear that young Marx adopted general materialism from Feuerbach; however, what many philosophers fail to remark is that young Marx, along with the other leaders of the Young Hegelians, **adopted socialism and communism from Hess**. Combining theory with the socialist movement, Hess began by criticizing the socialism of Gracchus Babeuf, Charles Fourier, Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon before turning towards Feuerbach's philosophical standpoint in the latter half of 1841. He proposed combining Feuerbach's philosophy with Proudhon's socialism to create "scientific communism." In the beginning, Hess attempted to provide philosophical evidence for socialism using Feuerbach's theories, but as time went on, his evidence gradually became rooted in economics. Despite its apparent similarity to Marx's own ideas, Hess' philosophical communist philosophy did not, at first, arouse Marx's interest; on the contrary, young Marx was quite dubious towards Hess in the beginning. Marx did not begin to trust Hess until 1843, when the two men worked together for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The two men approached philosophy from vastly different contexts. While Marx's criticism in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* moved from the alienation of religion and subject-predicate inversion in speculative philosophy to actual political alienation (the duality between legal entity and civil society), Hess had already pointed out that any political reforms of social rather than political evils would only cure the symptoms without curing the disease.

In terms of the progression of philosophical history, several of Hess' essays published in the 1843 *Twenty-One Sheets from Switzerland*, the most important of which was *Philosophie der That* (*The Philosophy of the Act*, 1843) prompted Marx's thinking. It was in this essay that Hess first systematically defined a form of revolutionary social historical philosophy that transcended bourgeois democracy. *Auguste Cornu* argues that "Hess was the first person to combine Hegel's philosophy with French socialism into the philosophy of the act."²³⁸ From the text, we are able to see that Hess replaces Cartesian existence with functional action (Fichte's "self" creative force), asserting that "all is determined by action and not existence." Hess objectifies Hegel's generating qualification of social history into a logical foundation; of course, this process naturally occurs through the intermediary of Feuerbach's perceptual life. In Hess' opinion, "man's life is action, and action is the true individual, the self-conscious spirit, free man, and true universal."²³⁹ We can see that the connotations of the action described here by Hess are derived from the self-conscious, spiritual activity found in Cieszkowski's praxis philosophy. More importantly, the free individual discussed by Hess and seemingly so familiar is no longer part of the general bourgeois ideology validated by the Enlightenment. Why not? Because, as Hess believed, the bourgeois social revolution against despotism

²³⁸Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, vol. 1, p. 221 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 262).

²³⁹Moses Hess, *Rom und Jerusalem, die letzte Nationalitätenfrage. Briefe und Noten* (Leipzig: Eduard Wengler, 1862), p. 184.

had not accomplished anything. According to Hess in *The Philosophy of the Act*, “Its freedom and equality, its abstract human rights, turned out to be just another form of slavery.”²⁴⁰ Bourgeois society may have changed who could be defined as a tyrant, but the act was still a tyranny. This is why think that Hess transcended bourgeois democracy.

Hess advocated communist “free action” (*freie That*) in opposition to the new slavery of bourgeois society. However in essence, the **philosophical ontology** of this free action was also an **idealized value postulate**. Hess believed that if Germany were to realize socialism, then it needed a Kant-like figure in the field of social history; the mission of this “Kant,” however, would not be to return to the abstract communism and materialism that leads to anarchy. *Hess was obviously not in support of Proudhon’s political position*. Hess’ aim, on the contrary, was to establish a new ethics, modeled after that of Spinoza’s theory. Therefore, as he writes in *Philosophy of the Act*, “freedom is morality:” man’s free action is not “as determination by natural necessity or as determination by nature, as was the case for all living creatures until now, but as self-determination.”²⁴¹ Later, in the context of Feuerbach, Hess took care to separate the free activity that **reveals man’s species-essence** from slave labor. As Hess writes in *Communist Credo: Questions and Answers*, “Free activity is all that grows out of an inner drive; forced labor, on the other hand, is all that happens out of external drive or out of need.”²⁴² In *A Communist Credo: Questions and Answers*, he uses the word “Lohnarbeit” (*hired labor*). The difference between free activity and forced labor is that in slavery, production enslaves the producer himself, whereas in freedom, the spirit does not become a restraint on nature, but rather overcomes it, leading to self-determination.²⁴³ *This is an extension of the antithesis between “should” and “is” in Feuerbach’s humanist logic to criticism of social reality. It is also the logical precursor to the antithesis between the free labor activities of the species-essence of man and alienated labor.*

In *Twenty-One Sheets from Switzerland*, Hess published an essay entitled “Socialism and Communism.” In it, he asserted that one of the characteristics of communism was the elimination of the antithesis between labor and enjoyment. He believed that the private system (*Privateigentum*) really “on one hand negates free activity, demeaning it to the point of slave labor, and on the other hand declares animalistic pleasure as the objective of animalistic labor, raising it to the highest happiness of mankind.”²⁴⁴ This is an inversion of human life, because,

Labor and society in general should not be organized externally but should only be self-organized: Everybody should be allowed to do what he really can do, and should not be forced to do what he cannot do.

²⁴⁰Moses Hess, “Die Philosophie der That,” in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, 210–225 (Chinese translation in *Ma En Lie Si yanjiu ziliao huibian* (1981), pp. 438–439).

²⁴¹*ibid.* (Chinese translation in *Ma En Lie Si yanjiu ziliao huibian* (1981), p. 445).

²⁴²Moses Hess, “Kommunistisches Bekenntniß in Fragen und Antworten,” in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, p. 360.

²⁴³*ibid.*, p. 360.

²⁴⁴Moses Hess, “Socialismus und Communismus,” in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, 195–209.

Everybody will prefer some kind of activity, he may even prefer different activities; these various objects of preference and the multitude of activities bring forth the organism of a society which, full of vigor and eternal youth, is so human. They turn labor into something completely different — “enjoyable” and free professions with a human appeal.²⁴⁵

For Hess, morality was central to freedom, and the *summum bonum* of morality would ultimately break down the “cage of slavery.” Hess’ criticism of society was essentially based on ethical values. I believe that here we find the origin of the concepts of communism, a priori labor species-essence, and the theory of alienation found in young Marx’s *1844 Manuscripts*. It is critical to note that Hess never progressed beyond criticism based on humanist values. *This is also one of the reasons why in 1845, after the establishment of the Marxist scientific worldview, Hess at first appeared to agree but ultimately parted ways with Marx and Engels. Consequently, the line in The German Ideology, “Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, [but] an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself,” was written in criticism of Hess.*

Not until they worked together for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* did Marx and Hess begin to develop a closer relationship. This was also a critical time in which Hess’ thoughts on economic alienation, developed through his studies of economics, exerted direct influence on young Marx.²⁴⁶ Strictly speaking, Hess’ philosophy of economic alienation was not the direct result of his economics research, but rather, at the most, a philosophical modification of French socialism along Hegelian and Feuerbachian lines. I believe that Hess’ theoretical framework primarily originated from Proudhon. Of course, I also believe that the quality of Hess’ economics research is far inferior to that of Marx in the *1844 Manuscripts*. Nevertheless, here I must mention Hess’ renowned essay *Über das Geldwesen* (*On the Essence of Money*, though also translated as *On the Monetary System*). This essay was written between 1843 and 1844 and already submitted to the editorial department of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, but because the journal was discontinued in 1844, it was not published until more than a year later in another journal.²⁴⁷ It is clear that young Marx, who worked as an editor for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, would have read this important essay in early 1844. Thus we have reason to say that this essay had a great deal of influence on Marx, causing his philosophy to undergo a massive shift. Marx himself even confirmed this fact.²⁴⁸ *Chinese scholar Zhao Zhongying argues that the relationship between Marx and Hess was one of “philosophical exchange,” arguing that British scholar David McLellan’s contention that Hess influenced Marx is incorrect.*²⁴⁹ It

²⁴⁵See Hess, “Die heilige Geschichte der Menschheit. Von einem Jünger Spinoza’s,” p. 71.

²⁴⁶From the documents available at this time, there is no evidence to suggest that Hess carried out systematic and profound scientific studies of economics. At the most, his interest in economics was philosophical, a projection of his communist theories.

²⁴⁷See Moses Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” *Rheinische Jahrbücher zur gesellschaftlichen Reform* (Darmstadt) 1 ([1843] 1845): 1–34.

²⁴⁸See the introduction to Marx’s *1844 Manuscripts*.

²⁴⁹See Zhao, *Makesi zaoqi sixiang tanyuan*, p. 9 and David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1969), pp. 158–160 (Chinese transl.: *Qingnian Heige’er*

is my opinion that because Marx did not study economics himself, it would have been impossible for him to independently develop a theory of economic alienation. It is undeniable that Hess' thoughts on economic alienation influenced Marx. I, however, do not believe that by admitting the influence that Hess had on Marx, we diminish Marx's greatness. Cornu has pointed out that Hess' philosophy, especially his thoughts on the nature and uses of money, "in his philosophical and political understanding laid a solid socio-economic foundation"²⁵⁰ for young Marx. I tend to agree with Cornu. To further explicate this point, let us turn to some of the important content in one of Hess' works.

We can see that after entering the realm of economics, the philosophical logic of Hess' communism started becoming more profound. For evidence of this, we need look no further than the first line of *On the Essence of Money*: "Life is exchange of creative life-activity (*Lebensthätigkeit*)."²⁵¹ Analyzing this thought from the perspective of theoretical logic, we can see that Hess is beginning to transition from the free activities of man to social relationships, from individual essence to species-essence. *Looking closer, it is evident that this is Feuerbach's logic. Hess is trying to objectify Feuerbach's humanist criticism within the context of bourgeois socio-economic phenomena.* In *On the Essence of Money*, Hess asserts that humans originated from the exchange of productive activities, and "inalienable subsistence" was the medium of this exchange.²⁵² Compared with Hess' earlier definition of the essence of man as non-slave labor ("free activity that is independent from external force"), here he expounds the social realization of man's species-nature from the perspective of social relationships, coining the term **intercourse** (*Verkehr*) to describe this concept. In Hess' opinion, the most important element in human society is "collaboration" (*Zusammenwirken*) in social intercourse. Hess goes on to explain in *On the Essence of Money* that it is impossible for "single men [who] behave as conscious and consciously acting individuals," to be separated from "the sphere of the exchange of their social life," just as physical man cannot be separated from his life-air.²⁵³ Even more importantly, the collaboration of this exchange and intercourse is "the real essence (*wirkliches Wesen*) of individuals, their real capacity (*Vermögen*)."²⁵⁴ Hess argues that this collaboration and intercourse between individuals is the essence of society. Intercourse is the form in which individuals realize and exercise their individual power and essence. As such, it is also the form by which **productive power** is realized. He writes:

The stronger their intercourse (*Verkehr*), the stronger also is their productive power and as long as their intercourse is restricted so too is their productive power... The intercourse of men does not arise from their essence; it is their real essence and is indeed not only their the-

pai yu Makesi, pp. 163–164).

²⁵⁰Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, vol. 1, p. 516 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 621).

²⁵¹Moses Hess, "Über das Geldwesen," in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, p. 330 (Chinese transl.: "Huobi de benzhi," p. 180).

²⁵²*ibid.*, p. 330 (Chinese transl.: "Huobi de benzhi," pp. 179–180).

²⁵³*ibid.*, p. 330 (Chinese transl.: "Huobi de benzhi," p. 180).

²⁵⁴*ibid.*, p. 330 (Chinese transl.: "Huobi de benzhi," p. 180).

oretical essence, their real life-consciousness, but also their practical, their real life-activity.²⁵⁵

With this statement, Hess differentiates between the dual qualifications of human species-essence. The first is the “theoretical species-essence” of spiritual intercourse, and the second is the “practical species-essence” of material intercourse. This **practical** (*praktische*) **species-essence** is the intercourse between humans in production as well as in the product consumption required for continued production. The real essence of man is a relationship of material intercourse; in this point, we can see Hess’ economics research beginning to surpass Feuerbach’s philosophy. *Chinese scholar Hou Cai does not comprehend Hess’ deeper economics background. He mistakenly defines Hess’ theories here within Feuerbach’s philosophical context.*²⁵⁶ It should also be noted that Hess directly indicates that the thinking and action of man can only originate from material intercourse, and the collaboration of this intercourse is productive power.²⁵⁷ *It is interesting to note that we find a similar, but somewhat modified, viewpoint expressed in the first manuscript of the first chapter of The German Ideology, the work which in 1845 to 1846 represented the establishment of a new philosophical perspective in the thinking of Marx and Engels.*²⁵⁸ *This is the view expressed by Hess in the first two sections of On the Essence of Money.* We can understand this viewpoint on material intercourse as the establishment of a certain form of theoretical logic.

Let us now conduct a simple evaluation of Hess’ argument on material intercourse. The philosophical perspective of history that Hess demonstrates with relation to this point is primarily a theoretical enhancement and summary of bourgeois social relations. While this is an important advancement with regards to Feuerbach, Hess nevertheless commits two fatal mistakes. First, he places intercourse (which is actually modern exchange in a commodity economy) above production, not realizing that this “intercourse” is really the **result of production**. This determinism of exchange is a step back from the social materialism of the second stratum of classical economics. *I believe that we can see the direct influence of Hess’ intercourse determinism on young Marx in Marx’s Comments on Mill.* Second, Hess did not understand that this material exchange is only able to occur under specific historical conditions of material production; it is the **specific historical result** of the production of commodities in bourgeois society. Hess’ elevation of economics using Feuerbach’s species-philosophy necessarily began from the same abstracted intercourse (exchange). In this sense, Hess was closer to the mercantilists than he was to Smith and Ricardo. Of course, the latent logic of the essence of Hess’ views (including the rules of creative force, collaborative intercourse, etc.) is unscientific. Nevertheless, I believe that the ideas of young Marx had not yet come close to attaining the level of depth of Hess’ philosophy at this time.

²⁵⁵Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” pp. 330–331 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” pp. 180–181).

²⁵⁶See Hou, *Qingnian Heige'er pai yu Makesi zaoqi sixiang de fazhan*, pp. 130–132.

²⁵⁷Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 331 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 181).

²⁵⁸Refer to Part I, Section A of *The German Ideology* Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Feuerbach. Gegensatz von materialistischer und idealistischer Anschauung*, (Erstes Kapitel des I. Bandes der “Deutschen Ideologie”), vol. I/5 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 1)* (Frankfurt am Main, [1845–1846] 1932), p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 24).

Beginning with the fifth section of *On the Essence of Money*, Hess criticizes actual bourgeois social life. His criticism touches on the **species-existence of humankind — the alienation of social intercourse in bourgeois social economics**. We can see here that Hess consciously links Feuerbach to Proudhon, even wring, “Feuerbach is Germany’s Proudhon.” However, Feuerbach was far from attaining the kind of philosophical depth of Proudhon’s practical, socialist conclusions. Therefore, Hess proposes “implementing Feuerbach’s humanism in social life.”²⁵⁹ Hess was one of the first to apply Feuerbach’s religious alienation conception of history to social reality. He also took Proudhon’s rejection of communism one step further, contending that the human alienation that Feuerbach had discovered in the realm of religion had broader social significance. On the basis of the private system in bourgeois society, competition and the pursuit of profit divides people and pits them against one another; this is an alienation of the species-essence caused in selfish (*Egoismus*) survival. It was Hess’ opinion that in nature, species-life is the center of animal survival and the individual is only a means of life. However, as human society developed into bourgeois society, society based on private ownership of property appeared as an abnormal phenomenon, because in it, the relation between the individual and the species had become inverted. The real worldview of bourgeois society was one of selfish individuals living in a “world of petty shopkeepers (*Krämerwelt*).” Here we see a theological, **inverted-species worldview**. This is the Christian viewpoint that the individual is the purpose, while the species (God) is degraded to a means. In *On the Essence of Money*, Hess asserts that “Christianity is the theory, the logic of egoism. Conversely the classic ground of egoistic practice is the modern Christian world of shopkeepers.”²⁶⁰ Hess believes that this inverted worldview comes about because “this condition is itself an inverted world.”²⁶¹ Though Hess’ criticism leads us to think of Hegel’s theory of the inverted world, the difference here is that Hess does not proceed through the intermediary of the inversion of the idea, and he did not truly understand the essence of classical economics. If Hess had begun with Smith’s concept of the self-interested economic man and then proceeded to analyze the objective effects of the social relations and free competition in bourgeois society, then his criticism would have been even more profound, perhaps even silencing his opposition once and for all. However, by directly extrapolating economic critiques from Feuerbach’s criticism of Christianity, Hess inevitably laid a non-historical foundation for his criticism of bourgeois society. He was not even able to see the historical progression represented by the economy of bourgeois society, which Hegel had already noticed. *It was not until 1845–1846 that Marx himself was able to take this important step.*

Hess discovered that in real bourgeois social economic life, self-interested shopkeepers become isolated one from another, there were no opportunities for direct intercourse, and humans only relate to each other through market exchange. As

²⁵⁹Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 292.

²⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. 334 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 186).

²⁶¹*ibid.*, p. 334 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 186).

such, civil society transforms man in reality into a corpse — the private man. In *On the Essence of Money*, Hess writes:

Practical egoism was sanctioned by declaring men as isolated individuals, as abstracted naked persons, to be real men, by proclaiming the rights of man to be the right of independent men, thus declaring that the independence of men from each other, their separation and isolation, was the essence of life and freedom, and stamping isolated persons as free, true and natural men.²⁶²

In *On the Essence of Money*, Hess argues that practical egoism “leaves men isolated and dead.”²⁶³ This is because in bourgeois social economic life, man loses his species-being, and as such, he is no longer able to truly engage in direct intercourse. In market relations, we are forced to externalize our species-life — the true relationship of exchange — and we can only “constantly alienate (*veräußern*) our essence, our life, our own free life-activity, in order to eke out our miserable existence. We constantly buy our own individual existence at the loss of our freedom.”²⁶⁴ Hess profoundly understood that our current “species-life,” which in reality is alienated, “is really money.”²⁶⁵ In the world of bourgeois society, intercourse between isolated individuals can only be realized through the medium of inhuman money. Thus, money is the inverted species-being that gradually departs from us. Feuerbach himself might have pointed out that “God is the alienation of the essence of man,” while money is the alienated species-essence of intercourse. Continuing in *On the Essence of Money*, Hess even writes that “Christianity discovered the principle of saleability (*Verkäuflichkeit*),” and that, “What God is to the theoretical life, money is to the practical life in this inverted world: the externalised (*entäußert*) capacity of men, their sold-off life-activity.”²⁶⁶ For Hess, money is not only quantifies human species-essence, but is also true value. Money is the brand seared onto the human subjectivity by the slave system of bourgeois society. The essence of money is the congealed “blood-sweat” of the impoverished people. Laborers take their inalienable property, “their most personal capacity, their life-activity itself, to barter it for a *caput mortuum*, a so-called capital, to consume cannibalistically their own fat.”²⁶⁷ *The conflict between the living life-activity and dead life-activity of workers is the antithesis of capital. Marx would later re-articulate this concept as the antithesis between labor and accumulated dead labor (capital).* Hess points out that “Money, the essence of our modern world of hucksters, is the realised essence of Christianity.”²⁶⁸ *It is not hard to see the connections between this view and Marx’s critique, found in Paris Notes, of Mill’s money medium theory.* Hess’ arguments are truly profound in his realization that beneath the surface roles of money, both as a means of exchange and as

²⁶²Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 339 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 193).

²⁶³*ibid.*, p. 339 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 193).

²⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 187).

²⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 334 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 186).

²⁶⁶*ibid.*, pp. 334–335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” pp. 186–187).

²⁶⁷*ibid.*, p. 335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 187).

²⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 337 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 190).

a medium, it is actually an illusion of social relations. He asserts that “without exception, money is unorganized; it is thus an illusion that escapes our rational wills and dominates modern social modes of production.”²⁶⁹ This is an extremely important explanation of modern modes of production.

Here we must understand that Hess’ criticism of money is not based on the internal logic of classical economics. This is because he did not understand the significance of the labor theory of value, nor did he scientifically define the relationship between money and capital. This was another area in which Hess took a step back from Proudhon, and in which he did not even begin to approach the level of the Ricardian socialist economists (such as Thompson, Hodgskin, etc.). It was under the influence of this incorrect theoretical intention that young Engels and young Marx, who were just beginning their studies of economics, both began taking the **erroneous, humanist path of rejection of the labor theory of value**.

In our discussion of this point, we must also mention Hess’ use of **humanist logic** to criticize bourgeois economics. In *On the Essence of Money*, he points out that “in fact, economics like theology is not at all concerned with men. Economics (*Nationalökonomie*) is the science of the acquisition of earthly goods just as theology is the science of the acquisition of heavenly goods.”²⁷⁰ *This sentiment appears to completely echo that of Sismondi. Furthermore, Hess’ criticism here has already passed through the intermediary of Feuerbach’s humanism. This important definition of economics was directly quoted by young Engels (in Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie) and young Marx (early part of Paris Notes).* Hess argues that according to the logic of political economy, “money is the general means of exchange, thus the medium of life, the human capacity, the real productive power, the real wealth of mankind.”²⁷¹ In fact, Hess continues, “money is the product of mutually estranged man (*der entäußerte Mensch*), of externalized man.”²⁷² This is because political economy “values man by the weight of his purse... [W]here men can no longer be sold they are no longer worth a penny.”²⁷³ Therefore, “Money is the life-killing means of intercourse which has solidified into a dead letter.”²⁷⁴ Based on these points, Hess vehemently presents the crimes of the inhuman cause of alienation, so antagonistic towards humans: money.

The first crime Hess presents is that money is the blood of society — it is blood that has been sold off, or sucked out of us, it is “the exchange value (*Tauschwerth*) of [our] life.” This “sold off blood” has led to the **indirectness** of man and his life. Life is direct love; human essence is direct intercourse (species). However, as Hess writes in *A Communist Credo: Questions and Answers*, in the modern world, man “[lives] in [his] species, not in love, but in alienation and enmity.”²⁷⁵

²⁶⁹See *Ruge in Paris*, “Society” vol. 8, 1931.2 (originally published as Ruge, *Zwei Jahre in Paris*).

²⁷⁰Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 188).

²⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 187).

²⁷²*ibid.*, p. 335 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 188).

²⁷³*ibid.*, p. 336 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 188).

²⁷⁴*ibid.*, p. 346 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 204).

²⁷⁵Hess, “Kommunistisches Bekenntnik in Fragen und Antworten,” p. 367 (Chinese transl.: “Gongchan zhuyi xintiao wenda,” p. 222). The astute reader will notice the Feuerbachian logical construction of opposition to intermediacy and the return to immediacy. In our interpretation of Marx’s philosophy this point will be shown as an important link ignored by epistemology.

Hess argues in *On the Essence of Money* that bourgeois society has “removed all direct intercourse, all direct life.”²⁷⁶ This is because all human relations must pass through the intermediary of money. From natural love and relationships between the sexes, to the exchange of ideas among scholars, without money, it is virtually impossible for society to function. This has caused men to have to sell their essence in order to eke out their miserable existence, creating a world “where there are no practical men but cashed-in and sold-off men.”²⁷⁷

The second inhuman crime of money is that it **quantifies** the existence of living, breathing human beings. Man is no longer defined as “a social body, the organic species-life, social intercourse,” but rather becomes “a dead mass, a sum and a figure.”²⁷⁸ In defining money in *A Communist Credo*, Hess writes:

It is human activity expressed in numbers, the buying price or exchange value of our life... Human activity can be as little paid for as human life itself. Because human activity *is* human life, and this cannot be weighed in any sum of money; it is immeasurable and invaluable [*unschätzbar*].²⁷⁹

In *On the Essence of Money*, Hess angrily asks, “How can the value of a living being, of man and his highest life and activity, how can the value of social life be expressed in sums, in figures?”²⁸⁰

As we have discussed above, Hess was unable to see the true nature of money in economics — that is, he was unable to see the relationship between money and the labor theory of value. He was also blinded to the fact that money is the necessary, reified representation of commodity value in market exchange, as well as the means by which this exchange is carried out. As such, Hess’ criticisms floated on the clouds of non-historic, non-scientific, ethical values; as ephemeral as the mist, his criticisms could not help but evaporate with time.

As Hess argues in *On the Essence of Money*, under the ancient, coercive slave system, men were sold against their wills; the anguish caused by this process was both natural and in accord with human nature. However, what made the world of money in bourgeois society so despicable was that it had become natural and a part of human nature for humans to willingly sell themselves. This is because here “man had first to learn to look down on human life so as to externalize it voluntarily. He had to unlearn considering the real life [and] real freedom as a priceless good so as to offer these for sale.”²⁸¹ Thus, Hess calls bourgeois social economics the “social animal world.” He writes,

We now find ourselves at the summit, at the culminating point of the social animal world (“soziale Thierwelt”); we are thus now social

²⁷⁶Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 340 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 194).

²⁷⁷*ibid.*, p. 341 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 194).

²⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 343 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 199).

²⁷⁹Hess, “Kommunistisches Bekenntnik in Fragen und Antworten,” p. 361 (Chinese transl.: “Gongchan zhuyi xintiao wenda,” p. 212).

²⁸⁰Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 343 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 199).

²⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 336 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 189).

beasts of prey, fully-developed conscious egoists who sanction in free competition the war of all against all, in the so-called rights of man the rights of isolated individuals, of private persons, of the “absolute personality,” and in freedom of trade mutual exploitation, thirst for money. This thirst for money is nothing but the thirst for blood of the social beast of prey.²⁸²

As Hess writes in *On the Essence of Money*, the bourgeois social system was “the practical world of illusion and lies.” This is because “under the appearance of an inviolable property guaranteed to everyone, the capacity of everyone is taken from them in reality; under the appearance of general freedom there is general servitude.”²⁸³ Therefore he believed that “money is human value expressed in figures; it is the mark of our slavery, the indelible brand of our servitude.”²⁸⁴

Hess was interested in discovering how to eliminate this inhuman servitude. As he writes in *On the Essence of Money*, “After these [our forces and faculties] have developed we will only mutually ruin ourselves if we do not pass on to communism.”²⁸⁵ This was Hess’ conclusion as he observed the appearance in bourgeois society of such ludicrous, self-destructive phenomena as “surplus forces of production” and squandered power. The only way to truly resolve this problem was to “unite” in creating a new life out of the “union or the collaboration of our forces;”²⁸⁶ to create, in other words, communism. Hess boldly declares that “the creation history of society is over; the last hour of the social animal world will soon sound.”²⁸⁷ Later, in his writing of *Capital and its manuscripts*, Marx scientifically describes bourgeois society as an “economic animal world,” further describing the end of bourgeois society as the end of human “prehistoric society.” Hess believed that as man’s essence and power developed, as material production and intercourse developed, or as the future organization of society acquired more material content, “the inhuman, external, dead means of intercourse must necessarily be abolished.”²⁸⁸ Hess further believed that this stage of species-alienation existence in human society would necessarily transition to a stage where “species-life is fully developed,” or “an organized form” of communism.²⁸⁹ In this new, “organic whole (*die organische Gemeinschaft*),” as carefully-managed social organizations emerge, hired labor will necessarily be abolished. As Hess expresses in *A Communist Credo*, as the value of man increases, money will begin to lose its value.²⁹⁰ He writes in *On the Essence of Money*:

²⁸² *ibid.*, p. 345 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” pp. 202–203).

²⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 344 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 201).

²⁸⁴ Hess, “*Kommunistisches Bekenntniß in Fragen und Antworten*,” p. 362 (Chinese transl.: “Gongchan zhuyi xintiao wenda,” p. 213).

²⁸⁵ Hess, “*Über das Geldwesen*,” p. 348 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 207).

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 348 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 208).

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 348 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 208).

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 347 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 206).

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 331 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 181).

²⁹⁰ Hess, “*Kommunistisches Bekenntniß in Fragen und Antworten*,” p. 365 (Chinese transl.: “Gongchan zhuyi xintiao wenda,” p. 218).

A human society without self-destruction, a reasonable, organic, human society with many-sided, harmonious collaborating (Zusammenwirken) productions, with many-sided organised spheres of activity corresponding to the various life-aims, the many-sided activities of men, so that each formed man can freely exercise his faculties and talents according to his vocation and inclination²⁹¹

In a society such as this, Hess writes in *A Communist Credo*, “the special faculties of each person are developed; everyone is offered the means for the application of his talent.”²⁹² Hess’ thoughts here are echoed in Marx’s more scientific explanation of the full development of man in the third form of society social.

Hess’ application of Feuerbach’s religious-alienation criticism (with perhaps changes from Bauer) to humanist-alienation in the sphere of socio-economics directly influenced young Marx between 1843 and 1844. However, we can see from several of the essays Marx wrote for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* that since he had not studied economics, he was unable to understand some of Hess’ views on social historical philosophy. Nevertheless, Marx realized that the research of Hess and Engels (who was influenced by Hess) had been greatly enhanced through economics study. This is one of the most important reasons behind Marx’s decision to engage himself in the field of economics.

1.3.4 The early economics criticism of young Engels

By 1843, it was young Engels and not young Marx who was most influenced by Hess. In September of 1842, after Engels had completed his military service, he stopped in London on his way from Germany to Manchester in order to visit a factory his father had opened there. When Engels first visited Marx at the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx mistook him for the representative of a free-lance writer from Berlin, and treated him rather coldly. Though Engels’ relationship with Marx was initially tenuous, Engels enjoyed a long correspondence with Hess. During Hess’ time in England, he and Engels maintained a close relationship; as such, in the beginning, Hess’ philosophy exerted a profound influence on young Engels. Because of this, Engels turned to philosophical communism before Marx (see Engels’ *Progress of Social Reform on the Continent*, published in October, 1843) and began studying economics before him as well. There is historical evidence suggesting that in 1842, during Engels’ time in England, he began serious exploration of economics, studying the works of Smith, Ricardo, Say, McCulloch, Mill, and others. At this time, both under the influence of Hess, as well as his own experiences with the labor and life of the working class, Engels’ political economic views were naturally much more profound than those of Marx. In fact, it was the thinking of Hess and young Engels that influenced Marx and inspired him to begin studying economics. Under their influence, Marx established the renowned theory of labor-alienation during his reexamination of economics from a philosophical

²⁹¹Hess, “Über das Geldwesen,” p. 332 (Chinese transl.: “Huobi de benzhi,” p. 183).

²⁹²Hess, “Kommunistisches Bekenntniß in Fragen und Antworten,” p. 364 (Chinese transl.: “Gongchan zhuyi xintiao wenda,” p. 211).



Figure 1.1: Young Engels

perspective, all before accomplishing his momentous philosophical transformation in 1845–1846.

Marx fully approved of Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*²⁹³ (*Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*), which he wrote between 1843 and 1844. It is throughout this important document that we find almost ubiquitous

²⁹³In volume 1 of the first Chinese edition of Marx and Engels, the title was mistranslated as “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” “Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy”. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

traces of Hess' thinking. Towards the beginning of *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, Engels refers to bourgeois economics as officially sanctioned fraud and as a "science of enrichment"²⁹⁴ Here we can see that in comparison to Hess, Engels maintains a **historical** perspective throughout his research. In his work from this time, he explicitly points out that bourgeois political economy is "the result of commercial expansion," and that mercantilism necessarily developed into the theory of free trade promulgated by Smith and Ricardo. While mercantilists accorded a great deal of attention to precious metals in circulation and expected wealth to grow by maintaining a surplus in trade, the 18th century witnessed the political economic revolution, which shifted the focus from circulation to labor production. It is clear to see that right from the start, Engels' economic analysis was markedly different from the airiness of Hess' metaphysics. We also observe that Engels rapidly, keenly, and profoundly grasped the one-sided nature of the bourgeois philosophical revolution. This one-sidedness was not only evident in politics, but also in the **methodology and philosophical foundation** of bourgeois economics. According to Engels' understanding in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, this one-sidedness was a simple metaphysical "antithesis:" "abstract materialism was set in opposition to abstract spiritualism, the republic to monarchy, the social contract to divine right."²⁹⁵ Engels goes on to argue that **abstract** materialism, the premise of bourgeois political economy, "did not attack the Christian contempt for and humiliation of Man, and merely posited Nature instead of the Christian God as the Absolute confronting Man."²⁹⁶ *The Soviet scholar Rosenberg believes that here Engels is using the dialectic to criticize bourgeois political economy; this conclusion is not without an element of truth.*²⁹⁷ With this comment, Engels demonstrates that he had, in fact, already discovered the non-critical premise of bourgeois political economy. He asserts that although economics begins its analysis with bourgeois economic phenomena, it validates bourgeois social economics as a given fact (even in **scientific** analysis!). As Engels writes in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, while the humanism and materialism that supported bourgeois economics were in opposition to religious authority and the "old school" of mercantilism, bourgeois economics still accepted the system of private ownership as a principle of nature, and as such could only be, at the most, a "new school" that was only "half an advance." With great perspicacity, Engels points out that political economy never thought to question the **justification of the private system**, because its intent was to protect the new factory system of bourgeois society: the modern slave system.²⁹⁸ Therefore, Engels argues in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* that this "science" can be

²⁹⁴Friedrich Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/3, p. 467 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 596).

²⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 468 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 597).

²⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 468 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 597).

²⁹⁷See David Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1958), p. 66 (Chinese transl.: *Shi-jiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjixueshuo fazhan gailun*, p. 36).

²⁹⁸Refer to Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," p. 471 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 598).

called “private economy.”²⁹⁹ With this insight, Engels takes a great step forward from the earlier criticisms put forth by Sismondi.

In *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, Engels uses the concept of private ownership to summarize all the economic phenomena in bourgeois society, as well as the categories and laws of bourgeois economics. *Here we see again the influence of Proudhon.* Through revealing the inhumanity of private property, Engels attempts to confirm the necessity of eliminating it. Furthermore, Engels begins with a **direct criticism of political economy**, rather than the pure philosophical deduction of Hess. *This is a difference between young Engels and young Marx, who was also beginning to research political economy.*

In Engels’ analysis found in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, the “old school” of mercantilists had not covered up the immoral nature of commerce (buy low, sell high), while the “new school” of economists was nothing but a hypocritical ideology. This was because Smith and Ricardo glossed over the inhuman slave relations of bourgeois society with a layer of allegedly humanized principles of exchange, and a whole set of scientific analyses of economic laws. This was an even deeper form of sophistry than mercantilism! The more scientific this “new school” became, the more deceitful it truly was. Therefore, **“Ricardo, is more guilty than Adam Smith, and McCulloch and Mill more guilty than Ricardo.”**³⁰⁰ *Here we can see that Engels has not yet differentiated classical economics from vulgar economics.* Maintaining the same position as Sismondi, Engels critically proposed that this abstract materialism rid itself of its “purely empirical and objective research methods,” and thus allow economics to take direct responsibility for the consequences of economic life in the system of private ownership. *Again, Engels did not differentiate between the social materialist premise implied in political economy and the ideological fetishism that this logic necessarily caused.*

In *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, Engels writes that Adam Smith is the bourgeois **“economic Luther.”**³⁰¹ *Note the similar identification of Smith in young Marx’s 1844 Manuscript.* We are familiar with the role Martin Luther played in the religious reformation of the 16th century; he distilled the externalized God of the Middle Ages into the human heart, transforming dogmatic theological precepts into individual self-awareness and introspection, thus bringing the world beyond the veil into this world. The analogy between Smith and Luther that Engels uses here explains how Smith transformed the open, immoral trade of mercantilism (as Engels put it, “trade is legalized fraud”) into somewhat humanized, free, equal, mutually beneficial commerce. I believe that here Engels makes a philosophical point, because if he had truly understood what it meant for Smith to have carried out a “Lutheran revolution,” then this “revolution” in economics would have been, in fact, the shift of the essence of wealth from the **objective form** of wealth to human **subjective activity**: labor. What’s more, it was the physiocrats, not Smith, who first changed the identification of wealth from circulation to agricultural labor; it was not until later that Smith used all

²⁹⁹Refer to *ibid.*, p. 473 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 600).

³⁰⁰Refer to *ibid.*, p. 472 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 599).

³⁰¹*ibid.*, p. 474 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 601).

productive labor to identify wealth. This is the **labor theory of value**. However, at this time, Engels did not realize the profound significance that the important theories of classical economics had for socialist revolution. *Later we will see that his view on this issue directly influenced young Marx, who was just beginning to study economics.*

I have already pointed out that Engels' research is different from that of Hess, who never progressed beyond a philosophical criticism of society; Engels truly engaged in profound, concrete criticism of economics theory. However, the economics criticisms made by Engels at this time were still incorrect, primarily due to his misunderstanding of value in economics. Because at this time Engels used the "dialectic concrete characterized by the logic of the actual total unity," so in his eyes, bourgeois economists were all false abstractionists who looked at the world through lenses of "applied antithesis." Ricardo and McCulloch shallowly believed that abstract value was determined by the cost of production, while Say shallowly emphasized utility in determining value. Engels' view of value is separate from **competition**, which is the abstract result of the "primary factor" of the economic reality of bourgeois society. As he writes in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, "value is the relation of production costs to utility."³⁰² Engels goes on to point out that value cannot be abstracted from actual competition, because all that emerges from competition is price. Therefore, in reality, "value, the primary factor, the source of price, is made dependent on price, its own product."³⁰³ In this sense, Engels argues that because of the underlying idealist abstract beneath bourgeois theories of economics, "everything in economics stands on its head." Engels concludes this thought by writing in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, "As is well known, this inversion is the essence of abstraction; on which see Feuerbach."³⁰⁴

Allow me to suggest a few of my own views at this point. First, at this point, Engels fundamentally establishes his theory on the basis of Feuerbachian perceptual materialist philosophy, opposing bourgeois economists for using an "abstract" materialism that had not begun with objective reality. *This view also influenced young Marx, who ultimately returned to the scientific abstract in his own economics analysis.* Second, manifesting his innate genius, Engels identifies the inversion of bourgeois economics theory, though he fails to recognize that this inversion is a true reflection of the **actual inversion of economic relations** in bourgeois society. Third, Engels confirms the existence of value, though his view of it is biased by his inability to recognize the fundamental differences between Ricardo's labor theory of value and Say's vulgar theory of "use-value." Therefore, at this point, Engels is naturally unable to scientifically criticize bourgeois economics, even though he had already encountered the well-known proposition that capital is accumulated wealth. Because of these shortcomings, Engels failed to grasp the labor theory of value.

³⁰²Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," p. 477 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 605).

³⁰³*ibid.*, p. 478 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 606).

³⁰⁴*ibid.*, p. 478 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang," p. 606).

With regards to the three elements of production cost proposed by bourgeois economists (rent, profit, and wages), Engels peeled away the object in production (the objective aspect of material) and labor (the subjective aspect of man); in other words, the “nature” and “man” of which we speak in philosophy. According to Engels, nature and man are **supposed** to be unified, though under the rule of private property, nature (land) is separated from man, and man’s own activity (labor) is split from him. These separations and splits result in the external opposition of the dialectical unity. Engels is especially interested in the second opposition, the self-separation of labor activity. He first writes in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, “**labor** is the main factor in production, the ‘source of wealth,’ free human activity.” However, Engels continues in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, in the production process of bourgeois society, man’s activity is divided into labor and capital; if capital and labor are initially identical, then the chaotic phenomena in the production process will be, in a certain sense, made clear.³⁰⁵ Engels contends that this is because capital is only the accumulation of man’s **past labor**; however, capital, which was once the result of labor, is **inverted** into the foundation and material of labor in a capitalist system. Engels profoundly remarks in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* that, “the split between capital and labor resulting from private property is nothing but the inner dichotomy of labour corresponding to this divided condition and arising out of it.”³⁰⁶ Here, Engels’ analysis exposes the fundamental base of bourgeois society: labor. Capital, or past labor, is further split into original capital and profit, while profit is further split into profit and interest. In these unnatural divisions “the product of labor confronts labor as wages, is separated from it, and is in its turn, as usual, determined by competition.”³⁰⁷ This is a transition from philosophy to economics, even if it is evidently an incorrect understanding of economics. Finally, as he puts it in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, Engels believes that, “all these subtle splits and divisions stem from the original separation of capital from labor and from the culmination of this separation — the division of mankind into capitalists and workers.”³⁰⁸ This is the separation of the subject itself.

As soon as Engels grasped the importance of capital as a crucial economic qualification, his criticism took an important step forward relative to his contemporaries. By basing his argument on the antithesis between capital and labor — we could also base the argument on **production** — the theoretical significance of Engels’ argument becomes much greater than that of previous critiques of the relationships between labor and wealth, as well as criticisms of labor and money in distribution. Confronted with this essential split, Engels still maintained the unified totality of the dialectic. At this point, Engels came to only one conclusion: to re-attain this totality, private property must be eliminated. Engels explicitly states in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* that by eliminating private property, “all of these unnatural divisions will cease to exist.”³⁰⁹ In terms

³⁰⁵Refer to *ibid.*, p. 481 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” pp. 610–611).

³⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 481 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 610).

³⁰⁷Refer to *ibid.*, p. 481 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 611).

³⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 481 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 610).

³⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 482 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 611).

of capital, without private property, the differences between interest and profit will disappear, and profit will not be separated from capital, but will become an “intrinsic element” of it. Similarly, capital will revert to its original unity with labor. In terms of labor, Engels writes, “If we do away with private property, this unnatural separation [between the product of labor and labor itself] also disappears. Labor becomes its own reward.” Separated wages will thus reveal their true significance.³¹⁰ *This critical perspective of bourgeois modes of production would soon be more fully expressed by Marx, through the philosophical projection of the humanist theory of labor alienation.*

Because he was still under the influence of humanist logic and maintained a critical line of thinking rooted in communism, we can see that in his earliest contact with classical economics, Engels was not able to correctly deal with the important foundation of this economic theory (labor theory of value). At this point in time, Engels stood opposite bourgeois economics, analyzing the theoretical logic of its defense of private property in order to disprove it. He did not realize that within the economics theories that he was so intent on refuting, there lay the seeds of the destruction of bourgeois society itself. Engels did not agree with Ricardo’s theory of value, because its claim that production cost determines value, like Say’s theory that utility determines value, was abstract, separate from the real workings of the economy (competition). Engels had not yet grasped the necessity of the scientific abstract of classical economics, nor did he understand that his own rules of labor were, in another sense, a humanist abstract.

More importantly, in the field of economics, Engels identified the irrationality of the economic laws of bourgeois society even before Marx did; consequently this allowed Engels to advance much further than Hess. Specifically, Engels demonstrates that under the rule of private property, the laws of value in a market economy centered on free competition were illogical. Engels points out in *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* that “everything comes down to competition, so long as private property exists.”³¹¹ As we have discussed already, private property results in the separation and antagonistic confrontation of the subject and object, the separation and confrontation of the activity of the subject itself, as well as the separation and confrontation between people. This unnatural “discord” results in “the consummation of the immorality of mankind’s condition hitherto; and this consummation is competition.”³¹² It should be noted that **competition** in the economical activity of civil society was ubiquitous and an objective fact of utmost importance when Engels conducted this theoretical criticism. He based his judgment on the concrete and immediate notion of reality when he objected to the “abstractions” of bourgeois economists. He had not realized that only the abstract method of science would allow him to expose the production relations of bourgeois society. *This discrepancy was later resolved by Marx in Grundrisse when he introduced the distinction between “capital in general” and “concrete capital.”* Nonetheless we can see that Engels’ analysis of competition is very much the most profound contents of this texts.

³¹⁰Refer to Engels, “*Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*,” p. 482 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 611).

³¹¹*ibid.*, p. 482 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 611).

³¹²Refer to *ibid.*, p. 483 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 612).

According to Engels, competition is the opposite of the monopoly of bourgeois social economics. Just like the private system, it is full of internal contradictions. As he writes in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, this is because in competition “it is in the interest of each [person or company] to possess everything, but in the interest of the whole that each possess an equal amount. Thus, the interest of the whole and the individual are diametrically opposed to each other.”³¹³ Furthermore, the law of competition is that “demand and supply always strive to complement each other, and therefore never do so. The two sides are torn apart again and transformed into sharp opposition.”³¹⁴ This opposition arises because in terms of economic law, the essence of the production process of bourgeois society is unconscious and incomplete; the rules of competition are always a kind of spontaneous, uncontrollable, **non-subjective** process of adjustment. However, bourgeois economics had always viewed these unconsciously operating laws, which **seemed to govern natural movements**, as true natural laws. This shows the reactionary nature of bourgeois economics, how it did not advance the true purpose of man. Thus, where bourgeois economists pointed out any natural law, Engels was able to profoundly identify the law’s anti-humanist essence in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*: “these laws are purely laws of nature, not laws of the mind.” Please note that the term “natural laws” used here by Engels already carried a certain degree of irony. he further describes these laws as “certainly based on the unconsciousness of the participants,” as opposed to “conscious production carried out as human beings.”³¹⁵ *This is the precursor to the perspective of pseudo-naturalness that I later expressly identified in the subjective dimension of Marx’s historical dialectic.*³¹⁶ On one hand, Engels asserts in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* that this law had, “completed the reciprocal bondage in which men now hold themselves.” On the other hand, he mentions the “disorder” in socio-economic life brought on by free competition, especially the periodic “fluctuations” and “trade crises”³¹⁷ caused by lack of order. At the same time he points out if “you continue to produce in the present unconscious, thoughtless manner, at the mercy of chance — then trade crises will remain; and each successive crisis is bound to become more universal and therefore worse than the preceding one.” Then, ultimately, it would lead to the complete destruction of bourgeois society. As Engels writes towards the end of *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, this would “finally cause a social revolution.”³¹⁸ Therefore, Engels believed that the economic laws of bourgeois society were, “laws which produce revolution.”³¹⁹

Rosenberg believes that Engels’ studies at this time were influenced by British utopian socialism. As such, he argues that “Engels often criticized capitalism from the perspective of eternal laws of morality; many of Engels’ profound theoretical

³¹³*ibid.*, p. 483 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 613).

³¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 484 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 613).

³¹⁵Refer to *ibid.*, p. 484 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 614).

³¹⁶Refer to *ibid.*, p. 484 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 614), and also to chapter 3, section 2 of *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

³¹⁷Refer to *ibid.*, p. 484 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 614).

³¹⁸Refer to *ibid.*, p. 485 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 614).

³¹⁹Refer to *ibid.*, p. 484 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan dagang,” p. 614).

analyses of economic phenomena conclude with moral condemnations.”³²⁰ I would like to point out that the research methodology employed by young Engels at this time is deserving of our careful attention. In his method of criticism, **objective logic rooted in actual social life** became his guiding principle, whereas the logical framework of humanism only exerted a limited influence on him. As such, Engels’ philosophical transformation was not as difficult as that of Marx.

Engels and Marx shared an identical understanding of *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. In fact, Engels was opposed to republishing this document. In a letter that Engels composed to Wilhelm Liebknecht on April 13, 1871, he wrote, “It is by now **quite obsolete** and full of inaccuracies that could only confuse people. Moreover, it was still written in a Hegelian style which likewise just will not do nowadays. Its sole value is as an historical document.”³²¹ In a letter that Marx also wrote to Liebknecht on the same day, he confirmed Engels’ opinion in the matter.³²²

³²⁰See Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p. 81 (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjixueshuo fazhan gailun*, p. 49).

³²¹Engels an Wilhelm Liebknecht in Leipzig, [London], 13 April 1871, in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 33, p. 208 (Chinese transl.: zhi Weilian Libukeneixi, Laibixi, p. 209).

³²²Marx an Liebknecht, 13 April 1871, in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 33, p. 207 (Chinese transl.: zhi Weilian Libukeneixi, p. 208).

Chapter 2

Philosophical Discourse in the Context of Economics: From Silence to Prominence

In the previous chapter, we unveiled the true philosophical progression that already existed within the context of economics, and with which Marx came into direct contact as he first began his study of economics in 1844. In the objective dimension, this progression began with social materialism unearthed by classical economics and continued to Hegel's idealist inversion and criticism of this reified logic; in the subjective dimension, we can observe a basic logical thread in the context of economics that impacted the value of the subject, beginning with the ethical critique of economics opened by Sismondi and continuing through Proudhon, Hess, and young Engels. I argue that we must not be like the teleologists and assume that young Marx at any particular point in time was becoming a Marxist and moving towards historical materialism. Marx is just Marx. When he first stepped into the context of economics research in 1844, he had only just identified Feuerbach's natural materialism in historical research, and under the influence of humanist subjective philosophy, he was in the process of distancing himself from the social materialism of political economy and Hegel's historical dialectic. It was the subjective critique in the context of economics found in the subjective thinking of humanism that was most in line with his conscious philosophical discourse. Therefore, the value postulate of philosophical communism inevitably came into direct conflict with the historical reality of bourgeois society.

2.1 From *Kreuznach Notes* to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*

It is commonly accepted that Young Marx's theoretical starting point was the philosophy of law. In the beginning, this philosophy of law stemmed from the subjective dynamism of the contradictory tension between the "should" of Kant and Fichte and the "is," later becoming the self-consciousness promoted by the Young

Hegelians that thrust individuality into the forefront (*The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*). In 1841, as the young doctor of philosophy Karl Marx entered society for the first time, he was a true idealist philosopher. At this point in time, his attention was devoted to reflecting the rational idealism of bourgeois democratic politics. This idealist line of thinking did not start to crack¹ until Marx began to come into contact with real social problems, which occurred as he criticized relations of economic interest during his time at the *Rheinische Zeitung*. When Marx realized that he had to face social reality, he produced *Kreuznach Notes* (July-August, 1843, five volumes), in which the French Revolution figured as the primary subject.² It was in this process of studying historical reality that Marx underwent the first great shift in his thinking (*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*). This new philosophical foundation was to become the primary theoretical premise for Marx's further economics research.

2.1.1 Young Marx and *Kreuznach Notes*

From the documents found at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, the Netherlands (Internationales Institut für Sozialgeschichte, abbreviated hereafter as IISG), there are nearly 225 notebooks written by Marx in existence today. In reading Marx's letters to his father, we learn that Marx began to write notes as he read sometime between 1836 and 1837. Marx wrote that "I have developed the habit of taking notes and excerpts from all that I read." Among the early notes already published in *MEGA 2*, we find *Notes on Epicurean Philosophy* (1839, seven volumes), written in preparation for his doctoral dissertation.³ After 1840, there are *Berlin Notes* (1840–1841, eight volumes) and *Bonn Notes* (1842, five volumes).⁴ The *Berlin Notes* are primarily composed of philosophical notes written on the works of Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, and others. These were materials gathered by Marx as he prepared to write his habilitation thesis. The *Bonn Notes*, on the other hand, are composed of excerpts on religious and artistic history. These are records of Marx's reading as he began to participate in the work of political review at the *Rheinische Zeitung*. *Because these notes all come before Marx's first great philosophical shift, they have not been listed as objects of textual study in this book.*

Before 1843 and as a member of the Young Hegelians, even though Marx had already begun to turn his attention to a form of self-conscious dynamism that had been "deep-fried" by Bauer (*The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*), he still had not attained a deeper understand-

¹Please refer to the first chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²Karl Marx, "Historisch-politische Notizen (Kreuznacher Hefte 1–5)," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/2:9–278.

³Karl Marx, "Hefte zur epikureischen Philosophie. Heft 1–7," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/1, pp. 5–146 (Chinese transl.: "Guanyu Yibijiulu zhexue de biji," pp. 25–175).

⁴Neither the Berlin Notes (Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus Werken klassischer Philosophen (Berliner Hefte)," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/1:153–288) nor the Bonn notes (Karl Marx, "Exzerpte zur Geschichte der Kunst und der Religion (Bonner Hefte)," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/1:289–376) have yet been translated into Chinese.



Figure 2.1: Young Marx

ing of Hegel's historical dialectic, much less an understanding of human society from the perspective of the objective totality of historical development. As we have already pointed out, the philosophical thinking of young Marx experienced its first important theoretical shift in 1843, when he worked for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. This was a shift from the self-conscious idealism of the young Hegelians to Feuerbachian natural materialism, from democracy to abstract communism. This shift in Marx's philosophy came in large part because of the setbacks suffered by Marx as he expressed his opinions on real-world problems during the *Rheinische Zeitung* period. In the recesses of his philosophy, there was buried a powerful urgency to understand real life. This internal drive first manifested itself in Marx's study of history, especially of the French Revolution. Later, under the influence of Hess and Young Engels, it evolved into Marx's study of political economy and real life. Furthermore, the reason behind Marx's philosophical shift was identified in the past as the external influence of Feuerbach. It seemed as though upon reading Feuerbach's works, that Marx immediately moved into the camp of the "Feuerbachians." In reality, the process was not so simple.

The group of documents that illustrate the process of this first shift is primarily composed of *Kreuznach Notes*, written by Marx between July and August of 1843,

as well as the manuscript of *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, completed at nearly the same time.⁵ I have discovered that the main content of *Kreuznach Notes* — Marx's historical excerpts that focus on the French Revolution — was an extremely important aspect of his **independent** move towards the subject of social history. At the same time, it was in this research that Marx identified the revolutionary significance of Feuerbach's materialist philosophy (though not historical materialism). This is evidenced by Marx's **affirmation** of the Feuerbachian subject-predicate reinversion of Hegel's philosophy. It is disappointing that Marxist philosophers and historians have not paid more attention to this important theoretical research and process of philosophical development. This inattention is directly correlated to the less than ideal state of textual research on the *Kreuznach Notes*. *The former Soviet scholar Morozov was one of the first to study these notes; however, he wrongly believed that it was through Kreuznach Notes that Marx realized the shift to historical materialism, further pointing out that Marx's revolutionary shift took place before he began serious study of economics. This is the viewpoint that this book intends to prove false.*⁶

2.1.2 Textual interpretation of *Kreuznach Notes*: A reevaluation of the reasons for Marx's first philosophical shift

It can be directly confirmed that *Kreuznach Notes* contain five notebooks,⁷ totaling 255 pages. Marx's words are written very closely together, and as such was able to fit excerpts of 24 books and other articles into these pages. His excerpts not only include the great works of classical politicians and historians, but also political and historical works that were not very well known in the mid-19th century. The excerpts come from books that span a period of 2500 years (from 600 B.C. to the 1830s). The notebooks were labeled by Marx himself with the numbers 1–5. The first and second notebooks are titled “Historical — Political Notes,” the third notebook is titled “Notes on French History,” and the fourth and fifth notebooks are not titled, though their content is the same as the first three. On the first, third, and fifth notebooks, we find the words “Kreuznach, July 1843,” while the second and fourth are labeled “Kreuznach, July-August 1843.” From this we see that the notebooks were not written in chronological order, one after the other, but rather that multiple notebooks were written at the same

⁵According to the documents contained in MEGA 2 vol. I/2, Marx worked on both of the texts at overlapping intervals of time. The *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* was written between March and September 1843, whereas the *Kreuznach Notes* were marked by Marx as written between July and August, 1843. Marx arrived at the Rhine Province, in the hamlet of Kreuznach, in May 1843, where he met with Jenny von Westphalen who was already there. They married in June 19 of the same year. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁶Refer to Nikolai Alexandrovich Morozov [Molosufu 莫洛索夫 [Морозов, Николай Александрович]], “1843–1844 nian Makesi dui shijieshi de yanjiu shi weiwu shiguan xingcheng de laiyuan zhi yi,” 1843–1844 年马克思对世界史的研究是唯物史观形成的来源之一 [Marx's research of world history in 1843–1844 is one of the sources of the formation of his materialist historical view], *Ma-Lie zhuzuo bianyi ziliao* 马列著作编译资料, no. 15 (1981): p. 77.

⁷It is my understanding that this group of notes should also include two unfinished notebooks. However, because Marx later used them to take economics notes while living in Paris, most scholars now include them with the *Paris Notes*. We will discuss this in greater detail in the next section.

time. *This is a particularity of Marx's style of note-taking.* Furthermore, Marx composed a condensed subject index, evidence that he had specifically pondered and organized the contents of the notebooks. In these notes, we find very little of Marx's own opinion and commentary; besides the subject titles and the index, the only independent opinions in *Kreuznach Notes* can be found in a short section of comments in the fourth notebook.

In discussing the theoretical methods employed by Marx in the writing of *Kreuznach Notes*, Soviet scholar Lapin remarks, "Marx had already begun consciously using materialism as a method of studying historical progression."⁸ I contend that this is an unfounded argument. In fact, as young Marx began to enter the realm of historical research, his philosophical discourse (idealism), which had come under attack by harsh reality during the *Rheinische Zeitung* period, had not yet completely collapsed. As such, his subjective thinking had not yet actively arrived on the scene in the face of new historical fact. Rather, it was hidden within large sections of textual excerpts and scattered among lengthy commentaries. I refer to this situation as the **voiceless** state of Marx's original philosophical theoretical discourse as he entered a new historical research field. In terms of Marx's prior theoretical habits, this is a very rarely observed phenomenon. *We can contrast this to the excerpts and notes that came before this point in time, such as Comments on Epicurean Philosophy, in which Marx's free and easy command of philosophical text is readily observable. In these notes, he meticulously critiqued and interpreted nearly every excerpt.*⁹ This voiceless state did not change until nearly the end of the notes: this was a **gestalt shift based on a complete deconstruction of the determinism of idealist ideas**. Furthermore, while the subsidiary awareness of his theoretical logic during the *Rheinische Zeitung* period was based on bourgeois liberal rationality and the new bourgeois reality established during the French Revolution (Marx's target of criticism at this time was feudalism and despotism), at the time he wrote *Kreuznach Notes*, his theoretical goals were much less fixed. This is because he discovered that after the bourgeois revolution, i. e., after the "Third Estate" became the ruling class, the bourgeoisie continued to protect private property. Nevertheless, this shift in political stance did not gradually take place until near the end of the *Kreuznach Notes*. We will see that the dual changes that made up Marx's first philosophical shift both took place **independent of outside influence** in the course of Marx's own study of history.

In considering the totality of the *Kreuznach Notes*, Marx's focal awareness¹⁰ is apparently the history of European feudal society, including the feudal political history of France, England, Sweden, Poland, and Venice; this content takes up a great deal of space in the notes. At first, Marx concentrated on discovering the effect of politics in history. However, Marx unconsciously realized again and

⁸Lapin, *Molodoj Marks*, p. 162 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de qingnian shidai*, p. 171).

⁹A Chinese translation of "Epikureische Philosophie" appeared in Karl Marx [Ka'er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], "Guanyu Yibijiulu zhexue de biji," 关于伊壁鸠鲁哲学的笔记, in *Makesi Engesi quanji*, 马克思恩格斯全集, Zhongwen di yi ban 中文第一版, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 40 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社 [People's Press], 1980), 25–175.

¹⁰**Focal awareness** was a key concept in Polanyi's cognitive theory. It refers to the clearly understood goals and intentions of the cognitive subject.

Sept. 1
 V. Seite
 wie fast Jahre.

I. Philipp II. 1328 - 1515.
 Carl VII. 1422 - 1461 (S. 10-11)
 Philipp II. 1328 - 1390 (S. 1-2)
 Ludwig II. 1461 - 1483 (S. 11-12)
 Philipp III. 1350 - 1364 (S. 3-7)
 Carl VIII. 1485 - 1498 (S. 13-14)
 Carl IX. 1364 - 1380 (S. 7)
 Ludwig III. 1498 - 1515 (S. 14-16)
 Carl VI. 1380 - 1422 (S. 7-10)

II.
 no. Seite 6. 7. 20. 21. 22. 23. (1515 - 1580)

Erz. I. 1515 - 1547 (S. 16-19)
 Erz. II. 1547 - 1559 (S. 19)
 Erz. III. 1559 - 1560 (S. 19)

Erz. IV. 1560 - 1574 (S. 19)
 Erz. V. 1574 - 1589 (S. 20)

II. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Erz. IV.
 Ludwig XIII.
 Ludwig XIV.
 Ludwig XV.

Figure 2.2: Facsimile of a page of the second notebook in *Kreuznach Notes*

again that **private property was the true foundation of social history**. *This was to be an important consensus between Marx and Proudhon in their philosophical intercourse.*

At the beginning of the first volume of *Kreuznach Notes*, Marx ponders Charles Lacretelle's *Histoire de France*, in which Lacretelle studies the formation of parlements in the social-political structure of France in the late 1500s. Although Marx took excerpts on the relation between the military system and the property system of the time, he still noticed that the fall of feudalism in Europe was spurred by the shipping industry, commerce, and industry, as well as the rise of the third estate.¹¹ This line of thought should represent the social and economic progression of the contemporary bourgeois class; however, there is no sign that Marx thought any deeper on this subject. In Marx's excerpts from Carl Ludwig's *Geschichte der letzten 50 Jahre*, begun in the second volume, Marx accidentally discovers that around the time of the French Revolution, the National Assembly formed by the third estate **still defended private ownership of property**. Although it confiscated church property, still it protected individual private property. Marx comments, calling this a great contradiction, where on the one hand, private property is declared inviolable, and on the other, it is sacrificed.¹² This naturally shook Marx's faith in democracy, because the goal of Marx's opposition to despotism was not merely to establish a new form of private ownership. Marx began to be conscious of the "liberal prattle" of the third estate. Here, Marx is evidently reconsidering his own support for the rationality of democratic liberalism in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. In Marx's excerpts from Bailieu's *Examen critique de l'ouvrage posthume de M. le B. de Stael* in the second volume, he remarks that feudalism is a firmly rooted hierarchy, noting that in feudalism, "property rules man, while in modern society, man controls property."¹³ Although Marx's summary here is not precise, he had become cognizant of the fact that in both old and new society, man has always revolved around relations of property. Where Marx had discovered while writing for the *Rheinische Zeitung* that material interests always predominate, here he begins to confront, in the development of history, the historical fact that property is the **basis** of all of history (society based on private ownership). This was a further refutation and deconstruction of Marx's already wavering faith in the rational principles of idealism.

In the topical index at the end of the second volume, we find Marx's two primary lines of thought here: first, the political structure of feudal society and bourgeois society, and second, ownership and property relations. Although the first line of thought was still the focus of Marx's attention at this time, under the topics "ownership and its consequences" and "property," he includes the relations between "owners and society," "owners and property," "appropriation and property," "equality and property," and "politics and economics." Most importantly,

¹¹Marx, "Kreuznach Notes," p. 39.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³*ibid.*, p. 103. For a Chinese translation, see Karl Marx [Ka'er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], "Kehuocinahe biji," 克罗茨纳赫笔记 [Kreuznach Notes], ed. Makesi Engesi yanjiu ziliao huibian 马克思恩格斯研究资料汇编, trans. Wang Fumin 王福民 (Shumu wenxian chubanshe 书目文献出版社, 1985), p. 9. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

Marx begins to realize the significance, the new bourgeois society, of property as a condition both to vote as well as to be voted into office. Proceeding from this point, in Marx's excerpts from Lingard's *Geschichte von England* he understood that at the end of the 18th century, 84 English towns sent 157 representatives to parliament; however, "the bourgeois members of parliament were not the representatives of the people, only of their own interests."¹⁴ At the same time, when the views of the people differed from those of the government, the House of Commons tended most often to side with the government, and not with the people. For Marx, this proved that the system of representation was "based on two illusions: the illusion of homogeneous interests of citizens, and the illusion that parliament represented the will of the people. In particular, hierarchical voting laws demonstrated the hoax that was the so-called sovereignty of the people."¹⁵ Marx discovered that this "democratic system of government" was not a manifestation of the sovereignty of the people, but rather of the economic and political interests of the bourgeois class. Furthermore, this new "modern system of private ownership was the product of long years of development."¹⁶ At this time, Marx began to gradually understand the real nature of the democratic political force to which he had once subscribed. This sounded the death knell of the bourgeois democratic principles in Marx's democratic stance.

However, Marx's most important philosophical theoretical change took place in the second half of the fourth volume of notes. As Marx excerpted from Leopold Ranke's article *On the Period of French Restoration* in the magazine for which he was editor, *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* (these excerpts can be found on lines 28–32 of page 41 of the fourth volume of notes), he writes the longest section of **exceptional** commentary to be found in all the *Kreuznach Notes*. Here we see an important shift in philosophical discourse. Here what we find are evidently no longer the self-conscious rational principles espoused by the Young Hegelians, but rather **the refutation of these idealist principles in social reality**. Thus revolution is brought to the forefront. In pondering on Ranke's historical analysis of the French Bourbon dynasty, what Marx originally studied were the complex political mechanisms in place during the transition from old France to new France. The basis of old France was made up of the monarch and the aristocracy, while the real starting point of new France was formed by the new property rights established after the revolution. General historical reality shows that the basis of state and law is constituted of property relations. At the beginning of this section of commentary, Marx writes:

During the reign of **Louis XVIII**, the constitution was a gift from the king. During the reign of **Louis-Philippe**, the king was a gift of the constitution. In general, we see that the subject becomes the predicate, the predicate the subject, and the determinant becomes determined. These changes lead to a new revolution, one not only started by revolutionaries.¹⁷

¹⁴Marx, "Kreuznach Notes," p. 128–129.

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 103. For a Chinese translation, see Marx, "Kaluocinahe biji," p. 9. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁶Marx, "Kreuznach Notes," p. 135.

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 181 (Chinese transl.: "Kaluocinahe biji," pp. 368–369).

This paragraph of commentary was originally intended to explain a concrete relationship in historical revolution, but Marx perhaps unconsciously employed Hegel's terminology: relationship of the subject and predicate. Thus Marx continues, writing that the "king made laws (old monarchy), while now laws make the king (new monarchy)."¹⁸ At this point, Marx's thinking is brought to life, and he realizes an important and fundamental philosophical issue:

Therefore, when Hegel takes the notion of the state as his subject and the old form of state existence as his predicate, he does realize that in historical reality, their places are exactly inverted. The notion of the state is ever the predicate of the form of the existence of the state. Here he only derives the collective spirit of the epoch, the **political theology** of the age.¹⁹

Evidently, the new understanding revealed here contains elements of Feuerbach's materialist revolution.²⁰ This is an important acknowledgement. Marx's thought all of a sudden moves leaps from analyzing ancient and modern historical periods to an identification of the **fundamental issues of philosophy**. He actually confirms a phenomenon that existed in social historical development from the beginning: **the system of ownership determines state and law, and reality determines ideas!** Thus Hegel's mistake becomes clear: what Hegel takes to be the determining element is reason in a religious sense, and the concept of the state in terms of the state. This metaphysics is a reflection of reactionary metaphysics, and for reactionary forces, the old world is the truth of the new worldview.²¹

It is redundant to reiterate that from our textual study, Marx did not simply or externally come under the influence of Feuerbach, as traditionalists would have us believe. Rather, he **consciously** confirmed the premise of general materialist in his actual social historical research. It should be pointed out that as soon as Marx turned to the standpoint of materialism, his position was not merely the natural materialist position of Feuerbach, i. e., the immediate subject-predicate inversion of material (nature) and consciousness, but rather the belief that **man's real social existence (system of ownership) determines** the social materialism of the **idea**. *Of course, this real social existence was actually similar to "thing that is felt" in social life proposed by the French materialists; it was the social materialism proceeding from economic reality present in political economy.* This is the true point of origin of the **critical materialist logic** in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. *McClellan wrote: before The Holy Family, none of Marx's works can be considered materialist. This is evidently an irresponsible conclusion.*²² On the

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 181 (Chinese transl.: "Keluocinahe biji," pp. 368–369).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 181 (Chinese transl.: "Keluocinahe biji," pp. 368–369).

²⁰See Ludwig Feuerbach, "Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie," in *Entwürfe zu einer neuen Philosophie*, ed. Walter Jaeschke and Werner Schuffenhauer (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996), p. 4 (Chinese transl.: *Guanyu zhexue gaozao de linshi gangyao*, p. 2). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²¹Marx, "Kreuznach Notes," p. 181 (Chinese transl.: "Keluocinahe biji," pp. 368–369).

²²Refer to McClellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, p. 97 (Chinese transl.: *Qingnian Heige'er pai yu Makesi*, p. 101).

other hand, it is also in this text that Marx begins to gradually perceive the true nature of bourgeois politics in actual historical development. Thus he was able to move further towards the political position of the proletariat, while coming under the influence of the German and French socialists of his day; this also provided the important philosophical foundation for the introduction to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Understanding this point is vitally important to our accurate understanding of the first great shift in young Marx's thought, especially to our understanding of the fundamental changes on the level of Marx's philosophical premise.

In the remaining excerpts, this important shift in Marx's ideas would be supported again and again by historical facts. In the same volume, while excerpting from Ranke's "Convention of 1775," Marx remarks that "the influence of monks in rural France depended on the amount of land they owned."²³ In Pfister's *Geschichte der Deutschen*, Marx discovers that in ancient history, "land ownership was always the basis of the Germanic system." In Jouffroy's *Das Princip der Erbllichkeit*, Marx remarks that "England's system of representation is founded on the basis of land ownership. The foundation of the constitutional monarchy is strengthening land ownership."²⁴ These findings greatly strengthened Marx's newly acquired social materialist ideas. According to the records in the fifth volume of notes, in reading Moser's *Patriotische Phantasien*, Marx found that "in the systems of antiquity, only man's personal freedom was guaranteed. Freedom is only relative to man himself. Later, the state limited material freedom in order to restrict man's personal freedom: material freedom is related to land ownership." Thus Marx was able to come to the conclusion that "freedom is a relative concept." Why is this the case? Because in the different systems of actual history, the content of the idea of freedom has been completely different. This is quite a profound idea already. We can see that Marx's democratic and liberal political position was no longer firm, but began to totter precariously.

I have also found that in the historical texts with which Marx was dealing at this time, there already began to appear a great deal of economics content. For instance, in Carl Ludwig's *Geschichte der letzten 50 Jahre*, he discusses the issue of cash money. In addition, topics 1, 7, and 16 of Marx's topical index make repeated mention of taxes, property, and other important economic issues. In his excerpts on land and property from Schmidt's *Histoire de France* in the fourth volume, Marx even summarizes the different forms of private ownership: "various forms of private property: free, granted, property on which interest must be paid."²⁵ In Ranke's *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Marx remarks the social problems caused by the increase in commodity prices. Even more interesting, in excerpting from Lingard's *Geschichte von England*, Marx writes "labor is the only wealth" (borrowing Smith's words). In Hamilton's *Die Menschen und die Sitten in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*, Marx writes that "New York's bourgeois society is divided into two classes: workers and non-workers." However,

²³Marx, "Kreuznach Notes," p. 185.

²⁴*ibid.*, p. 264.

²⁵*ibid.*, p. 147.

all these discoveries were still the iceberg under the sea: Marx did not pay special attention to any of them, because what he focused on during this time was still the state. History here was only ancillary; Marx still interpreted it as political history, and economic content was only excerpted as footnotes to political battles.

Only based on the historical confirmations made in *Kreuznach Notes* could Marx really take an accounting of Hegel's philosophical idealism (not long before, he had been dominated by the Young Hegelian concept of self-consciousness). This would make up the primary content of Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, which he would write soon thereafter. It is evident that Marx did not simply come under the influence of Feuerbach and then suddenly shift his thinking, but rather that this shift was rooted in the following two occurrences: first, the dilemma posed by actual social problems, and second, after his theoretical confirmation in historical research, he surpasses Feuerbach even while affirming his materialist position. This was understood from the perspective of social historical reality. In my opinion, for Marx this text should not be overestimated; we should not think that here Marx was already progressing towards **Marxism**. This is because when compared with the other members of the Young Hegelians who were also turning towards a materialist position, Marx's views at this time were not all that profound. On a political level, Marx's first philosophical shift was the same. It was not until later, in the introduction to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* that Marx thoroughly shifted from a democratic position to the position of the proletariat.

2.1.3 Redefinition of the internal theoretical thinking in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*

In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic* I explained that in Marx's structural analysis of social history in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, he had already established the premise of general materialism in the study of social history — that civil society determines State and Law. In his criticism of bourgeois social reality, his view of history was still based on Feuerbachian humanist alienation.²⁶ There are two lines of thinking in Feuerbachian philosophy: the first is materialist, sensuous descriptive logic of natural determinism; the second is the humanist value critique logic of the alienation of man's species-essence. The second of these lines of thinking had the greatest influence on Marx. *This is a point that McLellan has already made clear.*²⁷ Feuerbach criticized Hegel, pointing out that his dialectic of the Absolute Idea was just another exquisite theoretical representation of theodicy: *Phenomenology* was his creation story, *Science of Logic* described the moment of creation of the Creator (the subject), real nature and social history became the process of the alienated subject in the redemption of the world from enslavement to material (the Kingdom of Necessity), finally in the process of sublimation and alienation, the speculative Absolute Spirit awakens

²⁶See the first chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²⁷Refer to McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, pp. 95–96 (Chinese transl.: *Qingnian Heige'er pai yu Makesi*, p. 99).

and returns to the City of God of the Absolute Idea (Kingdom of Freedom). Here I must point out that Feuerbach did, in fact, correctly re-invert Hegel. He pointed out that immediate natural material was the foundation and that perceptual man was the subject. However, he did not see that behind the framework of Hegel's philosophy, there was an important, real historical foundation; that is, the European bourgeois revolution and the economic reality of bourgeois society. This is content that we have already analyzed in the preceding chapter. In Hegelian philosophy, a vitally important yet long overlooked frame of reference was bourgeois classical economics. As I have already pointed out, Hegel's philosophy is essentially an idealistic abstraction of the collective cognitive structure of mankind and its historical dialectic development. However, in addition to its abundant philosophical historical elements, it also contained two important topics of actual history: the French Revolution and the English Industrial Revolution. Where Napoleon is the "Absolute Spirit on horseback," Smith's "invisible hand" is internalized as the latent support of the Absolute Idea in reality — in other words, the "cunning of reason" that exists in the background of modern historical development. Hegel's Absolute Idea would ultimately move from the real economy of bourgeois social reality to world history more broadly. Feuerbach was opposed to how Hegel's idealism moved from abstract to concrete, from a mediated speculative abstract to concrete, perceptual immediacy. This criticism is **correct**, though **shallow**. It was precisely because of the simple, directly observed nature of natural materialism that prevented Feuerbach from truly understanding Hegel's deeper social historical dialectic.

As Marx moved towards the "perceptual concrete" of general materialism, he also expressed opposition towards Hegel's abstract speculative logic. *It was not until much later that Marx became cognizant of what he was doing, which was once again moving from the abstract to the concrete on a new scientific foundation, from directness to mediated critical phenomenology!* As such, Marx's first critique of Hegel's idealism did indeed form the first important shift in his philosophical thinking. However, because Marx had not yet begun a systematic study of economics, he was unable to understand Hegel's criticism of classical economics in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*.²⁸ Therefore, Marx was unable, after removing the premise of idealism, to address the profound question of why Hegel used State and Law to **refute, control, and surpass** civil society. From our earlier analysis of the whole of Hegel's logic we can see that in Hegel's eyes, the "natural order" based on isolated individuals that formed the market of the commodity economy promoted by Smith, Ricardo and others was, in fact, the Absolute Idea (the Subject) in a state of alienation in social historical economic objectification, a state in which the market is blindly, spontaneously controlled by the "invisible hand." Hegel believed that through the self-regulatory mechanisms of State and Law, the Absolute Idea directly manifested the "invisible hand." This was also the leap from the last stage of the reified Kingdom of Necessity to the Kingdom of Freedom of the Idea. In 1843, as Marx used materialism to invert this relationship in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, it is evident that he was right, though,

²⁸Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*.

in a sense, not yet profound enough. Of course, this lack of profundity would not become clear until after 1845 with the high point in the Marxist philosophical revolution. *On this point, Schmidt followed after Marcuse in arguing that Marx removed himself from Hegel's dialectic "for a time," before "using Feuerbach's critique of Hegel as a medium, to return to Hegel's point of view"*²⁹ in *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, and all his later works. *This is a very accurate opinion, because for young Marx, still under the influence of "self-consciousness," did not at first understand Hegel's historical dialectic on a deep level. Because of this, even though Marx did begin to reject Hegel's idealism at this time, he did not truly "remove" himself from it. Marx's understanding of Hegel's historical dialectic gradually became more profound through a gradual historical process. In fact, even as he accepted Feuerbach's philosophy, Marx was still projecting the developmental point of view of Hegel's historical dialectic through the intermediary of a humanist, dynamic alienation conception of history.*

We have just viewed young Marx's first important philosophical shift through the lens of economics research. Almost at the same time as this shift, in the second half of 1843, Marx began his first steps into economics research. As a true record of his process of study, Marx left the valuable manuscripts *Paris Notes* and *1844 Manuscripts*.

2.2 The Textual Structure and Context of *Paris Notes*

The shift in Marx's philosophical discourse within the context of economics research is the primary subject of our discussion at this point. As such, we turn our attention to Marx's earliest text which deals with economics research: the *Paris Notes*, written in Paris around 1844, as well as the *1844 Manuscript*, the most important text of the *Paris Notes*.³⁰ These texts were written as part of the same creative process. According to the results of my research, the economics research in *Paris Notes* formed the primary theoretical starting point of the philosophical discourse in the *1844 Manuscript*. However, in the current research on Marx's philosophical texts, a great theoretical blank space still exists as to the true context of *Paris Notes*. This state of the research has inevitably led to a great misinterpretation of the *1844 Manuscript*. Therefore, the *Paris Notes* — Marx's earliest economics texts in note form — very naturally become the first theoretical issue for us to tackle.

²⁹ Alfred Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, Überarbeitete, ergänzte und mit einem Postscriptum versehene Neuauflage (Frankfurt a. M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, [1962] 1971), p. 14 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de ziran gainian*, p. 9).

³⁰ During 1843, both Ruge and Hess visited Paris in order to prepare the publication of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. In October of the same year, Marx and Jenny moved to Paris, too. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

2.2.1 The textual structure of *Paris Notes*

Written between October, 1843 and January, 1845, *Paris Notes* are the true record of Marx's first forays into the study of economics.³¹ In their broadest definition, the *Paris Notes* are comprised of ten notebooks, of which seven primarily contain economics excerpts and three contain a record of Marx's early thoughts and reflections on economics. These last three unfinished manuscripts were written at the same time as the first seven. Strictly speaking, the ten notebooks complement one another; it is impossible to analyze them separately. However, in considering the context in which young Marx wrote the notebooks, we can narrowly define the seven notebooks containing early excerpts on political economy as *Paris Notes*, and the three notebooks containing early thoughts and criticisms of bourgeois political economy as the *1844 Manuscript*. *Specifically, this manuscript was completed before the commencement of the sixth notebook in August of 1844. According to the most recent research conducted by experts of Marx's manuscripts from the Amsterdam International Institute of Social History, as well as findings from Soviet and Eastern European scholars in the early 1980s, the actual circumstances of Marx's writing show that there was no independent 1844 Manuscript.*³² As such, it is improper for us to consider the *1844 Manuscript* without placing it within the context of *Paris Notes*. At this point, let us first look at the textual structure of young Marx's *Paris Notes*.

Within the space of one year, young Marx read an enormous number of works on economics, filling seven whole notebooks with his own notes. These notebooks, containing approximately 30 printed pages, were first published in 1932 by the Marx Engels Lenin Stalin Institute in the third volume of *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels* (abbreviated as *MEGA 1*) under the title "Economics Research (Excerpts)." At first there were believed to be nine volumes, and it was not until the publication of *MEGA 2* in 1981 that *Paris Notes* were placed in the second volume of the fourth part as seven volumes. This is because researchers discovered the words "1845 Brussels" in two of the notebooks, thus including them with the *Brussels Notes*.

Given that the main body of the text in *Paris Notes* contains neither reference to date or location, nor indications of sequence, it is impossible to determine with any great degree of accuracy the order in which the notes were written. As such, the editors of *MEGA 1* and *MEGA 2* arranged the notebooks differently. A brief overview of their organization is included at this point.

MEGA 1:

Notebook 1 (two columns): Marx wrote on 12 pieces of paper, making 24 written pages in total. There is no cover, and the writing is organized into two vertical columns. The right column of pages 5–24 is left blank. The first part contains

³¹Karl Marx, "Historisch-ökonomische Studien (Pariser Hefte)," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/2:283–589.

³²Refer to Zhonggong zhongyang bianyi ju, ed. [中共中央编译局编 [Central Compilation and Translation Bureau]], *Ma-Lie zhuyi yanjiu ziliao*, 马列主义研究资料 [Marxist-Leninist Research Materials], vol. di 1–58 qi 第 1 ~ 58 期 (Beijing 北京: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社 [People's Press], 1978–1990), 1984, No. 2.

21 pages of excerpts from Say's *On Political Economy* (two volumes, published in Paris in 1817). The second part contains $2\frac{1}{4}$ pages of excerpts from Skalbek's *Theory of Social Wealth* (two volumes, published in Paris in 1829). The last part contains just a $\frac{1}{4}$ page containing excerpts from Say's *Course in Practical Political Economy* (published in Brussels in 1837).

Notebook 2 (folded sheets, two columns): Marx wrote on 12 pieces of paper, making 24 written pages in total. The last page contains mathematical calculations, and there is no cover. The title on the first page, written by Marx, reads "Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith, translated by G. Garnier, 1802." This notebook is entirely comprised of excerpts from Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (first volume, published in Paris, 1802).

Notebook 3 (two columns): Marx wrote on nine pieces of paper, making 17 written pages in total. On the sixth page, Marx only wrote six lines, and on the 18th page he wrote only a heading. There is no cover, and the pages are divided into two vertical columns. The first part contains five pages of excerpts from Rene Levasseur's memoir (published in Paris in four volumes between 1828 and 1831). The last part contains 11 pages of excerpts from the end of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Notebook 4 (two columns): Marx wrote on 18 pieces of paper, totaling 35 written pages. There is no cover, one part is divided into two columns, the other into three columns. The first part contains $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from the fourth volume in Xenophanes' *Selected Works of Xenophanes of Athens*. The second portion contains 17 pages of excerpts from David Ricardo's *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (published in Paris in 1835 in two volumes). The last section contains 17 pages of excerpts from James Mills' *Principles of Political Economy* (published in Paris in 1832).

Notebook 5 (double-folded sheets): Marx wrote on 10 pieces of paper, totaling 18 pages. There is a cover, on which is written: "Gibbons, 1844. 1. MacCulloch, 2. Prevost on Mill, 3. Destutt de Tracy, 4. Mill/Sismondi: Explanations, etc. (this section has been deleted), 5. Bentham's Punishments and Rewards volume 2, edited by Edmond, Paris, 1826." This title was obviously added by Marx later, as there is some discrepancy between the titles of the sections and their content. The first section contains nine pages of excerpts from McCulloch's *A Discourse on the Rise, Progress, Peculiar Objects, and Importance of Political Economy* (published in 1825 in Geneva and Paris, the French edition of this work includes an essay in the appendix by the translator, Prevost, entitled *Critique of Ricardo's System*). The second section contains three pages of excerpts from Tracy's *Principles of Ideology* (volumes 4 and 5, published in Paris in 1826), as well as six pages of excerpts from the end portion of Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*. Finally, one inserted page of excerpts from Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* is included at the end.

Notebook 6: Excerpts from Lauderdale's *An Inquiry into The Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*. It was later determined that this notebook belongs with the *Brussels Notes*.

Notebook 7 (two columns): Marx wrote on 12 pieces of paper totaling 23 written pages. The pages are divided into two vertical columns. The first section

contains only one page of excerpts from Schutz's *Elements of Political Economy* (published in Tübingen in 1843). The second section contains 17 pages of excerpts from Friedrich List's *The National System of Political Economy Volume One: International Trade, Trade Policy, and Germany's Customs Union* (published in Stuttgart and Tübingen in 1841). The third section contains three pages of excerpts from Heinrich Friedrich Osiander's *The Disappointment of the Public towards Commercial, Trade, and Agricultural Profit, or an Explanation of Dr. List's Philosophy of Industrial Power* (published in Tübingen in 1842). The fourth section contains one page of excerpts from Osiander's *On the Trade of the Nations* (volumes 1–2, printed in Stuttgart in 1840). The last section contains one page of excerpts from the last part of Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*.

Notebook 8: Excerpts from Boisguillebert's *Le détail de la France*. and two other works, as well as John Law's *Considérations sur le numéraire et le commerce*, It was later determined that this notebook belongs with the *Brussels Notes*.

Notebook 9 (triple-folded sheets): Marx wrote on 12 pieces of paper, totaling 24 written pages. On the first page is the title: "Eugène Buret's *The Poverty of the Working Class of England and France*" (volumes 1–2, published in Paris in 1840). Part of the excerpts from this notebook have been included with *Brussels Notes*.

In the new *MEGA 2*, notebooks six and eight have been included with *Brussels Notes*, while the order of the remaining six notebooks has been changed. The original third notebook is now the first, and the remaining notebooks are sequenced two through seven according to the original order. Also, the editors of *MEGA 2* have determined that a page of excerpts from Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* should be included with *Paris Notes*.

In the past, scholars focused on two basic clues to the organization of *Paris Notes* in the textual research of Marx's writing: first is the condition of the writing, ink, and paper of Marx's manuscripts. Second, Marx's line of economics thinking and research, as best estimated by the modern researcher. However, what nobody realized was that at this time, **the deepest, actual theoretical underpinnings (power discourse) of young Marx's thinking were philosophical**. Using this new logic that I suggest, the real order of Marx's seven notebooks, using the notebook numbers from *MEGA 1*, is most likely as follows: notebook 1, notebook 2, notebook 3, notebook 5, notebook 7, notebook 4, notebook 9, and finally the excerpts from Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. On what do I base these conclusions? Let us conduct a brief analysis.

I have discovered that the "Levasseur Notes" and "Xenophanes Notes" that are listed as part of the *Paris Notes* do not really belong with the economics research that makes up the rest of the *Paris Notes*, but are rather focused on the study of politics, law, and history. I believe that it is very likely that these notes were originally part of the *Kreuznach Notes*, and that Marx was simply using the blank space in these notebooks for additional writing. The first notebook originally only used five pages, and the next notebook only $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages. Furthermore, Marx had the habit of continuing one notebook on the white space of the next, an issue that went unnoticed by the original *MEGA* editors. *This same phenomenon can be*

observed in Brussels Notes, where one section is begun immediately after the last part of Buret Notes.

Using my inferences as to the sequence of *Paris Notes*, Marx first took notes on Say, then Smith. In the second part of the section on Smith, he then recorded the second half his notes on Levasseur, which originally belonged with *Kreuznach Notes*. Next came his notes on McCulloch, then de Tracy. Following these, Marx took excerpts from Schutz, List, and Oslander. The last portion of Marx's notes on economics were on Ricardo and Mill. These were the most important of all the economics notes that Marx took at this point in time, included after his notes on Xenophanes in a notebook that had originally belonged with *Kreuznach Notes*. The "Comments on James Mill" represent the highpoint of Marx's notes on economics. The final portions of these two sections of notes are included after the notes on Tracy and Oslander, respectively. Finally, Marx departs from bourgeois political economy, first taking excerpts from Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, socialist Eugène Buret's notes, and Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.

2.2.2 The general cognitive background of Marx's first studies of economics

As we have already discussed, *Paris Notes* represent the first lines of thought in young Marx's study of political economy between 1843 and 1845. There are two points that I must clarify: first, at this point in time, Marx did not have a complete understanding of economics. Because he had virtually no authority to speak on the subject, the vast majority of his notes are made up of excerpts, with almost no commentary. This is what I refer to as the "voiceless" state of Marx the philosopher, as he first began to step into a new theoretical realm. *This "voiceless" state did not change until the Mill Notes at the end of the Paris Notes.* The second point that I must clarify is that even though Marx conducted a small amount of research and analysis in economics, he did not, at this time, develop a complete, historical understanding of economics. Marx not only lacked understanding of the movement from mercantilism to physiocracy that took place before Smith, but he was also unable to differentiate the theoretical differences between classical economics and vulgar economics. In fact, in the period of time around 1844, young Marx had not accumulated any economics knowledge; to use the later words of Engels, Marx "knew nothing" of economics. *In 1892, some people suggested that historical materialism was first developed by Lavergne-Peguilhen, the representative figure of the historical school of German jurisprudence. As quoted in Franz Mehring's On Historical Materialism, Lavergne-Peguilhen wrote in 1838 that the economic structure of a country forms the foundation of its society and governmental structure: "Production and the distribution of products, culture and its diffusion, state legislation and the form of the state must derive their content and development entirely out of the economic forms."*³³ Mehring wrote to Engels,

³³Moritz von Lavergne-Peguilhen, *Die Bewegungs- und Produktionsgesetze: ein staatswirtschaftlicher Versuch* (Königsberg, 1838), p. 225. Chinese translation quoted from Franz Mehring [Fu Meilin 弗•

asking if he and Marx were familiar with this viewpoint of the historical school. Engels replied in a letter to Mehring dated 28 September, 1892: “Marx was, at the time, a Hegelian... as for political economy, he knew nothing of it, and as such, the words ‘economic form’ to him had no significance whatsoever. As for the aforementioned reference to this term, even if he had heard of it, it could only have gone in one ear and out the other, leaving behind no trace at all in his memory.”³⁴

Perhaps because Marx knew so little of economics, scholars from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China tend to either avoid discussion of the specific economics content found in *Paris Notes* or maintain silence as to the theoretical value of this content, a silence that amounts to avoidance. *One of the earliest scholars to study Marx’s Paris Notes was the Soviet scholar Rosenberg. According to the materials published in MEGA 1, he provided a general description of the Paris Notes.*³⁵ *In addition, the Soviet philosopher Lapin also made Paris Notes the subject of quite profound philosophical thought.*³⁶ The main reason for this silence and avoidance was the inability of scholars to come to a definite conclusion about young Marx’s inchoate views on political economy. I contend that at this time, Marx did not understand the scientific value of classical economics. Specifically, he did not understand the historical essence of classical economics, especially its important labor theory of value. The primary cause of this deficiency of understanding was that Marx lacked scientific methods of comprehension, and therefore could not develop scientific views on economics. *The first shortcoming — Marx’s inability to grasp the labor theory of value — was addressed in the spring of 1845, while the second shortcoming — his lack of scientific methods — was not addressed until 1857–1858. These two breakthroughs would later become Marx’s two great discoveries.*

In Marx’s general theoretical background, there still lurks one important question: what were Marx’s reasons for not taking notes on some of the works he read during this time period? There are several possible answers to this question. First, it is possible that Marx owned the works in question himself, and so did not feel as pressed to take excerpts from them. *Refer to the 1844–1847 Notebooks for an index of the books Marx owned at that time. The 1844–1847 Notebooks contain the earliest record of Marx’s activities that we have discovered at this point, primarily documenting the books Marx read between 1844 and 1847, but also including commentary, plans for writing, and reflections on a variety of topics. However, these notebooks were not specifically intended to contain reading notes.*³⁷ Second, it is possible that Marx did take notes on some works, but those notes have been lost over the years. Third, perhaps Marx felt more familiar with these works, and

梅林], *Lun lishi weiwu zhuyi*, 论历史唯物主义, trans. Li Kang 李康 (Beijing 北京: Sanlian shudian 三联书店 [Joint Publishing], 1958), p. 6; that book is a translation of the second part of Mehring’s *Die Lessing-Legende*, see p. 436 there.

³⁴Engels an Franz Mehring in Berlin, London, 28 September 1892, in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 38, p. 481 (Chinese transl.: zhi Fulanci Meilin, Bolin, p. 480).

³⁵See also Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjirueshuo fazhan gailun*).

³⁶Lapin, *Molodoj Marks* (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de qingnian shidai*).

³⁷See Karl Marx, “Notizbuch aus den Jahren 1844–1847,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 1*, I/5:547–550.

so decided that he did not need to take notes on them. This third possibility can be further divided into three sub-categories: first, that Marx was more familiar with the philosophical documents commonly used by the Young Hegelians, such as those by Feuerbach, Ruge, Hess, and others; second, that by 1842–1843, Marx was already familiar with the writings of the English and French socialists of the day, such as those by Fourier, Henri de Saint Simon, Leroux, Considerant, Proudhon, Enfantin, Weitling, Cabet, Dézamy, and others; third, that Marx was concerned with other economics documents that did not appear in *Paris Notes*.³⁸

The documents in the third category are especially important to our research at this point. The first of these is Sismondi's *New Principles of Political Economy*. From the index in Marx's *1844–1847 Notebooks*, we can see that Marx had taken notes on Sismondi, but that those notes have been lost. In addition, there are the works directly quoted in the 1844 Manuscript, such as Constantin Pecquer's *New Theory of Social and Political Economy, or A Study of Social Organizations* (published in Paris in 1842), Charles Loudon's *Solution to the Problem of Population and Sustenance* (published in Paris in 1842), and Schulz's *Production Movement: A Historical and Statistical Study Laying a New Scientific Foundation for the Nation and Society* (printed in Zurich and Winterthur in 1843). Of especial importance is Schulz's³⁹ important work. *In his book* Biography of Marx and Engels, Cornu was the first scholar to bring out the importance of Schulz's work,⁴⁰ though according to Cornu, Louis Mink's manuscript *Study of Historical Materialism had a profound impact on his own views*. The importance of this book can be seen in the large number of citations that Marx took from it at the beginning of the *1844 Manuscript*.⁴¹

Let us here take the main viewpoints advanced in Schulz's 1843 *Movement of Production* as an example to conduct some necessary theoretical discussion. Schulz's research primarily uses the **history of production** to explain social development. At the same time, he introduces the argument that the different historical periods can be divided according to the development of human needs and the institutions necessary to satisfy those needs. The continual development of these needs necessarily causes persistent changes in economic and social relations. Using this standard, Schulz divides social history into four time periods: the first was a period defined by the small production of artisanal labor; it was defined by simple needs and reliant on the earth. This was a period with neither economic class nor national government. *Coming before Morgan, this is a fascinating viewpoint. Obviously, Marx did not pay attention to the idea of a "classless" society*. The

³⁸Bagaturija: On Feuerbach and the German Ideology. In: Marxist-Leninist Research Materials, 1984, No. 1.

³⁹Wilhelm Schulz (1797–1860) was a German democratic political scientist. Author of *The Movement of Production: A Treatise on the Historical and Statistical Foundation of a New Science of the State and Society* (1843) and "The Change of the Labor Structure and its Effects on Society," which was published in the second volume of the 1840 edition of *The German Tribune*.

⁴⁰Refer to Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, vol. 2, pp. 120–121 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 2, p. 140).

⁴¹Karl Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/2, pp. 334–336, 346–347, 350 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," 57–59, 70–71, 73–74).

second period was defined by agricultural production; by this time, man was no longer limited to the simple use of natural force to directly acquire material necessities from nature, but was rather able to cause nature to serve man. As human needs continually developed during this period, there began to be division of labor as industry and commerce emerged from agriculture. Consequently, there began to be divisions among people as well. The third period was marked by factory artisanal production; as production developed, there began to be an accumulation of capital, leading to the opposition of the classes. At the same time there began to be a division between physical and mental labor. The fourth period was defined by the factory system of production; this was a mechanized system caused by division of labor. In this new period in the development of production, the forces of production in agriculture, industry, and commerce all developed rapidly, and the accumulation of capital took place ever faster. However, at the same time, this also caused further separation and opposition between the rich bourgeoisie and the impoverished proletariat. Schulz believed that this class opposition was the defining characteristic of bourgeois society.

In this critically important work, we see that Schulz criticizes the economic system of bourgeois society using the logic of management. In describing the poverty of workers under the bourgeois economic system, he writes that they were forced to obtain pitiable wages “through anxious labor that damages the body and destroys the human spirit and mental faculties.” As the gulf between rich and poor grows ever larger, Schulz predicts that it will inevitably aggravate the tension between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, ultimately culminating in social revolution. Schulz suggests that it is the responsibility of the state to reorganize labor and restructure relations of property in order to reduce the current social conflicts, allowing the current society to transition to a more perfect society. If the ruling class attempts to obviate this peaceful resolution to class conflict, then Schulz argues that the only option is social revolution. At this point, Schulz directly criticizes bourgeois political economy, the Young Hegelians, and the “crude” socialism and communism of the time. As quoted in the second volume of Auguste Cornu’s *Karl Marx et Friedrich Engels, leur vie et leur œuvre*, Schulz argues that bourgeois political economists only study the material world, neglecting the “productive essence existant in humanity.” According to Schulz, these economists do not view man as the starting point and goal of research, but rather, as the Young Hegelians, stop only at abstract conceptual debates, being thus unable to “find the path to real life from the ephemeral realm of universality.”⁴² He further argues that “crude” socialism and communism only see the material aspect of production and consumption, ignoring man’s spiritual activity and its social conditions.⁴³

Schulz’s thinking on this point is extremely important. In fact, even before Marx, Schulz had consciously begun with production, viewing the development of the social economy as beginning with the foundation laid by the history of pre-historic human society. He even advanced the viewpoint that nations did not come

⁴²Refer to Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, vol. 2, pp. 121–125 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 2, pp. 140–143).

⁴³Refer to *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 124–125 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Engesi zhuan*, vol. 2, p. 143).

into being until social production had reached a certain point of development. This is manifestly an important theoretical improvement over the social materialism of classical economics. *I noticed that in Hess' On the Essence of Money, the only economist cited is Schulz, and of his works, only Movement of Production is cited.*⁴⁴ Was Schulz the starting point for Hess' theories of economics and philosophy? Did Marx learn about Schulz from Hess? It is impossible for us to know. *What we can know is that Marx excerpted copiously from Schulz's work in the first notebook of his 1844 Manuscript. It is interesting to note that he did not notice the social materialist thinking in Schulz's work. It would not be for another twenty years that Marx would once again reaffirm Schulz in Capital.*⁴⁵

2.2.3 The concrete reading context and internal research clues of *Paris Notes*

It is known that from the end of 1843 to the beginning of 1844, young Marx was still in the process of philosophical transformation that he had begun not long before, that is, the transformation from the self-conscious paradigm of the Young Hegelians to general materialism, from democracy to general communism. As part of this process, he was still busy publishing manuscripts of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Following the publication of the introduction to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx originally planned to publish the full text of in several issues of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* immediately after. However, between February and May of 1844, Marx once again turned his attention to the research he had begun on the French Revolution during July and August the year before in Kreuznach, emphasizing in particular the history of the Revolution after the 1792 formation of the French Republic (the history of the National Convention). Marx did not end his writing on the history of the National Convention until May/June of 1844, turning then to a study of bourgeois political economy.

The writing of young Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and *History of the National Convention* came naturally, as Marx moved away from his democratic stance of the *Rheinische Zeitung* period and towards historical research in the *Kreuznach Notes*, then towards study of social politics and rule of law through the lens of general materialism. But his reasons for suddenly halting this line of study and taking up economics are worthy of our examination.

I believe that the first theoretical impetus for young Marx's turn towards economics research came from social reality. This can be divided into two aspects: the social reality of his day and the large amount of historical data gathered in the course of young Marx's historical research. The former came from direct observation of the contradictions of economic relations that came after Marx's work for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The latter had exposed the importance of economic

⁴⁴Hess, "Über das Geldwesen," p. 346 (Chinese transl.: "Huobi de benzhi," p. 204).

⁴⁵In *Capital*, vol. I, Marx refers to Schulz: Wilhelm Schulz, *Die Bewegung der Production: Eine geschichtliche-statistische Abhandlung zur Grundlegung einer neuen Wissenschaft des Staats und der Gesellschaft* (Zürich und Winterthur: Druck und Verlag des literarischen Comptoirs, 1843). Marx, *Das Kapital I*, pp. 333–334, note 88 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 395, note 88).

relations and economic power within social life. The second factor in Marx's decision to take up economics was a clue found in Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, in the second chapter of the third part of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel discusses political economy directly: "**Political economy** is the science which begins with the above viewpoints [of need and work] but must go on to explain mass relationships and mass movements in their qualitative and quantitative determinancy and complexity."⁴⁶ Hegel then proceeds to explain that these ideas originate from Smith, Say, and Ricardo, listing their major works. The third factor in Marx's turn towards economics was Proudhon's socialism, as well as the philosophy of Hess and young Engels as they entered the field of economics research.

I am of the opinion that the intimate exchange of ideas between Marx, Hess, young Engels, and Proudhon was the proximate factor that led to young Marx's study of economics. *This can largely be seen from our previous analysis of the important influence of the socialist ideas of young Engels, Hess, and Proudhon on young Marx.* At the time, the philosophy of Hess and young Engels was primarily characterized by **philosophical and political criticism** founded on **somewhat shallow economics discussion**. At the same time, however, the two philosophers were also distinct: the philosophical logic of humanism directed the thrust of Hess' philosophy, while the thinking of young Engels stemmed from the logic of economic reality. In terms of their political views, they were both considered to be "philosophical communists," meaning they combined French socialism with classical German philosophy (especially the Hegelian view of the totality).⁴⁷ Because of this, young Engels declared at that time that communism was the necessary product of German philosophy.⁴⁸ As we have already pointed out, Proudhon had already affirmed the labor theory of value in criticizing bourgeois society (a view made clear in *What is Property*). Because Proudhon's legal socialism already included the labor theory of value, it was relatively more profound in comparison to that of Hess and young Engels. As a matter of fact, Proudhon's view that **labor creates wealth** caused a profound change in Marx's views about civil society (capitalism). Although Marx did not agree with Proudhon's political views, he began to realize that the concept of the **injustice of laboring workers in economic distribution**, as described by Proudhon, was much more profound than the logic of political alienation represented by the break between legal entity and citizen (in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*). *We have also seen that the philosophy of young Engels also completed a shift to socialism, under the influence of a similar idea by Fourier: that of "social philosophy" based on labor.* Beginning in July of 1843, Marx and Proudhon were in frequent and direct contact. After October, 1843 when Marx arrived in Paris, the two men would engage in even more

⁴⁶§ 189, *Philosophy of Right*.

⁴⁷Half a century later, this would become the logical starting point for young Gyorgy Lukacs. See Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Berlin: Luchterhand, [1923] 1968) (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*).

⁴⁸Friedrich Engels, "Progress of social reform on the Continent" [Fortschritte der Sozialreform auf dem Kontinent], in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/3, p. 495 (Chinese transl.: "Dalu shang shehui gaige yundong de jinzhān," p. 575).

frequent debates, often lasting through the night. At this time, because Marx's philosophy was nearer to that of Hess and young Engels, so these debates often pitted philosophical communism against economic (legal) socialism.

At this point, allow me to divide the cognitive structure of the context of Marx's reading and study into areas of focal awareness and subsidiary awareness. Focal awareness refers to Marx's **direct, intended theoretical goals** that lay at the forefront of his consciousness: here, his goal is primarily to refute anything affirmed by bourgeois economists. As Marx read and took notes for *Paris Notes*, his direct goal was to overturn anything and everything that bourgeois political economists identified as true and logical. This is, without a doubt, a simple **technique of inverted reading**. Subsidiary awareness refers to **the context that existed in the background of Marx's consciousness, which, on a subconscious level, supported Marx's cognitive process**. This level of awareness is made up of two aspects: first is the immediate reference background, meaning the criticisms of Hess, young Engels, and Proudhon with respect to the national economy, as well as the socialism they advocated. *Young Engels and Hess advocated communism, while Proudhon supported a Sismondi-esque socialism of the petty bourgeoisie*. From the content of the early excerpts in *Paris Notes*, Marx was primarily influenced by Engels. *Rosenberg correctly identifies the influence of Engels' Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie on Marx. Rosenberg points out that most of the opinions that Marx had with regards to the excerpts came directly from Engels; even the words he used sometimes directly originated with Engels.*⁴⁹ The second level is even deeper rooted in the philosophical logic of Feuerbach and Hegel, notably Feuerbachian philosophical humanism (not only natural materialism).⁵⁰ I have pointed out earlier that the most powerful discourse at this time in Marx's philosophical thinking was a conception of history based on the Feuerbachian logic of the alienation of the human essence.⁵¹ *McLellan remarks that in all of the Paris Notes, Feuerbachian humanism occupies a central position.*⁵² Nevertheless, as Marx read and took the notes that would become *Paris Notes*, he basically remained in a "voiceless" state as to his philosophical discourse.

I have also remarked that as Marx excerpted and commented on economics opinions at this time, his overall angle of attack was **critique of the various political positions**, not criticism of the theoretical content of the economics itself. This selective reading pattern caused Marx to neglect, whether consciously or unconsciously, several important elements. The first thing Marx missed was the premise of social materialism hidden within the methodology of classical political econ-

⁴⁹See Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p. 87 (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjixueshuo fazhan gailun*, p. 54).

⁵⁰On Marx's initiative, Feuerbach's book *Das Wesen des Glaubens im Sinne Luthers* (Leipzig 1844) appeared in installments from March 14 to October 30, 1844 in the journal *Vorwärts!* thus demonstrating Marx's theoretical position toward Feuerbach at that time. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁵¹See the third chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁵²McLellan, *Karl Marx. Leben und Werk*, p. 115 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi zhuan*, p. 111). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

omy. At this point in time, Marx did not realize that the principle methodological premise of classical economics was a kind of empirical materialism as manifested in social life, in the style of Francis Bacon and John Locke. This empirical materialist methodology had already experienced a certain degree of theoretical transformation. *It was no longer exactly the same as the natural materialism that had begun with the Enlightenment and continued until Feuerbach.* In the real theoretical development of classical economics, economists had always attempted to start with an empirical reality in social life that existed above natural material. Furthermore, a few exceptional economists, such as Quesnay, Smith, and Ricardo, had already abstracted non-substantive social material existence, including “labor activity,” “value,” and “exchange,” etc. These are the first and second levels of social materialism, what we already identified as starting from the perspective of social material existence and operating in social economic life. Taking this one step further, we arrive at the most profound level of the bourgeois classical economic context: the third level of social materialism, which starts from objective economic reality, as represented by Smith’s study of actual social economic structures and laws, as well as Ricardo’s analysis of the material production of large-scale industry. Marx was also unable to understand the specific analysis of real history found in Sismondi’s criticism of industrial civilization, as well as List and Roscher’s individual analysis of Germany’s economic resistance to the invasion of old English and French bourgeois social economics. *Of course, due to the nature of bourgeois ideology, these philosophers were unable to truly discover scientific historical materialism or the historical dialectic.* Quite the contrary, although young Marx’s philosophical thinking at this time already contained some elements of the proletariat position, its most profound context was still composed of ethical, humanist value postulates and criticisms. Thus, the **economic social materialist methodology and objective logic** that we discussed earlier were also **unconsciously rejected by Marx** at this time. Without a doubt, this was fascinatingly complex context.

Another important theoretical construct ignored by Marx in his study of economics was the labor theory of value, the idea which would have had the greatest chance of laying the foundation for **scientific** socialism. It is evident that at this time, Marx’s underlying theoretical construct was based on the “perceptual” concrete immediacy of Feuerbach’s natural materialism, as opposed to the “abstract” (indirectness) of Hegel’s idealism. As such, Marx was also opposed to the non-real “abstract” in economics research. Marx believed that the essence of bourgeois economics “repudiated all meaning in life”; this was the pinnacle of “shameful” disdain towards man. He criticized Smith and others like him for not considering the elements of competition and the market in reality, and thus necessarily rendering their theories abstract. From this we can see that Marx could not understand the scientific and necessary nature of conducting **objective, abstract** analysis on the essence of social life. *His grasp of this point did not come until his definitions of “labor in general” and “capital in general” in Grundrisse.* This caused him to agree with young Engels and Hess in rejecting the labor theory of value. From the perspective of philosophical epistemic logic, this is the **repudiation of a more profound essence of social materialism in favor of a phenomenon on natural materialism.** From the perspective of economics, Marx lost the scientific realization that bour-

geois society could be rejected in reality by overturning the labor theory of value, thus also causing him to lose the possibility and theoretical backing needed to scientifically differentiate between classical economics and vulgar economics.

Because Marx's principal line of thinking at this time was based on humanist philosophical reflections, when he first came across "scientific research" in the realm of economics (this was a term later used by Marx in reference to Ricardo's research), Marx simply inverted it in order to understand it. This means that he applied the standard of "humanity" in rigidly opposing and refuting the private system. To use the words of Professor Sun Bokui, this was the beginning of Marx's "pre-scientific critical period" in economics.⁵³ Marx's criticism at this time was still unsystematic; the logic of labor alienation that was to surpass Proudhon and Hess had not yet become to take shape. This new philosophical theoretical structure was not realized until "Comments on James Mill," the last stop in his journey of reading and note-taking that made up *Paris Notes*. At this point, the most important event in *Paris Notes* took place: **Marx finally departed from the voiceless state that had dominated the *Notes* up to that point, once again acquiring the right to critique economics text.** Marx no longer meekly followed after Smith and Ricardo, but rather began to truly seek for a logical entrance to their world. On the surface, this appeared to be a shift from Engels' line of thinking to that of Hess; or in other words, the replacement of objective economic opposition and social split with humanist alienation judgment. However, in reality, here Marx was able to obtain the first framework to holistically criticize bourgeois economics. This framework was the **critical logic of alienation based in humanist philosophy**, as modified by Hess. We can see that Marx's theoretical commentary at this point is very different from earlier portions of *Paris Notes*. All of a sudden, we see Marx begin to confidently assert his freedom.

We have just completed an overall assessment of Marx's *Paris Notes*. In the following section, we will move directly to textual interpretation to confirm the viewpoints we have just discussed.

2.3 A Study of the Excerpted Text in *Paris Notes*

The works of economics and philosophy that formed the basis of *Paris Notes* were primarily books mentioned in Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* and Proudhon's *What is Property*. The principle objects of study were the French versions of writings on economics available to Marx in Paris — 20 books and articles by 18 scholars (including Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*). Marx chose to read in French because while his French was very fluent, he was not yet very proficient in English. As such, Marx did not directly read the original versions of the works of English classical economics, choosing instead to read the French translations of these works. At the same time, Marx did select a small number of German authors to read, including List, Schulz, and Oslander. In this section, we will embark on a preliminary study and discussion of the excerpted text found in *Paris Notes*.

⁵³See Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 262.

2.3.1 A voiceless beginning: From Say to Smith

The procession of authors analyzed in *Paris Notes* begins with Say. Why does Marx chose to begin here? Though Engels makes some mention of Say in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, this cannot be the direct reason for Marx's decision to begin with Say. Rather, it is in Proudhon's *What is Property* that we find a great deal of text dedicated to the discussion and refutation of Say. There is another additional possibility: Say was widely regarded as the representative of the systematization of Smith's theoretical system, and was one of the more popular economists in France at the time.

From the first and second volumes of Say's *Treatise on Political Economy* Marx took more than 200 extracts, but left almost no commentary or personal reflection. This was an honest reflection of the state of Marx's early thinking with regards to economics. On the 3rd page of *Paris Notes*, Marx copied an excerpt from Say's discussion of the usefulness of material and the utility qualification of value for man. At this point, Marx was unable to see that Say's utility theory of value was, in fact, a vulgarized understanding of Smith's theories. On the 78th page of *Paris Notes*, Marx copied an excerpt on the difference between commodities (used in resale) and goods (used in consumption). Between these two excerpts, Marx's drew a vertical line. On the 90th and 91st pages, Marx remarked that capital is not formed from material but rather from value, emphasizing this portion of text with double vertical lines in the margin. This was likely a line of thinking that had not yet become activated in Marx's research. However, in the vast majority of excerpts taken after this point, Marx still did not add any formal commentary, only adding a few simple words in two places. Additionally, he drew vertical lines in the margins next to excerpts in the second book on the value of capital and the problem of rent.

This state of voicelessness did not change until Marx's outline found at the end of *Paris Notes*. However, Marx did make the first important commentary of *Paris Notes* in the right hand margin of two paragraphs of excerpts on property and wealth, both from the first book of Say's *Treatise on Political Economy* (from the sections on the nature of wealth and principles of circulation). Here we see that the motivating factor for this line of commentary did not originate from economic theory, but was rather aroused by the critical views demonstrated by Hess and Engels. Marx first writes, "Though the private system is taken as a given by national economics, this fact nevertheless forms the foundation of national economics," continuing, "without private property there would be no wealth; according to its fundamental nature, national economics is a **science of wealth**."⁵⁴ *This is a subjective line of criticism developed from Sismondi*. Second, Marx notices the exceptionality of the rules of wealth in bourgeois economics research, namely that it is determined by the relative value of goods used in trade. He writes, "from the

⁵⁴Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus Jean-Baptiste Say: Traité d'économie politique," (Berlin) IV/2 (1981): p. 316. For a Chinese translation, see Karl Marx [Ka'er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], *Bali biji xuanyi*, 巴黎笔记选译, ed. Makesi Engesi yanjiu ziliao huibian 马克思恩格斯研究资料汇编, trans. Wang Fumin 王福民 (Shumu wenxian chubanshe 书目文献出版社, 1982), p. 30. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

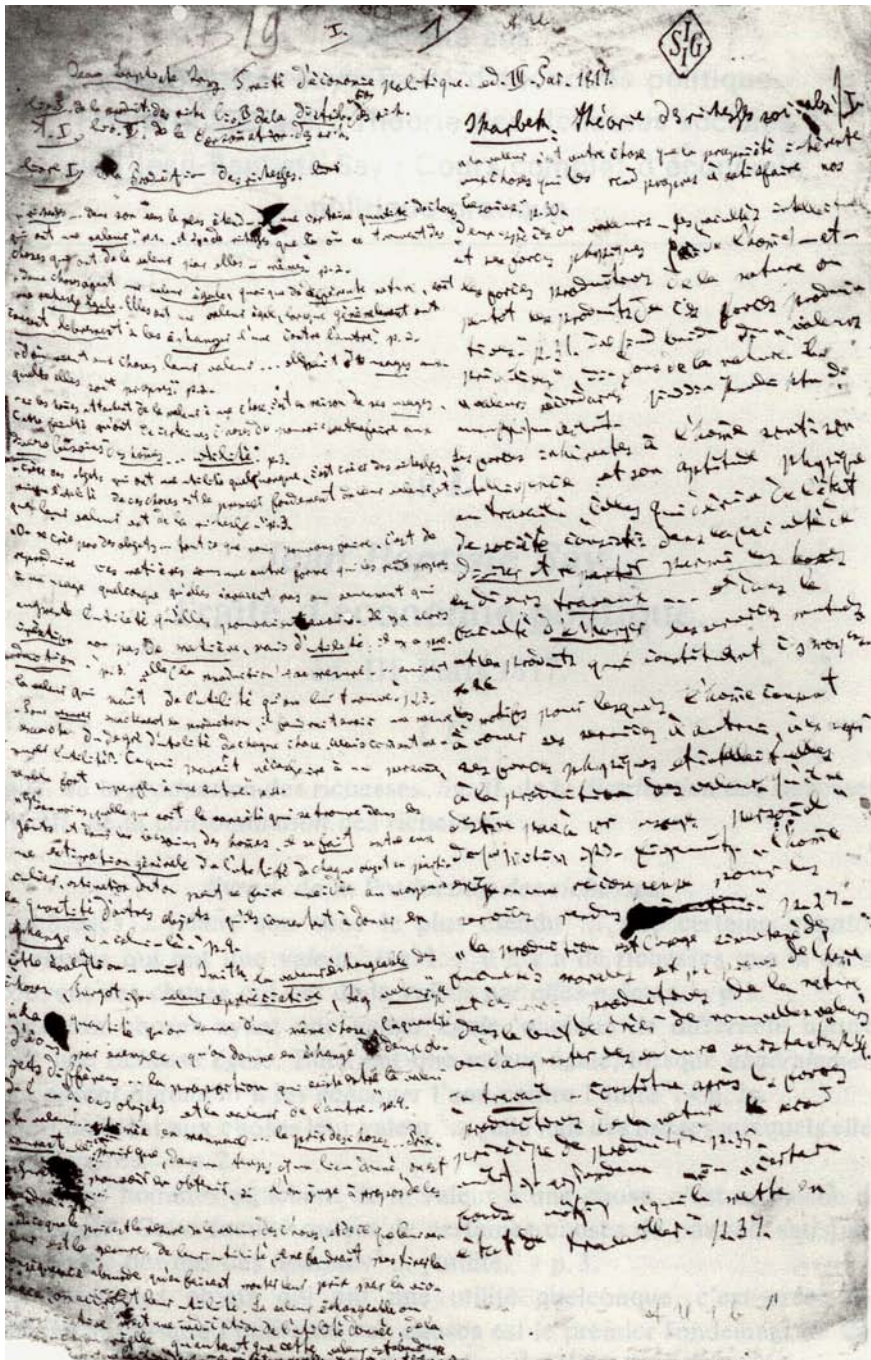


Figure 2.3: Facsimilie of a page of excerpts from Say in Paris Notes

beginning, ‘trade’ has been the fundamental element of wealth.”⁵⁵ Marx makes no comment as to Say’s mistaken belief that exchange determines wealth (in comparison to Smith and Ricardo). Next, Marx takes several paragraphs of excerpts from Say’s discussion of exchange value, utility, cost of production, elements of production, and consumption. It is plain to see that Marx was, as yet, unable to clearly see Say’s place in the history of bourgeois political economy, nor was he able to make out the theoretical intentions of vulgar economics that Say had introduced.

I must point out one further point: the important points of social materialism found in Say’s works did not pique Marx’s interest. For instance, as we have already discussed earlier in this book, Say makes mention in the introduction of *Treatise on Political Economy* of the following idea brought up by Plato and Aristotle: “There exist invariable relations between the different modes of production, and the results obtained from them.”⁵⁶ To draw another example, as Say critiques the academic nature of political economy, he writes, “[political economy] does not rest upon hypothesis, but is founded upon observation and experience.”⁵⁷ Also, between the third and fourth chapters of the first book, Say devotes a great deal of space to the discussion of productive forces; in the fifth chapter, Say delves into the mode in which capital and natural forces unite in production; in the eighth chapter, Say discusses the division of labor. At the end of this chapter, Say clearly suggests that to a certain degree, division of labor will lead to a regression of workers’ capabilities, causing them to become mere accessories in piecemeal production.⁵⁸ The 19th chapter is a discussion of colonies. Say’s thinking on these points is completely saturated by the empiricism and positivist science inherited from Smith, as well as a limited amount of opinions from the first level of social materialism. At the time that Marx wrote *Paris Notes*, all of these philosophical resources presented by Say floated just outside of the scope of his attention, beyond what his cognitive framework was able to support at the time. Just as Engels put it, for Marx, the view that economics determines social development could only “go in one ear and out the other.”

As Marx read Say’s *Treatise on Political Economy*, he confirmed the conclusions of Hess and Engels. Once he finished his reading of Say, he understood that Say was explaining Smith’s theories. As such, it was a natural choice for Marx to move to reading Smith after finishing Say. The version of the *Wealth of Nations* that Marx had before him was the French translation in five volumes. Of these, Marx only took excerpts from the first three volumes of the four that contained the main body of text. In all, he recorded more than 170 excerpts. The latter half of these excerpts did not strictly follow the original order of their placement in Smith’s work. From the first volume, though Marx does take excerpts on Smith’s discussion of the division of labor, he does not notice Smith’s view that the division of labor drives the productive forces of labor. Rather, Marx nitpicks at what he calls the “circular reasoning” that Smith uses in the second chapter to describe

⁵⁵Marx, “Notes on Say,” p. 319.

⁵⁶Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, p. xxviii (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 28).

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. xlix (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, p. 49).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 98 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue gailun*, pp. 101–102).

the relation between division of labor and exchange.⁵⁹ It is true that Marx did take excerpts from Smith's discussion of value in use and value in exchange, as well as natural prices and market prices in chapters three through six of *Wealth of Nations*, even recording Smith's belief that property is the right to control the labor of others or all products of labor. However, Marx neglected to record Smith's crucial declaration that labor is the standard by which the value of all commodities in exchange is measured. It is evident that at this point in time, young Marx, like Engels, was unable to grasp the essence of Smith's labor theory of value, and was therefore unable to comprehend the implications of this theory on socialism, the tool he had chosen to topple bourgeois society. Coming from this theoretical background, Marx was naturally unable to decipher the internal contradictions of Smith's theories. We can also see that in the excerpts from the second and third volumes of *Wealth of Nations*, Marx found himself in a voiceless state, without any commentary or criticism to offer in the face of Smith, the master of classical economics. Similarly, **the empirical methodology of classical economics as well as many of the important views of philosophical history found on the second level of social materialism initiated by Smith did not have any real impact on young Marx at this time.**

2.3.2 Marx's early understanding of the theoretical logic of political economy

Marx's next section of excerpts come from John McCulloch's *A Discourse on the Rise, Progress, Peculiar Objects, and Importance of Political Economy*,⁶⁰ including a critical essay on Ricardo written by the French translator, Pierre Prévost, attached as an appendix to the text of McCulloch's work. Marx apparently hoped to gain a better understanding of the basics of political economy through reading McCulloch's textbook-style work. Marx took approximately 40 excerpts in this section. Interestingly enough, Marx rarely took excerpts from the main body of McCulloch's text. On the first page of *A Discourse on the Rise and Importance of Political Economy*, Marx remarks McCulloch's definition of the field of economics: production, distribution, and consumption based on wealth. From pages 57 through 132, Marx recorded McCulloch's commentary on Quesnay, Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo, emphasizing in particular his critical opinions. In the last paragraph of excerpts from the main body of McCulloch's writing, we see Marx become enraged by McCulloch's reference to political economy as a science. Marx believed McCulloch's citation of Bacon's metaphor on scientific research to be "shameless." This is an important construct in Marx's subsidiary context at this point in time: he did not believe that **bourgeois economics was capable of being**

⁵⁹Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus Adam Smith: Recherches sur la nature et les causes de la richesse des nations. T. 1-3," (Berlin) IV/2 (1981): p. 336.

⁶⁰Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus John Ramsay McCulloch: Discours sur l'origine, le progrès, les objets particuliers, et l'importance de l'économie politique, Guillaume Prevost: Réflexions du traducteur sur les système de Ricardo, und Antoine-Louis-Claude Destutt de Tracy: Éléments d'idéologie, sowie Konspekt zu Friedrich Engels: Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationaloekonomie," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/2, p. 473-479.

scientific! *This belief did not begin to change until Marx's research on Ricardian socialist economists in the Manchester Notes.*⁶¹

It would be useful for us to submit this attitude of Marx's to closer scrutiny. What we find here is a fascinatingly relativist cognition. In our discussion of the first level of social materialism in the first chapter, we learned that McCulloch calls political economy a science in *Principles of Political Economy* because it "is founded on **fact and experience.**" Also, the principles governing such phenomena as the accumulation of wealth and the progress of society are not established by law, rather, these principles and their effects are "a part of the original constitution of man, and of the physical world; their operation may, like that of the mechanical principles, be traced by the aid of observation and analysis."⁶² Although in terms of economic principles, McCulloch vulgarizes Smith and Ricardo in his interpretations of them, nevertheless his designation of "scientific" is a tenable position on the first level of social materialism. *While what was available to Marx at that time was not the version of McCulloch's principal work Principles of Political Economy, which is available to us today and cited in the first chapter of this book, what Marx was reading and recording was fundamentally the same, both in terms of expressed views as well as methodology. Furthermore, in terms of some historical descriptions, basic explanations of methods, and especially the elucidation of the principles of the first level of social materialism, as well as many other fields of political economy, the exposition in Principles of Political Economy is actually quite a bit clearer. It is my personal opinion that this was a relatively objective and thorough early exposition of the **history of political economy.*** However, in reading all of this profound material, Marx found no spark of insight, left no commentary whatsoever. Why was this? This is an important question for us to consider.

In my opinion, in the fundamental philosophical premise that Marx took to his analysis of social life, he had already clearly put forth the idea that civil society determines State and Law. This was a correct affirmation of Feuerbach's general materialism in social life, which Marx had garnered through his study of history. However, this materialist view of society had not yet been established on the deeper level of economics, much less surpassed the three theoretical levels of the social materialism of classical economics by creating the entirely new academic field of historical materialism. Soviet and Eastern European scholars and economists (including the editors of *MEGA 2*) were simply unable to demonstrate their comprehension of this point. Similarly, Western Marxists and Marxologie philosophers have completely overlooked this point.

Strangely enough, we next notice that Marx develops a great deal of interest in Prevost's article in the appendix of McCulloch's work, in which Prevost uses Mill to explain Ricardo. It is here that we first observe some of the more powerful philosophical activity that takes place in *Paris Notes*. Why did this happen at this point? I believe that although Marx had great difficulty in engaging in profound discussion of concrete economics descriptions, when faced with general

⁶¹See the discussion in chapter 5.2.2 on page 276 of this book for more on this topic.

⁶²McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 14 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli*, p. 10).

theoretical summaries of economics, Marx more space to develop his own ideas. Soon after writing the title to this section, Marx noticed that Prevost's (Mill's) views were based on "separating the theories of Ricardo and Smith." From the first section of this essay, Marx excerpted seven main points. The second of these points is Prevost's compliment of Ricardo for being a profound economist because "he summarizes economic things into extremely simple things based on the mean. Thus he is able to throw aside all the contingencies that could impede their generalization."⁶³ After copying down this point, Marx angrily questions:

*What do these "means" really explain? They prove that man has become more and more abstracted, real life is more and more abandoned in favor of an abstract movement that observes material, inhuman property. These **averages** are an insult and a slander to individuals in reality.*⁶⁴

Apparently at this point Marx was unable to hold himself back any longer, he could no longer tolerate the indifferent attitude of "value neutrality" (to use Weber's words) of the bourgeois economists towards the plight of the workers. Finally, Marx could not help but **use the words of humanist philosophy and the socialist political position to oppose economics**. Thus Marx finally breaks his theoretical silence. Marx wrote that the Ricardians are only able to realize economic proofs through calculations of **means**, in other words, by abstracting away reality. Of course, the "reality" of which Marx spoke at this point referred to the inhuman, unjust relations between workers and capitalists under the system of bourgeois society. Marx was, of course, correct in these arguments. However, Marx at this point in time was still unable to comprehend that the "movement of inhuman property" and "averages" described by Ricardo were the essence of the objective reality of bourgeois society, and as such, this abstraction was the **objective product** of bourgeois society. As Professor Sun Bokui points out, "It was precisely this abstract method, which could bring about true progress and scientific accomplishment within political economic research, that went unnoticed by Marx and Engels."⁶⁵ *It would not be until 1847 that Marx would truly come to understand the significance of this point. Of special importance here is the fact that Marx's rejection of the abstract at this point of the Paris Notes was directly related to the influence of Feuerbach, especially in its opposition to Hegel's abstract speculative philosophy. It should also be clear why I have determined Marx's early rejection of the "abstract" in classical economics to be "shallow."*

Continuing on, about the sixth point of Prevost's essay, Marx writes:

In my opinion, the strong Ricardian advocacy of replacing capital with **accumulated labor** — a view that already appeared with Smith — can mean only one thing: the more that the national economists recognize that labor is the only source of wealth, the more workers become debased and impoverished and labor itself becomes a commodity. This

⁶³Marx, "McCulloch," p. 480.

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 480.

⁶⁵Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 265.

is a necessary theoretical axiom in the field of national economics, just as if it were a truth of modern social life.⁶⁶

It is evident that these thoughts represent an ethical criticism based in philosophical humanism and socialism. The following line of commentary from Marx is also interesting: “The term ‘accumulated labor,’ in addition to expressing the origins of capital, also have another meaning: labor is thought of more and more as material, as a commodity. It is now understood more as a form of **capital** than as human activity.” *The implications of this line of reasoning are more similar to Marx’s later proofs based on economics research. Only later he realized that the substance of value becomes independent in the form money precisely because of the objectification and abstraction of general social labor due to both the division of labor and exchange. When money (objectified labor) becomes the means by which living labor is absorbed in the production process of bourgeois society, then the relations of capital truly appear. Through the interpersonal social relations inverted by objectified forms, capital becomes objective reality. This is the essential relation in bourgeois society — capitalism. However, Marx did not, at this time, continue further along this important line of thinking. This simplified, inverted, interpretive structure of political negation caused Marx to pass right by the labor theory of value without truly comprehending it.*

In his excerpt of the seventh point in Prevost’s essay, Marx records the first extended discussion found in *Paris Notes*. Marx criticizes Ricardo for only studying so-called “**general laws**,” while the fact that the manner in which these general laws “appear in bourgeois society can determine the bankruptcy of thousands of people” remains outside of the scope of his research. *As we have seen in chapter one of this book, this is a question that Sismondi might have asked.* Marx realized that the main point of the principals of national economics was that only when an individual’s interests were in line with the interests of others, social interests, and individuals — in general, only when an individuals interests or production had been socialized — was there meaning, was there perceptual and existing truth. Starting from this point and looking from the perspective of the internal logic of economics, Marx could have moved towards issues such as the labor in the bourgeois society of classical economics, or towards necessary labor in society, etc. However, Marx felt at this time that doing so **X** would be for inimical interests, under the rule of private property, to “abstract away the human element.” He argued that “equality here is nothing but the equality that comes from removing the abstract capital and labor of capitalists and people, just as society is simply resembles a mean.” Thus it can be seen that “in the present system, the laws of rationality can only be preserved through **abstracting away** existing relations; in other words, laws only rule in an abstract form.”⁶⁷ To the indignant Marx, such reasoning was shameless sophistry. *In the third phase of Marx’s research on economics, however, this attitude did change a great deal.*⁶⁸

⁶⁶Marx, “McCulloch,” p. 481. Chinese translation: Marx, *Bali biji xuanyi*, p. 44.

⁶⁷Marx, “McCulloch,” p. 483.

⁶⁸Refer to chapter 9.1.5 on page 457 of this book.

In the second section of excerpts, Marx did not offer any specific commentary on the two paragraphs of excerpts he took. Neither did he add any commentary to the approximately thirty paragraphs of excerpts he took from the fourth and fifth volumes of Destutt de Tracy's principal work of economics, *Elements of Ideology*.

In the next notebook, Marx began excerpting from the works of several German economists, including four books by Schulz, List, and Osiander. Marx did not add commentary to his excerpts of Schulz and Osiander. In his excerpts from List, Marx only makes one comment: that Mr. List's entire basis conforms to the private system and that in the context of one nation, he accepts the current bourgeois theories. Only in the context of foreign trade does List differ somewhat from these theories. Furthermore, Marx criticizes List for overemphasizing the diverse details of division of labor and forces of production, writing that List "separates between workers and employers, as well as between different employers."⁶⁹ Actually, List's views on economics were unique in several ways, namely in that he upheld the position of the German bourgeoisie, promoting the interests of German private owners through "national economics" in opposition to the so-called "global economics" of classical economics. List criticized the falsity of the concept of universal free trade as promoted by economists from Quesnay to Smith and Ricardo. He comprehended the particularity of economic development, namely that because different countries developed productive forces to different degrees, there could not exist the free trade and exchange of a veritable "laissez-faire" economy on the international scene. This was because in any economic relations between backwards Germany and advanced England, the only country that truly stood to gain was England (the capitalist). As such, the essence of economic research must lie at the national level. As List writes in the *National System of Political Economy*, this research must concentrate on "how a given **nation** in the present state of the world and its own special national relations can maintain and improve its economical conditions."⁷⁰ List goes on to contend that free-trade globalism would only truly become possible when numerous nations approach the same level of industrial and cultural development.

In short, List's economics actually did contain some very important historical points, though Marx was unable to discern these in his first reading of List's work, causing this important text to "exist but not exist" in Marx's eyes. Because of this, vital theoretical points were necessarily buried and veiled within Marx's notes. *In March of 1845, it was Marx's reevaluation of this important German economist in his writing of On List that provoked the second great shift in Marx's philosophical logic. I have included an analysis of List and the philosophical connotations of his economics views in the important analytical context in the second section of the fourth chapter of this book.*⁷¹

⁶⁹Karl Marx, "List," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/2, p. 529.

⁷⁰List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 185 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, p. 109).

⁷¹See the discussion in chapter 4.2 on page 220 of this book for more on this topic.

2.3.3 Ricardo: The invigoration of Marx's philosophy before a change in discourse

According to my understanding, Marx did not read List and Mill until last. As he read List, Marx's philosophy experienced an obvious shift: the number of his commentaries and annotations began to increase and independent thinking began to become more manifest and more abundant. In Marx's reading of Ricardo's *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, Marx copied about 80 paragraphs of text.⁷²

The first book of excerpts is organized into "chapters." At the beginning of the first chapter, Marx discovers the difference between Ricardo and Say with regards to the question of value (Say was the French translator of Ricardo's work). It is also at this point that Marx begins to express somewhat "professional" views on some issues in economics. From Marx's commentaries, we can infer that he realized the thoroughness and perspicuity of Ricardo's views on economics, relative to Smith and Say. In Marx's excerpts of pages 15 and 16, he even uses such complimentary terms as "exceptional" and "remarkable." When Marx came upon the familiar phrase "capital is also labor" on page 17, he consciously cites Proudhon's criticism of private property. We can see that beginning from this point onward, Marx begins to be able to comment with force on the specific theoretical content of economics, even producing a fair number of remarkable philosophical insights. Marx's debut into a whole new level of professional academic ability in such a short period of time is truly rare indeed. Of course Marx, at this time, did not yet possess a true scientific method; so what line of reasoning did he use in his dialogue with Ricardo?

In the excerpts Marx took on the question of rents in the second chapter, Marx expresses his own views on economics in response to a footnote by Say (on page 84 in the original book). Marx points out that while Smith believes that natural prices are made up of wages, rents, and profit, he approves of Proudhon's opinion that the price of all goods is too expensive (Proudhon is not correct in this). Therefore, "the natural rate of wages, rents, and profits is entirely determined by habit or monopoly. In the end, it is determined by competition and not the product of the nature of land, capital, or labor. As such, the cost of production itself is determined by competition and not production."⁷³ Unfortunately, Marx was incorrect in this point. Because he did not understand Smith's labor theory of value, he was unable to grasp the economic question raised here. *Later, in his 1847 Poverty of Philosophy, Marx stood with the classical economists in criticizing the confusion and unscientific nature of Proudhon's economics theories.* In fact, the competition inherent to bourgeois society is only a means to realize the price of commodities. In the fourth chapter of his commentary, Marx would come upon a question similar to this. Still in the second chapter, Marx criticizes the concept of "natural prices" used by Smith and Ricardo. He argues that "all that national eco-

⁷²Karl Marx, "David Ricardo: Des principes de l'économie politique et de l'impôt. T. 1 und 2," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/2:392–427.

⁷³*ibid.*, p. 401 (Chinese transl.: Marx, *Bali biji xuanyi*, p. 34). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

nomics discusses is market price. Therefore goods are not considered in light of the cost of their production, the cost of production is not considered in light of people, but production as a whole is rather considered in light of buying and selling.”⁷⁴ In this way, in the process of bourgeois social economics, competition becomes the root determining factor. *It is evident that this competition-determinism was still inaccurate. We can see that the views that Marx expresses here are very similar to those in Engels’ Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie.*

We have previously pointed out that as Marx excerpted and commentated on these economics viewpoints, what determined his acceptance or rejection of a particular viewpoint was its **political stance**, not the content of its **economics theory**. Thus in Marx’s study of the question of wages found in chapter five of his notes, it is not difficult for us to see that he was still attacking the bourgeois position of national economics from the outside. He writes:

Spiritual freedom is the purpose, and therefore a majority of people find themselves in a state of dim-witted slavery. Physical needs are not the only purpose, and therefore they become the sole purpose of a majority of people. To put it another way, marriage is the purpose, therefore a majority of people commit adultery. Property is the purpose, and therefore a majority of people do not possess it.⁷⁵

These elegant couplets testify to exceptional philosophical reflection. Through the later *Comments on James Mill*, they would become the primary literary style of the critical humanism of the *1844 Manuscript*.

It is evident that by the time Marx begins taking excerpts from the second volume of Ricardo’s work, he already understands some of the basic principles of political economy, and is even able to go deeper into the details of the commentary. In chapter 13, Marx again takes note of the question of value, beginning to acknowledge the logic behind Say’s separation of “natural wealth” and “social wealth.” He points out at this point that “the latter is wealth with private property as its premise.” *This statement approaches Marx’s later separation of value in use and value in exchange.* One particular section of commentary is especially important in chapter 14, to which I would like to direct our attention at this time. After commenting on the many contradictions in Ricardo and Smith’s expression of capital in completion, Marx points out: “Political economy not only encounters the strange situations of overproduction and excessive poverty, but it also encounters, on one hand, the expansion of uses for capital, and on the other, a penury of opportunities for production brought on by this expansion.”⁷⁶ It is important for us to realize that this is a line of thinking that truly confronts the objective contradictions in the modes of production in bourgeois society. This is because here Marx has already seen the confrontational nature of the actual production

⁷⁴Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (P),” p. 402 (Chinese transl.: Marx, *Bali biji xuanyi*, p. 34–35). (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁷⁵Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (P),” p. 407 (Chinese transl.: Marx, *Bali biji xuanyi*, p. 35). (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁷⁶Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (P),” p. 416.

process through the lens of economics. If Marx would have continued this line of thinking, he would have inevitably come upon the objective laws of economic development. However, Marx was only able to pursue this train of thought when he was truthfully and calmly approaching economic facts; Marx's dominant logical line of thinking was, at this time, self-consciously incompatible with a further development of his analysis of the confrontations in the production process. This analysis would later become the foundation of the second line of thinking in the *1844 Manuscript* — **latent logical reasoning based in reality**. Rosenberg believes that at this point, both Marx and Engels consciously oppose Ricardian socialism and Proudhon's views on price theory; specifically, the opinion that on the basis of the labor theory of value, the realization of labor value could take place through the circulation of "labor money" to establish a system of exchange in bourgeois society.⁷⁷ This is a misreading by Rosenberg, because neither Marx nor Engels could possibly have come to this realization by this point in time. *Strictly speaking, it was until 1845 in Marx's Manchester Notes that he discovered the significance of opposing the reasoning of bourgeois society through economics research itself. This is what Marx later called the "unique method" of affirming socialism using Ricardo's economics. Because Marx's dominant line of reasoning at this time (his power discourse) was the philosophical reflection of humanist values, Marx only understood "scientific research" (a term later used by Marx in reference to Ricardo's research) after inverting it, opposing and rejecting private property from the perspective of human subjectivity.*

In chapter 18, after Marx's analysis of Ricardo's views on total revenue, he recorded a long section of commentary. Marx here argues that the essence of bourgeois political economy is in "rejecting all meaning in life," which, for Marx, was the pinnacle of "shameless" abstraction. What is the meaning of life? According to Marx's argument at this point, the meaning of life is made up of individual **men**. *However, Marx did not realize that from a deeper historical perspective, the concept of "man" was also abstract. It would not be until Marx's philosophical revolution in the spring of 1845 that he would correctly come to this understanding.* Therefore, it was only natural that Marx come to the following humanist philosophical conclusions: first, the purpose of bourgeois political economy revolves around wealth (material), not humans; second, human life, of itself, has no value; third, the working class is the "labor machine" that produces wealth.⁷⁸ However, Marx also discovered at this point for the first time that from the position of bourgeois economics, "Ricardo's proposition is true and consistent." Therefore, in order for Sismondi and Say to combat the anti-humanist conclusions of Ricardo's work, they had no choice but to escape from **political economy**. For Marx, this proved precisely that bourgeois economics had no place for the human element, "humanity exists **outside** the realm of national economics, and **anti-humanism exists within it**." Marx did not differentiate between the opposition between Sismondi the advocate of small-bourgeois socialism and Say the vulgar economist with Smith and Ricardo; instead he unequivocally stands with Sismondi.

⁷⁷See Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjixueshuo fazhan gailun*, p. 60).

⁷⁸Marx, "Notes on Ricardo (P)," p. 421.

Marx's position here determined the inevitability of his **political support for the proletariat class, using humanist philosophy to criticize all aspects of bourgeois economics**. This marks the appearance of a new discourse. In my opinion, this is the first time that young Marx began to possess a creative, independent theoretical logic. Marx's adoption of this landmark position took place in the next section of *Paris Notes*, entitled *Comments on James Mill*.

2.4 “Excerpts from James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy*”: The Appearance of Humanistic Discourse in Economics Criticism

James Mill is a well-known 19th century English economist.⁷⁹ In the theoretical battles of the 1820s surrounding Ricardo's theories, he was a staunch supporter of Ricardo. *Marx would later identify Mill as the representative of the vulgarization of Ricardo's economics theories. In the third volume of the Theory of Surplus Value, written in the 1860s, Marx reappraised Mill, writing: “Mill was the first to present Ricardo's theory in systematic form, even though he did it only in rather abstract outlines. What he tries to achieve is formal, logical consistency.”*⁸⁰ At the very end of *Paris Notes*, after reading Mill's most influential work (*Elements of Political Economy*, published in 1821, though Marx read the French version published in Paris in 1828), Marx recorded *Excerpts from James Mill's Elements of Political Economy* (abbreviated as *Comments on James Mill*). I believe that in young Marx's early economics research, *Comments on James Mill* is an extremely important document, as it highlights the sudden shift in logic of Marx the philosopher when faced with classical economics. This shift was none other than the attempt to criticize bourgeois economics from the framework of philosophical humanism. These notes are the next part of our analysis of the underlying significance of the *1844 Manuscript*.

2.4.1 The interpretive context of “Excerpts from James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy*”

As I have already made clear, the philosophical precursor to Marx's theory of alienation was, at its most basic level, Hegel's theory of the alienation of the subjective idea. As young Marx first began to accept the idea of alienation, it was only on the logical basis of the externalization and return of the subject determined by the self-conscious partial nature brought forward by the young Hegelians (*The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*). It

⁷⁹Though we have already provided a brief introduction of Mill, here I feel it necessary to add some additional explanation. Mill was born in Scotland and his father was a shoemaker. In his youth, he studied theology at the University of Edinburgh, qualifying himself to become a minister. Beginning in 1815, Mill wrote articles for the appendix to the fifth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He spent over 10 years beginning in 1806 writing *The History of British India*, which became famous after its publication. His representative work of political economy was *Elements of Political Economy*, published in 1821.

⁸⁰Marx, *Das Kapital III*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun* (Ziben lun di si juan), p. 87).

was not until 1843 as Marx shifted towards Feuerbach's humanist position that he began to possess a more complete conception of history based on humanist alienation. It was after he surpassed Feuerbach's natural humanism, especially under the internal impetus of finding a revolutionary basis for the proletariat class, that Marx first put forth the idea of social **political alienation** with criticism as its main point (during the period of *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*).⁸¹ However, I have found that even though Marx was able to suggest the idea of political alienation, he was unable to form the logical framework of his own theory of alienation based in philosophical logic. Marx's own theory of **economic (labor) alienation** was gradually founded as he turned towards economics research of bourgeois social life. This was an extremely important stage in the formation of Marx's new world-view.

In terms of his thinking on economic alienation, it is clear that at first, Marx was heavily influenced by Hess (specifically, Hess' *On the Essence of Money*). In works such as Marx's 1843 *On the Jewish Question*, the thinking of this new theory of alienation first began to become clear. Marx wrote that in economic life, money is a form of material that exists outside the human subject, but it is also a representation of the externalization of the human essence. Though money is clearly a creation of man, yet now as the universal value of all goods it has deprived the subject itself, as well as the entire world, of its value. More importantly, the alienated subject has no choice but to grovel before this man-made creation.⁸² At this point, Marx was no longer content to simply condemn man's obsession with the pursuit of material gain as he was in the *Rheinische Zeitung* period (in his words, an "obscene materialism"), but rather viewed this phenomenon as an important aspect of the socio-economic life of bourgeois society ("civil society"). Marx unconsciously brought up the idea that **alienation in economic life was the foundation of human social political alienation**. This line of reasoning reached a deeper level of identification in the economics research in *Paris Notes*, specifically in the last stop of his research, "Comments on James Mill." I believe that "Comments on James Mill" represent an important leap in understanding in *Paris Notes*, characterized by the establishment of **humanist philosophical discourse within political economic research**. At this point, Marx realized a shift in discourse, **from following the context of economics learning to consolidating the context of philosophical discourse**. In fact, this was Marx's true logical medium as he moved towards the *1844 Manuscript*. As such, in our study of Marx, we must not lightly skip over "Comments on James Mill." *Unfortunately, from the first publishing of these notes in 1979 in the 4th volume of the Chinese version of the Complete Works of Marx and Engels up to now, there has not been a single essay systematically analyzing Comments on James Mill.*

According to the organization of the editors of *MEGA 2*, "Comments on James Mill" are included in pages 18–34 of the fourth notebook of *Paris Notes*. There is also a six-page conclusion added in the fifth notebook; this is also part of the main

⁸¹See the first chapter, second section of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁸²Karl Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/2, p. 166 (Chinese transl.: "Lun Youtairen wenti," p. 448).

text and important content of the notes. What we will study here is primarily this portion of text. *It should be made clear that in my book The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic, I already made some preliminary progress in the study of these notes. However, my research at that point did not progress beyond simple interpretive methods using philosophical ideas to extract Marx's theoretical points. Therefore, while I did correctly identify these notes as the true birthplace of Marx's logic of economic alienation and pointed out young Marx's framework of economic alienation, I overlooked a great deal of important content related to Marx's early economics research. At this point, I will give additional explanation and necessary reinterpretation of Comments on James Mill.* According to my current views, the establishment of the logical framework of young Marx's humanist economic alienation took place in three important theoretical leaps contained in *Comments on James Mill*: **philosophical criticism of economics theory, economic-philosophical reflection on the inversion of man's true social relations, and the philosophical establishment of the theory of labor alienation.**

2.4.2 Theoretical construct A: Philosophical criticism of economics theory

The first theoretical construct is extremely important. It represents the first time in *Paris Notes* that Marx develops a **holistical grasp of economics**. I believe that this theoretical consolidation is **projected by philosophical logic**. This is, in fact, a very important theoretical leap in *Paris Notes*. This theoretical leap represents a new level of insight attained from Marx's voiceless state. In this section, we will go to the text to analyze this process.

In Marx's reading and copying of excerpts from Mill, he follows the same structure as in Mill's work, beginning with production and continuing with distribution, exchange, and consumption. From the beginning of his reading until page 137 in the original work (the eighth section of part three) he abstains from writing a single **personal** comment. Marx's first theoretical point of interest appears in the sixth section of the third part, in conjunction with Mill's discussion of money. Marx adds the word "medium" to the title of this section to draw attention. *In Marx's subsidiary awareness, this is Hess' framework exerting latent influence.* When Marx read that Mill believes that money and the value of metal is determined by the costs of production, Marx suddenly breaks off his excerpt, writing a large section of independent opinion. In *Paris Notes*, this is a rare instance where Marx's personal commentaries take up a significant portion of the text.⁸³

Near the beginning of his discussion, Marx first criticizes the similar mistakes made by Mill and bourgeois classical economists, namely the non-historical attitude of crystallizing given economic laws. Marx writes that "in expressing **abstract laws**, Mill — just like the Ricardians — makes the mistake of ignoring the changes and continual transcendence of these laws, though it is in change and transcen-

⁸³See footnote 3, Karl Marx [Ka'er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], "Zhanmusi Mile 'Zhengzhi jingjixue yuanli' yishu zhaiyao," 詹姆斯·穆勒《政治经济学原理》一书摘要, in Marx and Engels, *Makesi Engesi quanji*, vol. 42, p. 485.

dence that abstract laws are realized.”⁸⁴ Marx explains the constant fluctuation of the determining relation between cost of production and price, as well as between supply and demand in the production process of bourgeois society. This is, in fact, an extremely complex and contradictory interaction. As such, the abstract equations used by bourgeois economists to explain this interaction are revealed to be inadequate to explain the contingencies inherent in the actual economy. This fact led Marx to conclude that “in political economy, laws are determined by their opposite, that is to say, by lawlessness. The true law of national economics is **chance**.”⁸⁵ It is evident that this interpretation is still an extension of the line of reasoning put forth by young Engels, which we have already analyzed earlier. It is important to remark that though Marx’s conclusions are correct at this point, they are not very profound. This is because Marx attempts to use Feuerbach’s sensuous concrete to oppose the “abstract” in classical economics, which has already been realized in social reality (industry).

This section of commentary by Marx was written in response to Mill’s specific viewpoints found in the eighth section of Mills’ *Elements of Political Economy*. What’s more, Marx’s comments here truly belong to the category of economics. After completing this paragraph of commentary, Marx drew a horizontal line under the text, after which his line of reasoning experienced an important shift. All of a sudden, he moves away from section eight of Mills work to the sixth section, beginning to comment on Mill’s view that money is the “medium of exchange.” Marx states definitively that Mill “very successfully uses a concept to express the essence of things.” We see that Marx all of a sudden affirms Mill’s opinion.

Marx believes that as a medium (relationship), money appears to have become the link between people in exchange, though through this medium, people lose their subjectivity. Money appears to reveal some particular characteristic of people, though it ultimately alienates man’s essence. Money appears to serve people, though it ultimately acquires the power to control man (the subject). Money may seem to grovel at the feet of man, but in reality, it has become the “**true god**” of mankind. Using the analogy of Jesus as the medium between man and God, Marx explains that the essence of money is the alienation and inversion of the essence of man. Marx’s comments here are an exposition, integrating Marx’s own thinking and judgments; it is also a connection, representing an extension of Hess’ philosophical logic that money is the alienation of the human essence (*On the Jewish Question*). However, this is not a simple connection, but rather a deepening and sublimation of Marx’s theoretical structure. Marx writes, “The essence of money is not, in the first place, that property is alienated in it, but that the mediating activity or movement, the **human**, social act by which man’s products mutually complement one another, is **estranged** from man and becomes the attribute of money, a **material thing** outside man.”⁸⁶ Marx thus elucidates this concept:

⁸⁴Karl Marx, “Éléments d’Économie Politique. Par J. Mill. traduits par J. T. Parisot. Paris 1823,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/2, p. 447 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 18).

⁸⁵*ibid.*, p. 447 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 18).

⁸⁶*ibid.*, p. 447 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 18).

Since man alienates (Entäußerung) this mediating activity itself, he is active here only as a man who has lost himself and is dehumanized; the **mutual relation** itself between things, man's operation with them, becomes the operation of an entity outside man and above man. Owing to this **alien mediator** — instead of man himself being the mediator for man — man regards his will, his activity and his relation to other men as a power independent of him and them. His slavery, therefore, reaches its peak.⁸⁷

Marx observes that the cult of this “medium” has become “a purpose in itself.” The perspicuity of this view is self-evident. He further remarks that “This **mediator** is therefore the lost, estranged **essence** of private property, private property which has become **alienated**, external to itself, just as it is the **alienated** species-activity (*die Gattungstätigkeit*) of man, the **externalized mediation** between man's production and man's production.”⁸⁸ Marx's thinking here is a clear extension of Feuerbach and Hess. Where Feuerbach views religious theology as the externalization and alienation of man's species-essence, Hess believes that in the economic process of bourgeois society, the free action and intercourse of man (the species-essence of society) is externalized and alienated into money; Marx takes the explanation of the essence of this economic alienation one step further.

Marx continues his analysis, asking, “Why must private property develop into money?” He answers: “Because man as a social being (*Verkehr*) must proceed to **exchange** and because exchange — private property being presupposed — must evolve **value**.” It is clear that Marx's words “man as a social being” is a direct citation of Hess. *The Soviet scholar Rosenberg believes that Marx has already differentiated private property in the natural economy from the private property of commodities and money at this point. He argues that Marx has “truly laid the foundation of the history of scientific economics, generalizing the principles of dialectic materialism into this department of knowledge.”*⁸⁹ *I believe that this is an unfounded overestimation of Marx. Besides the fact that there did not yet exist any dialectical materialism to speak of at this point, Marx had yet even begun to systematically, historically study economics yet. This research would not begin until Manchester Notes, one year later.* Marx was only able to observe at this point that “the mediating process between men engaged in exchange is not a social or human process, not **human relationship**; it is the **abstract relationship** of private property to private property, and the expression of this **abstract** relationship is **value**, whose actual existence as value constitutes **money**.”⁹⁰ It is obvious that these words are a projection of the **humanist logic of Hess and Feuerbach**. In Feuerbach's criticism of religion, the species-essence of man is mankind's common sensuous activity and true, direct interhuman relationships of exchange. However, in religion, it takes

⁸⁷*ibid.*, pp. 447–448 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 19).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 448 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 19).

⁸⁹See Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p. 111 (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjizhushuo fazhan gailun*, p. 75).

⁹⁰Marx, “Exzerpte zu Mill,” p. 448 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” pp. 19–20).

an inverted and abstract (medium, *Vermittler*) form. Man's species-essence is inverted and expressed as a God existing above man, while "Christ is the medium between **externalized** God and externalized **man**." The subject of alienation is relationship, not an abstract substance. This is a very profound aspect of Feuerbach's alienation conception of history. Marx further specifies Feuerbach's "natural man" and "interhuman" natural relations as existing between "social man" and "interhuman" social relations. At the same time, Marx systematizes Hess' view of alienation as the species-essence of relations of exchange inverted into money, proposing the theory on the alienation of human species-essence (relations) in the movement of the social economy. Marx argued that interpersonal relationships had been alienated and abstracted into value, and that this value was the God of economic relations under the private system, with money, playing a Christ-like role, representing value being alienated into personality-less, abstract property. This is a synthesis of Feuerbach and Hess.

Marx points out that the difference between the monetary system (mercantilism) and national economics (bourgeois classical political economy) is simply that the latter "substituted refined superstition for crude superstition" without truly changing the nature of this economic alienation. In his opinion, the system of credit in bourgeois society so accepted by national economics was nothing but a hoax. Although "it appears as if the power of the alien, material force were broken, the relationship of self-estrangement abolished and man had once more human relations to man. However, this is just a façade, its self-estrangement and dehumanisation, is all the more **infamous** and **extreme**." This is because "its element is no longer commodity, metal, paper, but man's **moral** existence, man's **social** existence, the **inmost depths** of his heart, and because under the appearance of man's **trust** in man it is the height of **distrust** and complete estrangement."⁹¹ Marx concisely points out that bourgeois credit is only given to the rich, evidence of the moral affirmation to those who possess money. Marx writes that "In credit, the **man** himself, instead of metal or paper, has become the **mediator** of exchange, not however as a man, but as the **mode of existence of capital** and interest." Thus the medium which seems to be used for exchange appears to return from the form of material into the form of interpersonal intercourse, though the humans involved in this intercourse are actually personified capital. Marx continues, "Within the credit relationship, it is not the case that money is transcended in man, but that man himself is turned into **money**, or money is **incorporated** in him. **Human individuality**, human **morality** itself, has become both an object of commerce and the material in which money exists. Such is the extent to which all progress and all inconsistencies within a false system are extreme retrogression and the extreme consequence of vileness."⁹² It is plain that this is not an economic analysis of the question of credit, but rather a philosophical and moral condemnation of credit in the bourgeois system.

According to Marx's opinions at this point in time, the credit industry in bourgeois society is an extreme expression of man's self-alienation. However, this

⁹¹Marx, "Exzerpte zu Mill," p. 450 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," pp. 21–22).

⁹²*ibid.*, p. 451 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 23).

inversion of man is accepted by the bourgeois national economy, confirmed “under the appearance of an extreme economic appreciation of man.” First, credit, this personification of trust and acceptance is only provided to the already-wealthy capitalists; thus poor workers can only be rejected as the opposing this personification. Second, workers not only cannot obtain economic trust and accumulated opportunities as people, “but in addition, a pejorative moral judgment that he possesses no trust, no recognition, and therefore is a social pariah, a bad man.” Third, because money only exists nominally in the credit industry, alienation begins to take place in the non-substantive human person, and “[man] has to make himself into counterfeit coin, obtain credit by stealth, by lying, etc.” Fourth, the perfection of the credit industry in the banking industry is also the perfection of money, demonstrating only that the essence of bourgeois nations is the “plaything of merchants.” From this analysis we can see that at this time, young Marx was already beginning to delve deeply into the field of economics, though Marx was not yet planning to oppose the bourgeois world truly using the **theoretical standards of economics**. What he did use as his weapon against the bourgeoisie was philosophical humanism. In short, in the first theoretical construct, Marx criticizes economics from the perspective of philosophy.

2.4.3 Theoretical construct B: Economic and philosophical reflection on the inversion of economic relations

The second theoretical construct is another line of investigation undertaken by Marx on the foundation laid by the first construct. I believe that this represents a **fusion** of philosophical and economic theory. At this level, Marx’s humanist philosophy becomes the **power discourse and theoretical axis that drives his logic**. *This humanist discourse would become the tool by which Marx would craft the logical framework of the 1844 Manuscript. Marx moves from economic (money and exchange) to philosophical criticism (species essence and alienated labor), from actual economics criticism to metaphysical philosophical thought. On this same point, more than 10 years later in Grundrisse, Marx would return from philosophical criticism to economics.*⁹³

Marx remarks that in the process of economic exchange in bourgeois society, the following phenomenon appeared:

Exchange, both of human activity within production itself and of **human product** against one another, is equivalent to **species-activity** and species-spirit (Gattungsgenuß).⁹⁴ The real, conscious and true mode of existence of which is **social** activity and **social** enjoyment. Since **human** nature is the **true community** of men, by manifesting their **nature** men **create**, produce, the **human community**, the social entity, which is no abstract universal power opposed to the single individual, but is the

⁹³Refer to chapter 9.1 on 435 of this book.

⁹⁴The original text has the word “Genuß” which was erroneously changed to “Geist” in MEGA 1. Though MEGA 2, it was corrected to “Genuß”, the Chinese translation of the Collected Works remains uncorrected. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

essential nature of each individual, his own activity, his own life, his own spirit, his own wealth.⁹⁵

Note that in this citation, the words highlighted by Marx are “exchange” as opposed to “species-activity,” as well as the word “social.” Marx is consciously drawing a **connection** between economics and philosophy: “exchange” is actually the original species-activity and species-spirit **that should have existed** in interpersonal intercourse. Exchange is economics, while the species-activity and species-spirit of intercourse belongs to philosophy. The former is part of the national economy, while the latter is a humanist discourse after the style of Feuerbach and Hess; the third context is the theoretical identification established by Marx himself, namely the social activity and enjoyment that was part of the originally **true human existence**. In Marx’s opinion at this time, the essence of man was not, as Feuerbach argued, man’s natural existence and relationships, but rather man’s **true social essence and community**. Furthermore, this was not an abstract thing opposed to individual people, but rather the essence of every individual’s true existence. Thus, man’s essence is not produced through speculative reflections as in Hegel’s idealism, but rather through the needs and egoism of individuals; in other words, produced as man actively realizes his own existence. However, in bourgeois social life, this relationship of man’s social essence is expressed as an exchange relationship of material. This is the alienation of man’s species-essence relationships in bourgeois economic reality.

It is important to note here that although Marx added the adjective “social” in his description of man’s essence (relationships), this was only an **abstract** identification. Just like the concept of the essence of labor in the *1844 Manuscript* that Marx wrote shortly afterwards, this can be thought of as an element of abstract humanism. This is because the so-called “true social relationship” of which Marx writes does not exist in reality, but rather a theorized value postulate. *This is fundamentally different from the concept of the possibility of actual liberation that is dependent on material conditions of production identified by Marx in 1846.*⁹⁶ *As such, Marx was not able to clearly see to the core of the complex, objectively reified, and inverted social relations in the economic reality of bourgeois society.* Marx was only able to theoretically identify the objectively inverted social relations in economic reality as estrangement: “It does not depend on man whether this community exists or not; but as long as man does not recognize himself as man, and therefore has not organized the world in a human way, this **community** appears in the form of **estrangement**.” Taking this investigation further, Marx argues that the entity of community is man, not as an abstract concept, but rather as a “real, living, particular individual.” However, in bourgeois society, man is a “self-alienated being.” Hence “**as [man] is, so is this entity itself.**”⁹⁷ Alienated man necessarily leads to alienation of social relations. At this point, the existence of man determines social relationships, it is not social relations that determine

⁹⁵Marx, “Exzerpte zu Mill,” p. 452 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 24).

⁹⁶Karl Marx, “Über P.-J. Proudhon. Brief an Johann Baptist von Schweitzer,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/20, p. 63 (Chinese transl.: “Lun Puludong,” p. 32).

⁹⁷Marx, “Exzerpte zu Mill,” p. 452 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 25).

man. *The logic we see at this point in Marx's philosophy is exactly opposite of the theoretical standard found in The German Ideology. It was not until Grundrisse that Marx was able to truly complete the analysis and resolution of the problem of inversion in capitalist society's relations of production.*

It is evident that beginning from the philosophical explication of a specific question in his earliest study of economics, Marx began to realize a leap in terms of the totality of his theoretical logic. From his study of the alienation of money Marx moved to the study of exchange, the alienation of bourgeois social relations as a whole. Thus Marx's theoretical research began to take on a whole new significance, because he was beginning to **consciously construct** the entire logical framework of his theory of economic alienation. Latent discourse was beginning to mesh with conscious theoretical principles. We can see that here Marx had only latched onto a very important question of which he had become aware not long before: that in the development of modern society, man had transformed from the slave of nature to the slave of his own creation. This new slavery shared many characteristics with early societies in which man was controlled by nature. Specifically, man is enslaved by external material, the human subject is not, as it should be, the master of his destiny. It is plain to see that within the framework of the humanist conception of history to which Marx subscribed at the time, this reasoning carried with it strong ethical and romantic overtones.

At the same time, here we can also observe the subsidiary awareness of the logic of Feuerbachian humanist philosophy. In Feuerbach's criticism of religion, God is the inversion of man's essence. Man created an all-powerful God, succeeding only in causing the human subject to become hollow, and this powerless, empty man can only kneel before the omnipotent creature he created. It is evident that Marx's philosophical logic at this time stood a little higher than Feuerbach's, having already gone from the theoretical confirmation of natural humanity and essence towards the theoretical confirmation of man's social essence. Marx's logic was also a good deal clearer than his own prior reasoning not long before. This is the first time Marx established the essence of man, which he did as the *a priori*, originally true state of the human subject before it was alienated — true human social relations. Compared with Marx's earlier views based on political alienation, it is clear that this is a more concrete logical identification.

As Marx applied the standard of the true nature an individual ought to have to evaluate the economic life of the bourgeois society of his day, he immediately discovered that the human subject (the laborer) was exactly the same as in Feuerbach's description of the process of religious alienation, completely alienated in social life (another evil "is"):

To say that man is estranged from himself, therefore, is the same thing as saying that the **society** of this estranged man is a caricature of his **real community**, of his true species-life, that his activity therefore appears to him as a torment, his own creation as an alien power, his wealth as poverty, the **essential bond** linking him with other men as an unessential bond, and separation from his fellow men, on the other hand, as his true mode of existence, his life as a sacrifice of his life,

the realisation of his nature as making his life unreal, his production as the production of his nullity, his power over an object as the power of the object over him, and he himself, the lord of his creation, as the servant of this creation.⁹⁸

According to Marx, “The **community of men**, or the manifestation of the nature of **men**, their mutual complementing the result of which is species-life, truly human life — this community is conceived by political economy in the form of **exchange and trade**. Political economy **defines** the **estranged** form of social intercourse (*geselliger Verkehr*) as the **essential** and **original** form corresponding to man’s nature.”⁹⁹ Marx discovers that,

Exchange (*der Tausch*) or **barter** is therefore the social act, the species-act, the community (*gesellschaftliche Beziehung*), the social intercourse and integration of men within **private ownership**, and therefore the external, **alienated** species-act. It is just for this reason that it appears as **barter**. For this reason, likewise, it is the opposite of the **social** relationship.¹⁰⁰

From this analysis we can see that the evolution of Marx’s theoretical exposition is very clear — it progressed from analysis of socio-political division (alienation) to a study of alienation within the realm of social economics, from concrete criticism of the alienation of money to the holistic logic of philosophical criticism of the alienation of economic relations. Next, Marx would move from exchange to labor and production as we begin to see the formation of labor alienation thinking. This progression mirrors that of classical economics, as it moved from the logic of exchange to that of production. This was an important step that Hess never did take.

2.4.4 Theoretical construct C: Early steps in the establishment of the logic of labor alienation

The third important theoretical leap accomplished by Marx in *Comments on James Mill* was the early formation of the theory of labor alienation. In this step, young Marx started from the alienation of social relations, directly discerning that the root of the alienation of the human essence was the mutation of labor activity. The appearance of this view marked the beginning of the establishment of young Marx’s humanist alienation conception of history. To use Marx’s own words, “The relationship of exchange being presupposed, labour becomes **directly labor to earn a living**.”¹⁰¹ What Marx is investigating here is the economic nature of labor alienation.

⁹⁸Marx, “Exzerpte zu Mill,” p. 452 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 25).

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 453 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 25).

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, p. 454 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 27).

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, p. 455 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 28).

In Marx's opinion at this time, though labor is the source of man's subsistence, it is also "the manifestation of his **individual existence**," his individual "self-enjoyment," as well as the laborer's "realisation of his natural abilities and spiritual aims."¹⁰² *This is the first time that Marx establishes a law for the authenticity of labor.* This is a need of the laborer's life as a whole, though now he finds that a mutation of this life-need has taken place in relations of exchange: first, "**labor to earn a living** and the product of the worker have no **direct** relation to his need or his **function as worker**," becoming, instead, a kind of "social combination." Second, "he who **buys** the product is not himself a producer, but gives in exchange what someone else has produced."¹⁰³ Marx continues, "The product is produced as **value**, as **exchange-value**, as an **equivalent**, and no longer because of its direct, personal relation to the producer." Therefore for the laborer, the needs of society are diverse, but production itself becomes more and more "one-sided," and labor "falls into the category of **labor to earn a living**, until finally it has only this significance and it becomes quite **accidental** and **inessential**."¹⁰⁴

We can see that at this time, Marx is moving from the definition of **subject-needs** (*Bedürfnis*) to determine the originally true significance of labor. This is fundamentally different from the determination of labor through **objectified production** found in the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*. Marx develops the concept of labor alienation through labor to earn a living. This contains four levels of concrete relationships: 1. "Estrangement and fortuitous connection between labor and the subject who labors." 2. "Estrangement and fortuitous connection between labor and the object of labor." 3. External social needs become the compulsion for the laborer's self-estrangement. 4. The life-activity of the laborer is alienated as the means to earn a living.¹⁰⁵ Though it is clear that this analysis is still very crude and unrefined when compared with the four logical levels of labor alienation outlined in the *1844 Manuscript*, it exhibits the potential for a much more profound logical framework.

According to Marx's understanding at this time, labor alienation is caused by division of labor under the rule of private property. He writes,

Just as the mutual exchange of the products of **human activity** appears as **barter** (*Schacher*), as trade, so the mutual completion and exchange of the activity itself appears as **division of labor**, which turns man as far as possible into an abstract being, a machine tool, etc., and transforms him into a spiritual and physical monster.¹⁰⁶

This is because under the premise of division of labor, products and wealth in the private system acquire equivalent significance. What man exchanges is no longer the excess of his labor, but rather a "matter of insignificance," the medium of exchange that is the direct result of labor to earn a living — money. It is

¹⁰²*ibid.*, p. 455 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 28).

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p. 455 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 28).

¹⁰⁴*ibid.*, p. 455 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 28).

¹⁰⁵*ibid.*, p. 455 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," pp. 28–29).

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 456 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 29).

here that “The complete domination of the estranged thing **money** over man has become evident, which money is completely indifferent both to the nature of the material and to the personality of the property owner.” At this point, the essence of society can only be attained in the form of its opposite, in its alienated form.

Marx’s total logical construct of the humanist theory of economic alienation already acquired an extremely important realization in the first section of his commentaries. After this, Marx took a large section of excerpts from the second half of the third section of Mill’s work up to the third section of the fourth part, entitled *On Consumption*. Given the fact that Marx’s humanist philosophy was dominant at this point, economic things were constantly being veiled. In fact, in the fourth section of Mill’s book, he already mentions productive labor and non-productive labor, having already analyzed the fact that consumption only expands as production expands. These views were a simple reproduction of Smith’s theories, though Marx was unable to understand these economics subjects and concepts at this point in time. Because of this, Marx returns to the subject of economic alienation based on exchange, directly explaining the internal connection between the private system in bourgeois society and economic alienation, further establishing the complete philosophical logical framework of his theory of economic alienation.

Marx points out that on the foundation of actual private property, the purpose of man’s production is invariably selfish, material possession. He writes: “The aim of production is **having**. And not only does production have this kind of **useful** aim; it has also a **selfish** aim; man produces only in order to **possess** for himself; the object he produces is the objectification of his **immediate**, selfish **need**.”¹⁰⁷ Before the emergence of exchange, the number of products a man produces was not more than his direct needs, therefore, “the **limit of his needs** was also the **limit of his production**.” It was need that limited production! However, “as soon as exchange takes place, a surplus is produced beyond the immediate limit of possession.” The two views that need limits production and exchange determines the product are both incorrect propositions. What Marx sees at this time is that in production and exchange, interpersonal relations of exchange (what was once the species-essence of interpersonal intercourse) are no longer man’s true relationship. Furthermore, the product of man’s labor is no longer “the link between the products we make for one another,” but rather,

That is to say, our production is not man’s production for man as a man, i. e., it is not **social** production... The **social** relation in which I stand to you, my labour for your need, is therefore also a mere **semblance**, and our complementing each other is likewise a mere **semblance**, the basis of which is mutual plundering.¹⁰⁸

At this point, Marx initiates a kind of phenomenological critical framework. As we have already seen earlier, Marx’s use of the word “social” is the true, un-alienated

¹⁰⁷Marx, “Exzerpte zu Mill,” p. 462 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 33).

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 463 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 35).

interpersonal species relationship as put forth by Feuerbach. *In the third notebook of the 1844 Manuscript, we will revisit this changed “social” category.*

Under conditions of exchange, interpersonal “social” relationships, the species-essence of intercourse that connects us together has already been inverted into a selfish, objectified thing that no longer depends on the will of man, a “means by which I have the power to control you.” Therefore in actual bourgeois economic life, “We are to such an extent estranged from man’s essential nature that the direct language of this essential nature seems to us a **violation of human dignity**, whereas the estranged language of material values seems to be the well-justified assertion of human dignity that is self-confident and conscious of itself.”¹⁰⁹ This is made manifest in two ways: first, each person living in the economic system of bourgeois society “actually **behaves** in the way he is regarded by the other. You have actually made yourself the means, the instrument, the producer of **your** own object in order to gain possession of mine.” Second, “your own object is for you only the **sensuously perceptible covering**, the **hidden shape**, of my object; for its production **signifies** and seeks to **express** the **acquisition** of my object. In fact, therefore, you have become for yourself a **means**, an **instrument** of your object, of which your desire is the **servant**.”¹¹⁰

Marx is naturally opposed to this alienation of man’s species-essence and the inversion of the human subject into material. According to his understanding, the subject of this alienation was the proletariat class, existing under the rule of the bourgeoisie. As we have explained above, Marx, who already represented the position of the proletariat, was searching for evidence in support of a revolution of the oppressed class, he demanded the transcendence of this illogical phenomenon of social history using the “criticism of weapons,” thus returning the human subject to the normal state that in which it should have existed. However, because human revolution at this time still began in the heads of philosophers, the reduction of alienation and the liberation of the human subject was still the conclusion of logical inference based in humanist value philosophy. This was the last logical construct in the completion of Marx’s theory of economic alienation: the transcendence of alienation and the return of the human subject from a state of alienation to its own essence.

In this textual context, Marx did not clearly explain that the return of the subject was communism. He only idealistically described it using the species-essence demands that “man” ought to have:

Let us suppose that we had carried out production as human beings. Each of us would have **in two ways affirmed** himself and the other person. 1) In my **production** I would have objectified my **individuality, its specific character**, and therefore enjoyed not only an individual **manifestation of my life** during the activity, but also when looking at the object I would have the individual pleasure of knowing my personality to be **objective, visible to the senses** and hence a power **beyond all**

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 464 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 36).

¹¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 465 (Chinese transl.: “Notes on Mill (Chinese),” p. 37).

doubt. 2) In your enjoyment or use of my product I would have the **direct** enjoyment both of being conscious of having satisfied a **human** need by my work, that is, of having objectified **man's** essential nature, and of having thus created an object corresponding to the need of another **man's** essential nature. 3) I would have been for you the **mediator** between you and the species, and therefore would become recognised and felt by you yourself as a completion of your own essential nature and as a necessary part of yourself, and consequently would know myself to be confirmed both in your thought and your love. 4) In the individual expression of my life I would have directly created your expression of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have directly **confirmed** and **realized** my true nature, my **human** nature, my **communal nature**.¹¹¹

It is evident that this is an idealized, **genuine** living context of of man. Next, Marx conducts a comparative analysis of the human subject in a state of alienation and non-alienation. First, under conditions of non-alienation, "My work would be a **free manifestation of life**, hence an **enjoyment of life**. Presupposing private property, my work is an **alienation of life**, for I work **in order to live**, in order to obtain for myself the **means** of life. My work is **not** my life."¹¹² Secondly, "the **specific nature** of my individuality, therefore, would be affirmed in my labour, since the latter would be an affirmation of my **individual** life. Labour therefore would be **true, active property**."¹¹³ Under the rule of private property, labor becomes a "forced activity," a hardship for man, and in the activity of the subject itself, the individuality of man becomes distanced from him. This is similar to the view that labor is the essence of the human subject, that through transcendence of the alienation of labor, it reverts to the true essence of man, the root of human liberation. Of course, Marx does not give further explanation of this new theoretical point at this time. *The development of this opinion takes place as an important topic in the 1844 Manuscript.*

2.4.5 Towards holistic criticism: A socialist conclusion

By the end of *Paris Notes*, Marx had already begun to show a tendency to depart from the logic of bourgeois political economy, turning to a combination of philosophy and communism to open his own independent critical line of reasoning. It is my contention that in this movement to criticize bourgeois political economy, Marx did not stand alone, but rather stood with the support of four theorists: Sismondi, Proudhon, Hess, and young Engels. In his criticism of economics itself, Marx tended towards Sismondi's premise of rejection; in his political criticism of political economy, Marx basically affirmed Proudhon and Engel's criticism based on economics; however, in his philosophical criticism of economics — the area he believed to be most important — he agreed with Hess' views. What's more, Marx

¹¹¹Marx, "Exzerpte zu Mill," p. 465 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 37).

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 466 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 38).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 466 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," p. 38).

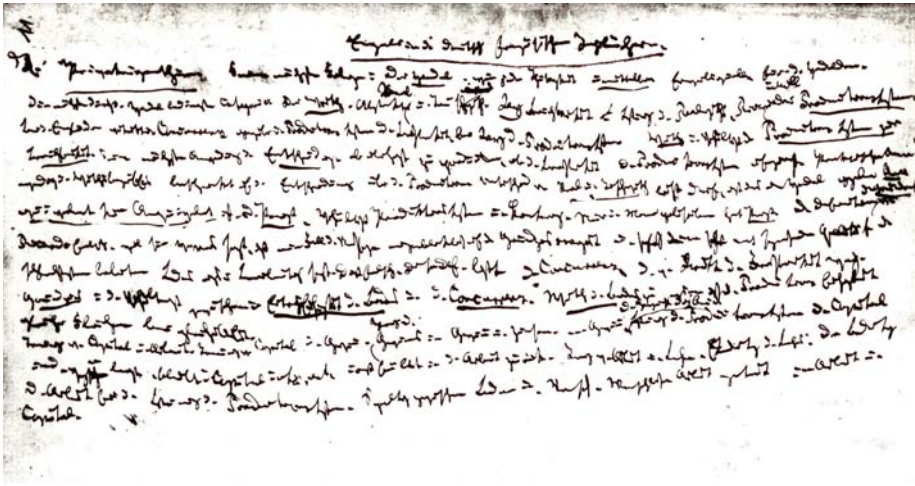


Figure 2.4: A facsimile of a page of excerpts from Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*

easily surpasses Hess in *Comments on James Mill*. It is interesting to note that at the end of *Paris Notes*, Marx did not take excerpts from the first three theorists, but rather specifically took notes on Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, which he had already read. Why did he do this? According to our previous analysis, Sismondi, Proudhon, and Hess were all thinkers that Marx had an easier time understanding at this point in time, while Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* was outside of the scope of his easy comprehension. As we have already discussed, Sismondi's was a humanist ethical criticism, Proudhon's was a political and legal criticism, Hess' was a philosophical criticism, and young Engels' criticism targeted political economy using political economy itself. Marx believed that it was necessary to ponder again Engels' methods.

Marx's excerpts from Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* can be found on one lone page, inserted at the end of *Comments on James Mill*.¹¹⁴ In November, 1843, Marx read this work of Engels' for the first time. At that time, Marx lacked knowledge of the economists and their works that Engels criticized in *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. Therefore, he did not take any excerpts in his first reading. As we previously discussed, Engels' proletariat position had a great influence on Marx by this time. By this point in *Paris Notes*, Marx had already developed basic ideas about economics, and so felt that he needed to reread Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. At the same time, I believe that Marx realized that he could not continue in Engels' line of thinking in criticizing political economy. This is the meaning of Marx's phrase "standing with the political economists" found in the first logical framework in the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*.

¹¹⁴See footnote 3, Marx, "Notes on Mill (Chinese)," pp. 485–486.

At the end of *Paris Notes*, Marx takes excerpts from the work of Eugène Buret,¹¹⁵ a Sismondian socialist, entitled *The Poverty of the Laboring Class of England and France*.¹¹⁶ What Marx is interested in here is Buret's critique of the social institutions of bourgeois society, especially the large amount of data about the impoverished life of the proletariat. In Buret's book, he not only describes the condition of English workers, but also includes moving data on the miserable life of workers in other industrialized countries in Europe. Buret cites the research of a great number of scholars in his book, such as England's Archibald Alison, Frederic Morton Eden, the French scholars de Villeneuve-Bargemont, Villot and M. Villermé. In addition, Buret includes a good amount of official statistics, such as British parliamentary reports and French social welfare reports, etc.

Marx divides these excerpts into two sections: first, examples of the poverty of workers. In Marx's excerpts, his dominant theoretical intentions are confirmed: the poverty of the vast number of workers is connected to the wealth accumulated by a minority of capitalists. He writes that "the price of wealth is the consequence of poverty." He even remarks that at the end of Buret's work, there is a chapter containing a study of absolute impoverishment and relative impoverishment. The second section of excerpts contains evaluations of the policies undertaken by the ruling bourgeoisie towards the laboring poor. This section contains an analysis of the first Poor Law up until the measures taken to alleviate poverty in the 1840s. Marx copied Buret's analysis that bourgeois society was powerless to truly alleviate poverty, because at the most, these measures could only lessen "abject poverty," and not eliminate poverty as a whole. Meanwhile, both in the cities as well as in the countryside, poverty continued to worsen. *Japanese scholar Hattori Fumio points out that Marx cites Buret's work in the 1844 Manuscript but omits Buret's name. In Marx's The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian Marx also cites Buret's work.*¹¹⁷ He quotes, "Irishmen only know one need, that to eat. They only know to eat **potatoes**, and then only the most **rotten, worst of potatoes.**"¹¹⁸

At the very end of *Paris Notes* we come to Marx's excerpts of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. This was a re-preparation for Marx in terms of philosophical method. After completion of these excerpts, the complete line of reasoning of the *1844 Manuscript* had already been formed. Marx already clearly understood that there had to be an opportunity to completely elucidate his new theoretical logic. Thus was planted the philosophical seed that would eventually grow into his *1844 Manuscript*.

¹¹⁵Eugène Buret (1810–1842) was a French socialist economist and political scholar.

¹¹⁶Eugène Buret, *La misère des classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Paulin, 1840, 1841).

¹¹⁷Karl Marx, "Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel 'Der König von Preußen und die Sozialreform. Von einem Preußen.' ('Vorwärts!' Nr. 60)," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. 1/2, pp. 451, 454–456 (Chinese transl.: "Ping 'Pulushiren' de 'Pulushi guowang he shehui gaige' yi wen," 473, 476–478).

¹¹⁸Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 420 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 134).

Chapter 3

Dual Discourse: From a Humanist Labor-alienation Conception of History towards Objective Economic Reality

It has been over 70 years since young Marx's *1844 Manuscript* was made public in 1927. During this space of time, the manuscript has become almost legendary, coming to play a significant historical role. To this day, the manuscript remains one of the most oft-cited — yet most abstruse — of Marx's texts. In recent history, the two most important breakthroughs in understanding the *1844 Manuscript* came in the form of the Soviet Communist Party's "humanist socialism" as well as China's "species-philosophy" and "practical humanism." The difference, however, is that the Soviet Union's political explanation of the *1844 Manuscript* failed when confronted with reality, while the humanist explanation made by China's philosophical world is just beginning to emerge, bringing this important manuscript back to the forefront of the discussion on Marx.

3.1 A Basic Overview of the *1844 Manuscript*

From the introductory discussion at the beginning of this book we learn that the various understandings of the *1844 Manuscript* constitute the key element defining the differences between the five great interpretative models. In recent years, research conducted on this text both in China and elsewhere has achieved impressive results, which can be summarized into two main viewpoints. The first contends that the *1844 Manuscript* was already a work of Marxist philosophy, and so naturally affixes "humanism" as its theoretical label. Schools of thought advocating this viewpoint include the Western Marxist-humanist School, the Western Marxologie School, the Chinese Practical Humanist School, and the various forms of Marxist humanism. The second viewpoint categorically refutes the theoretical value of the *1844 Manuscript*, judging that the humanist theory of labor alien-

ation was still a bourgeois “ideology.” The school of thought based on the Althusser Model advocates this second viewpoint. These two viewpoints represent opposing sides of a linear way of understanding the *Manuscript*. Between them we can still find the muddled, incomplete cognitive logic of the Soviet and Eastern European scholars. I have already explained how Professor Sun Bokui was the first to suggest that the *1844 Manuscript* actually contains two distinct lines of logic. Peeling back the dominant logic of humanist labor alienation, Professor Sun identified another line of logic: that of nascent objective materialism emerging from a description of reality. However, Professor Sun fails to directly address the second line of logic, except to briefly highlight the possibility of a connection to Hegel’s thinking on the objectification of labor. Past research tends to only connect the materialist views contained in the *1844 Manuscript* with Feuerbach; I, on the other hand, believe that such a position is untenable. The issue here is not nearly so simple. The critical problem is that past scholars have merely employed a philosophical interpretation of the *Manuscript*, departing from the concrete content of Marx’s economics research at this point in his life. Because of this disregard for Marx’s economics research, we have no choice but to call into question the legitimacy of prior research on the *1844 Manuscript*.

3.1.1 The textual structure of the *1844 Manuscript*

In the early 20th century, as Soviet expert David Riazanov was studying photographs of Marx’s *Paris Notes*, he discovered that of the 10 notebooks in *Paris Notes*, three of them formed a relatively independent theoretical text. Unlike other excerpted texts, these notebooks were filled with Marx’s independent critique of bourgeois political economy; these came to be known as the *1844 Manuscript*. At the beginning, only selections of the text were published in the third volume of the Russian version of the 1927 *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*. This early version primarily included the majority of the content of what would be called the third notebook. Later in 1929, it was reprinted in the third volume of the Russian *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* under the title of “Preparatory Documents for the ‘Holy Family.’” The publisher did not realize at the time that this was a work that Marx had been unable to finish, but that was extremely important. At the time, the publishing of this text aroused very little interest.

In January 1931, a short article entitled “On an Unpublished Work of Karl Marx” appeared in the *Rote Revue*, the monthly publication of the Social Democrats in Zurich. The report stated that one of Marx’s early, unpublished writings had recently been discovered; the text in question was really the *1844 Manuscript*. In 1932, the manuscript was organized and published in German in the first volume of *Karl Marx, Historical Materialism: Early Works* under the title “National Economy and Philosophy: On the Relation between National Economy and the State, Law, Morality, and Civil Activities (1844).” Though this version included some of the unpublished parts taken from the Russian version, it still did not include all the content of the original. A little later in 1932, this text

was published in the first part of the third volume of Adoratskij's¹ German edition of the *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* (MEGA 1), under the title "1844 Economics Manuscript, Critique of National Economy: A Chapter on Hegelian Philosophy." At the time, the *Manuscript* was divided into four parts, of which the first three parts (the primary text of the document) were entitled "Critique of National Economy." The fourth part included excerpts from Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. *We should note here that when this book was published in the 1930s, it did not excite much attention from scholars in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, though it instigated the most important "Marx Craze" of the first half of the 20th century in Western Europe.*Acft

It was not until 1956 that the 1844 *Manuscript* was first published in its entirety in the Russian edition of the *Selected Early Works of Marx and Engels*. Not long after, the Chinese edition of the *Manuscript* was published separately in 1957. By that time, the text had already become popular, moving to the center of the Eastern European theoretical discussion. It gained special attention as a theoretical banner of the "Neo-Marxists," a school of thought that arose as an extension of the Western Marxism movement. All of a sudden, the relation between Marxism, socialism, and humanism took on a new logical meaning. Humanist socialism was directly written into the party manifestoes of several European communist parties (such as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia). However, this theoretical movement was condemned and repressed by authorities who subscribed to official Soviet ideology. This repression continued until Gorbachev came to power. *Gorbachev's concept of "perestroika" was based on the species-philosophy of humanism — specifically that "the interest of man is above that of class." As such, it is not surprising that humanist socialism became the catch-phrase of the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress of the USSR.* The second Chinese edition of the 1844 *Manuscript* was published in 1979, and retranslated by Liu Pikun.² The version of this text that was soon included in volume 42 of the Chinese version of the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* was virtually identical to the one translated by Mr. Liu. This brought the first wave of discussion on Marx's theories of labor alienation and humanism to China. That the 1844 *Manuscript* would become an important foundation for "humanist Marxism" is only too natural.

In 1980, the second volume of the first part of *MEGA 2* published Marx's 1844 *Manuscript* in two different forms for the first time. The first was the complete text of Marx's work, organized in the same sequence, and the second attempted to follow Marx's theoretical thinking, organized along the lines of Marx's logic and manuscript structure. The former is referred to as the original version, and the

¹Vladimir Viktorovic Adoratskij (1878–1945) was a well-known Soviet philologist. Adoratskij was born in the Russian Kazan Mountains in 1878 and passed away in 1945. In 1897 he entered Kazan State University studying law; there he was a classmate of Lenin. In 1900 he began to participate in revolutionary activities, joining the Bolsheviks in 1904. He participated in the general strike of 1905, and was consequently exiled. That same year, he met with Lenin in Switzerland. Starting in 1905, Lenin charged him with important research on Marx's writings. Adoratskij served as the head of the USSR National Archives as well as the vice-head of the Central Archive Institute.

²Karl Marx [Ka'er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], *1844 nian jingjixue zhexue shougao*, 1844 年经济学哲学手稿, trans. Liu Pikun 刘丕坤 (Beijing: 人民出版社, 1979).

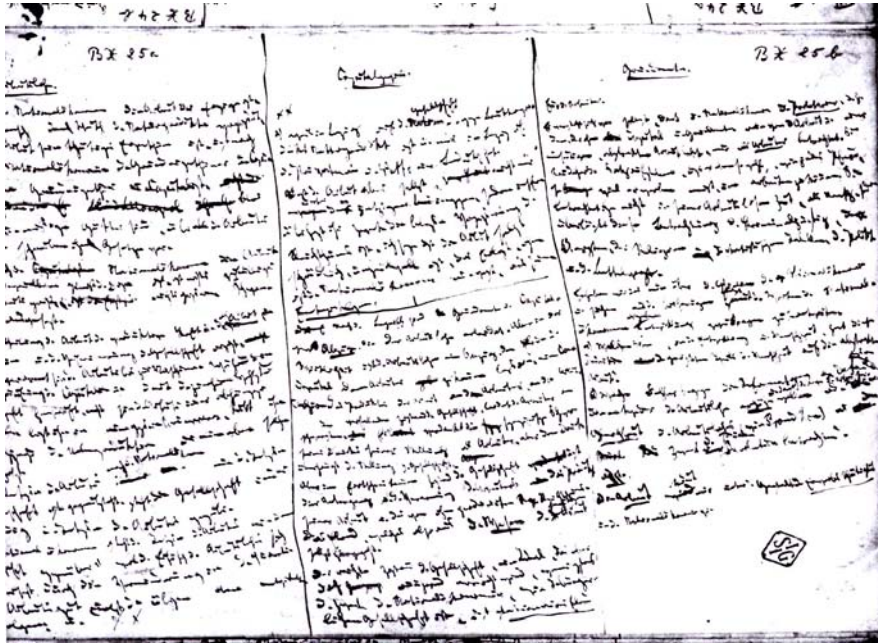


Figure 3.1: A Facsimile of a page from the first notebook of the 1844 Manuscript

latter as the logically ordered edition.³ We will focus our attention on the first version, the original textual structure of the 1844 Manuscript.

The 1844 Manuscript was originally composed of three notebooks. There are 36 existing pages in the first notebook, and like the *Comments on Mill in Paris Notes*, the pages are numbered using roman numerals (I–XXXVI). Of these, Marx wrote on 27 pages (I–XXVII), while from the second half of page 27 to page 36 there are nine blank pages (XXVII–XXXVI). The notebook is divided into three columns, in which the first part is labeled wages, profit of capital, and rent (though there are only one or two columns at times). Beginning on page XXII Marx stops using three columns and his text begins to take up the entire page. This is the second part of the first notebook, and contains Marx’s thoughts on alienated labor. The Chinese edition of the 1844 Manuscript organizes the material contained in the three columns into a single column, taking care to indicate the page number of the text in the original work. *Readers who do not pay special attention to the writings are likely to mistakenly believe that these are three different sections of content written one after the other.*

There are only four existing pages in the second notebook, specifically the last four pages (XL–XLIII). The second notebook actually contains the most important

³It must be explained that the two Chinese editions of this text which we are most likely to encounter are the one in vol. 42 of the first edition of the Chinese edition and the other one in volume 2 of the second edition. The first one was arranged according to the Russian edition of the *Collected Works* while the editorial arrangement of the latter follows the logical order of the text.

Table 3.1: Diagram of the original textual structure of the first notebook

I–VI	Wages	Profits	Rent
VII	Wages		
VIII–XII	Wages	Profits	Rent
XIII–XV	Wages	Profits	
XVI		Profits	Rent
XVII–XXI			Rent
XXII–XXVII	Alienated labor		
XXVIII–XXXVI	(Blank)		

of Marx’s critical viewpoints to be found in the *1844 Manuscript*. Unfortunately, of the 43 pages in the notebook, 39 are lost. There are 68 existing pages in the third notebook (I–LXVIII); these pages were also numbered by Marx himself using Roman numerals. Marx wrote on the first 43 pages of the notebook (I–XLIII), though page 22 (XXII) was left blank in Marx’s original notebook, and the pages after 44 are also left blank. In the logically ordered edition, the editor moved the text labeled “preface” from page 38 to the beginning of the document, and combined the three sections on Hegelian philosophy at the end of the document (these are pages 11–13, pages 17–18, and pages 23–24; in the original there were two sections of critique of national economy in between these sections). Though this was Marx’s original intention, because the edited version does not take special note of the changes, readers who do not pay close attention will mistakenly believe that this was the original order of Marx’s work.

Finally, there are two unconnected pages. The original editor gave them the title of “Excerpts from the Chapter ‘Absolute Knowing’ from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.” According to later research, these excerpts were taken between April and August 1844; as such, they were likely preparatory materials for Marx’s critique of Hegel in the third notebook. The pages contain almost 1/3 of the original text in Hegel’s chapter, and Marx does not make any of his own commentary on them. Because these pages use Arabic numerals instead of the Roman numerals used in the rest of the *1844 Manuscript*, the editor decided to include them separately in an appendix. In the past, some collections of Marx’s work have referred to these pages as the “fourth notebook” or the “fourth manuscript.” However, past Chinese editions of the *1844 Manuscript* have not included these pages.

Volume 42 of the current first Chinese edition of the *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* was based on the Russian translation of the second edition of the *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* in Russian. It is organized along the lines of the logically ordered edition (this is not very different from the same version in *MEGA 2*). It was important for me to take note of this point in my research.

It is still necessary for me to explain a conflict that was instigated by a few Soviet scholars. These scholars contended that Marx wrote the *1844 Manuscript* at the same time as he researched bourgeois political economy. In other words,

Table 3.2: Diagram of the original textual structure of the third notebook

Pages		Contents
I–III	National economy reflects the subjective nature of property	On the first page, Marx writes “Re. p. XXXVI”
III–VI	(1)	At the beginning of the third paragraph of this page, Marx has written the Roman numeral I, followed by the note “Re. p. XXXIX.” On the fourth paragraph of the same page, Marx writes “add to the same page.” The content of these pages focuses on communism.
IV–VI	(2–3)	On communism and the riddle of history.
VI–X	(4)	On the private system and the comprehensiveness of man.
X–XI	(5)	On communism and socialism.
XI–XIII	(6A)	On the accomplishments of Feuerbach and offer a critique of Hegel.
XIII–XXI	(7A)	A critique of national economy; pages XVII and XVIII are divided into two columns and align with page 6.
XVII–XVIII	(6B)	On the first of these pages is written “go to page XIII.” The content is a critique of Hegel’s <i>Phenomenology of the Spirit</i> . At the end of page XVIII is written “go to page XXII.”
XXII	(Left blank on the original)	
XXIII–XXXIV	(6C)	At the top of the first page is written “go to page XVIII.”
XXXIV–XXXVIII	(7B)	Studies of the division of labor and exchange
XXXVIII–XLI	Preface	
XLI–XLIII	(7C)	These pages are primarily a study of money

Paris Notes were written at the same time as the *1844 Manuscript*. More specifically, they hypothesize that Marx first wrote *Notes on Say and Smith*, then began writing the notes in the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*; after this, Marx started to read again, writing notes on McCulloch, Proudhon, and Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* before finally finishing the second and third notebooks. Under this assumption, Marx's notes on Ricardo and Mill were not written until after the completion of the entire *Manuscript*. Such a hypothesis is incorrect from the perspectives of **textual research, Marx's own direct identification, and the internal logic** of the *Manuscript*. In fact, the only support for this hypothesis is that the first notebook only cites Say and Smith, and that the entire *Manuscript* fails to cite Ricardo or Mill.⁴ This line of thinking portrays Marx as an irresponsible scholar, suggesting that he would start formulating his own economic theories after only reading the work of two economists, then producing another great volume of writing after only flipping through a few more pages. But we know that Marx's attitude towards scholarship was never this perfunctory. In fact, from what we have already seen of the writings of young Marx, we can clearly understand his method of approaching a foreign area of scholarship. This is evidenced in the relation between *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy* and *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, *Kreuznach Notes* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte III/A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, and even more in the relation between *Brussels Notes*, *Manchester Notes/German Ideology*, and *The Poverty of Philosophy* as well as *London Notes* and *Grundrisse*. It can be said that in the history of Marx's theoretical study, never once did he begin to write on a subject or a field until he had gained a complete and systematic understanding of that topic and had conducted profound and repeated thought experiments.

I believe that the "theoretical breakthrough" of these Soviet scholars is nothing more than inventing discoveries for the sake of achieving an unconventional conclusion. More importantly, in considering the internal progression of Marx's theoretical logic, ordering Marx's works in this way not only does nothing to deepen our research, but it also adds considerable unneeded confusion to our interpretation of the text. Although I concede that *Paris Notes* and the *1844 Manuscript* are the same body of text completed in the same period of time, I do not agree with the methods of the Soviet and Eastern European scholars who insist on slicing up the text into smaller fragments. Therefore I do not employ this viewpoint in this book; instead I choose to treat the *1844 Manuscript* as an independent text. It is unfortunate that the editors of *MEGA 2* unquestioningly accepted the assumptions of these Soviet scholars.⁵

3.1.2 A general appraisal of the 1844 Manuscript

Within the pervasive and latent interpretive framework of the "two whatevers," "whatever" Marx and Engels said is thought to be correct. As such, it is not diffi-

⁴Lapin, *Molodoj Marks* (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de qingnian shidai*).

⁵See the introduction: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Einleitung," in *MEGA 2*, vol. I/2, p. 11*–56*.

cult to see how the *1844 Manuscript* was accepted as soon as it was published as fresh proof of Marx's belief in Western Humanism, Marxism, Gorbachev's style of "species-philosophy" and "practical humanism." In actuality, however, from a scientific Marxist standpoint, many of young Marx's writings in the *1844 Manuscript* are **not scientific**. According to my understanding, the *1844 Manuscript* was not the result of young Marx's **planned writing**, but rather an experimental process of criticizing bourgeois economics. The *Manuscript* is an extremely complex, **contradictory body of thought encapsulating multiple lines of logic**.

First, let us take a moment to revisit the overall development of young Marx's thought. Marx's theoretical starting point was the concept of subjective dynamism (a legal philosophy based on Kant and Fichte). Then, under the influence of the Young Hegelians, Marx turned to Hegel's concept of self-consciousness as the theoretical premise of democracy. This materialist philosophical framework that Marx demonstrated at the time was shaken by Marx's experiences in the real world during his time writing for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. *This is an early line of thinking that I have already discussed in my book The Subjective Dimension of Marxist Historical Dialectics*. In the previous chapter, we have already seen that Marx did not exoterically accept Feuerbach's influence, but rather autonomously identified with Feuerbach's materialism in the historical studies of *Kreuznach Notes*, seeing past the façade of the bourgeois class to its true nature. This caused Marx to experience his first great philosophical shift as he thoroughly rejected the tenets of Hegel's idealism and bourgeois democracy. It was only after this that Marx came to accept two of Feuerbach's lines of thinking: first, the descriptive logic of natural determinism, and second, the critical logic of the alienation and reversion of man's species-essence. The latter, in particular, became the dominant latent discourse for young Marx during this period of time.⁶ As we have discussed previously, Marx began studying economics under the influence of young Engels, Hess, and Proudhon. Because of the interpretive context that Marx brought to *Paris Notes*, he was unable to truly understand the scientific elements implied by bourgeois political economy. Therefore, Marx's critical reading of national economy produced a form of humanist philosophy as the theoretical result (*Notes on Mill*). The *1844 Manuscript* was the **summary achievement** of all of Marx's thinking, study, and critique up to that point.

In general, young Marx's guiding, dominant logic in the *1844 Manuscript* can be summarized as follows: an inversion of the unchallenged political premise of classical economics in order to justify the position of the proletariat; an inversion of Hegel's idealist dialectic (phenomenology of spirit); an extension of Feuerbach's humanist theory of alienation (humanist phenomenology); a rejection of Proudhon and young Engels' empirical, critical line of thinking; an improvement and systematization of Hess' logic of economic alienation. To summarize Hess and Feuerbach, in Feuerbach's humanist theory of alienation, humanism is the secret of theology, the essence of man is the secret of God, and human relations are the secret of the trinity, and in Hess' theory of money alienation, man is the essence

⁶On August 11, 1844, Marx sent a copy of the introduction to his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* to Feuerbach, as a sign of respect.

of national economy and the true species-essence of man — relations of exchange — are the essence of money. Turning to Marx's labor theory of alienation, we see the projection of these influences: **humanism is the secret of national economy, labor is the secret of capital (alienated labor is the secret of private property), and man in society is the secret of money.** In the course of writing the *Manuscript* (especially the third notebook), because Marx was delving deeper into economic reality, Marx began to develop an objective method of thinking rooted in economic reality, even though this line of thinking was still unconscious and latent in the *1844 Manuscript*. Unlike the understanding of the Soviet Scholars, I do not believe that this was a “Marxist viewpoint,” but was rather simply a **theoretically unconscious** contact between Marx and economics. *Lapin concedes the transitional nature of the 1844 Manuscript, though he maintains that the Manuscript still exemplifies a “Marxist point of view” and “humanist materialist elements.”*⁷ **Because two completely different theoretical logics and discourses can be found in the same text,** the work manifests a special kind of **dual discourse**. Of course, we must be sure to remember that humanist logic occupies a dominant position in the *1844 Manuscript*, constituting the **principle power discourse** in this work.

Second, it is important to point out once again that the dominant idea in the *1844 Manuscript*, the **humanist theory of labor alienation, was not an element of the scientific Marxist worldview.** At its essence, the labor theory of alienation was still based on an underlying, latent idealist conception of history, because it had yet to break free of the conventions set by traditional historical humanist teleology and abstract ethical value judgments. *The representative figure of Western Marxologie, Maximilien Rubel, once said: “Before Marx began scientific analysis of an economic system based on men’s exploitation of each other, he participated in the cause of the workers. The foundation for his participation in this movement was a humanist rejection of this alienated social system, not ‘value laws.’”*⁸ *Though such an interpretation conforms to the actual circumstances of the 1844 Manuscript, Rubel’s extension of this thinking to cover all the theoretical foundation of Marxism is reactionary. At this point I find myself more in agreement with the analysis of Japanese Marxist scholar Hiromatsu Wataru. According to Hiromatsu’s findings, in Marx’s labor theory of alienation in 1844, although Marx had already begun trying to use “humans” (the species-essence of the unity of humanism and naturalism) to replace the Absolute Idea in the logical framework of the unification of “subject/object” in Hegel’s philosophy, this was still an unscientific process. Because the theory of alienation assumes a priori the same process of alienation and reversion that moves from A = the originally true existence of man before his alienation, to B = an alienated human existence, and then to C = the recovery of man’s originally true state through the transcendence of alienation (A → B → C), this is still a latent form of Hegel’s theological framework. The labor that constitutes the subject of the human species-essence is still an a priori, subjective value substance.*⁹ Although what Marx viewed as the true

⁷See Narskii, *Shijiu shiji Makeshi zhuyi zhexue*, p. 152.

⁸See Maximilien Rubel, *Studies in Marxologie*, no. 10 (1966): p. 4.

⁹Wataru Hiromatsu [广松涉], *Wuhualun de goutu*, 物化论的构图 [The composition of reification]

foundation of history was no longer Feuerbach's physiological-ethical activity and natural-emotional relations, his reference to the "free, conscious labor" and "true social relations" (or "social existence") that "ought" to exist implies that he was still conducting a **philosophical-ethical critique** of the inhuman, alienated labor that existed in reality. Such a critique cannot help but be unscientific, because both the methods of criticism and the object of the criticism were **ahistorical**. "Marx did not begin from the private system that existed in reality, nor did he begin from objective economic relationships such as those between products and money or between capital and labor, because in his opinion, all these things were only a further stipulations of the private system, nothing but the result and expression of alienated labor."¹⁰ Where bourgeois economists contended that the social activity and economic relationships in bourgeois social reality were natural, eternal, and humane, Marx believed that all of these had been alienated; the real activity and relationships of the human subject that should have existed — but were unable to — were the true essence of humankind. As a matter of fact, in the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx continued the incorrect ideas on economic alienation first suggested by Hess, summarizing the essence and origins of the private system as "alienated labor" and viewing the liberation of mankind as escape from the slavery of labor alienation.

Third, Marx's critique of **bourgeois political economy** in the *1844 Manuscript* could not have been scientific. This is because he first refuted the labor theory of value, thus refuting the scientific nature of classical economics. Although Marx did not agree Engels' theoretical line of thinking with regards to classical economics, from an academic standpoint, he was still profoundly influenced by Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. For instance, in Marx's opinion at the time, bourgeois social reality was the product of the private system and competition; private property was a fact that enjoyed the wholehearted acceptance of political economy, though in fact the relationships formed by alienated labor were simply blind pseudo-phenomena caused by competition. It is precisely for this reason that Marx could not have conducted a scientific appraisal of the historical formation and development of bourgeois political economy. Thus like young Engels, Marx lumps classical economics and vulgar economics, as well as the scientific and vulgar elements of classical economics together, referring to them all derisively as "anti-human." For Marx, the more bourgeois economics developed, the further it walked down the road of alienation. Thus where Adam Smith was the "Luther" of political economy, David Ricardo was its "cynical" representative. There is a great difference between Marx's scientific understanding of classical economics at this point and his understanding in the 1850s.

Finally, let us turn to an analysis of the internal logic of the *1844 Manuscript*. In terms of the progression of the writing, Marx first wrote the first half of the first notebook (abbreviated below as 1-1) in the same vein as Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. This is a direct criticism of the so-called "facts" upheld by political economists. This critique is, in fact, very similar to Proudhon's

(Nagoya 名古屋: Iwanami shoten 岩波书店, 1983), pp. 13-14.

¹⁰See Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 264.

socialism. *The Soviet scholar Nikolai Lapin was unable to penetrate Marx's line of thinking in this area. He simply remarks that Marx "criticized the bourgeois political economists from within their own field of study."* It is impossible for such an ambiguous definition to thoroughly capture the later shift in Marx's discourse.¹¹

Marx goes on to **refute** this line of thinking, instead writing on the four levels of alienated labor in the second half of the first notebook (abbreviated below as 1–2). This was the critical framework that Marx himself re-established in order to overthrow the philosophical humanism that formed the foundation of political economy (**humanist social phenomenology**). Next came a theoretical confirmation of this critique, which encompasses the economic philosophical analysis in the second and third notebooks.

I believe that there are two lines of thinking in Marx's first notebook. The first is an inversion of national economy, echoing the thinking in Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. The second is the logic of philosophical humanism. Therefore between 1–1 and 1–2 there is a **shift in the train of logic**. I believe that this shift represents Marx's critique and supersession of young Engels. Marx directly affirms Feuerbach's philosophical standpoint, Hegel's dialectical framework, and socialist views concerning the phenomenological critique of political economy. This was, in fact, an affirmation of Hess' critical humanist line of thinking. Between these two lines of thinking, Marx consciously leaned towards the critical humanist logic.

I have discovered that between the second and third notebooks there was another adjustment in Marx's thinking; this was an unconscious dual discourse (this is distinct from Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of conscious polyphony in textual creation). This is because this complex discourse **subintentionally** appeared in Marx's economic philosophical criticism. We can see that in Marx's own theoretical expression, there often appears a kind of latent **social materialism**. Many of Marx's thoughts were profound; giving them a scientific foundation allows them to immediately excel. Of these, the section in the third notebook criticizing Hegel's philosophy of right was an **identification of Marx's own research methodology at the time**. The essence of this section was a reworking of Hegel and Feuerbach's critical methods, and it was targeted at the so-called "criticism of criticism," as well as the cognitive framework of German and French socialism. I summarize this section as a **transition from the phenomenology of spirit to humanist phenomenology**. It is especially important to point out that the identification of this methodology was accomplished as Marx commented on political economy; it was most certainly not, as past research has suggested, a philosophical restructuring of the dialectic of Hegel's materialism.

3.2 Towards a Humanist Phenomenological Criticism Based on Social Truth

The context of the first notebook in the *1844 Manuscript* is extremely complex. I believe that there are three different discourses present in this notebook: first

¹¹See Narskii, *Shijiu shiji Makeshi zhuyi zhexue*, p. 112.

is a refutation of the bourgeois social system and national economy; second is an evaluation and confirmation of Proudhon and young Engels; third is Marx's supersession of the simple philosophical humanist criticism of political economy from within its own scholarly field (also implying a natural materialist premise). This is, without a doubt, an extremely profound and complex theoretical dialogue. Therefore, if we move away from the specific context of Marx's economics research at that time, we will be unable to grasp Marx's deep, critical, and very targeted logic.

3.2.1 The textual structure and general logical framework of the first notebook

As we have discussed previously, at the beginning of Marx's study of economics, he used a passive, external approach in taking excerpts on economics; it was not until *Notes on Mill* that we first begin to see a critical humanist logic. I have also pointed out that by this time Marx had already realized that he could **no longer criticize political economy according to young Engels' line of thinking**. This is because he understood that this line of thinking had not yet stepped beyond the "position of national economy" identified in 1-1 of the *1844 Manuscript*. Therefore in 1-1, Marx first strategically uses Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* as a general principle, then, moving in the same line of thinking as political economy, he critically analyzes the three great elements of bourgeois social distribution. It is evident that this logic (**the second kind of discourse**) is only an inversion of national economy (**the first discourse**); this was the common premise of Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* (the leading logic of this document is the objective logic of economic, with humanist logic only present weakly) and Proudhon's *What is Property*. The foundation of this line of thinking is Ricardian socialism, which was to hold a given economic viewpoint and reconsider the bourgeois labor theory of value, fundamentally rejecting bourgeois society's private system. This thinking can be glimpsed in Proudhon's *What is Property*, and is on full display in Engels' *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. Though Marx briefly and **strategically** used this line of thinking in 1-1, he quickly rejects it, believing that this inversion of political economy was simply holding the position of political economy in order to oppose political economy. Marx had already discovered this problem in *Notes on Mill*. Therefore, the overall line of thinking in 1-1 was nothing but the logical process of criticizing economic phenomena from within the theoretical boundaries of political economy from a socialist perspective. It is my belief that this was to **establish the object of Marx's later, more profound humanist critique**.

The specific content of 1-2 is the labor theory of alienation that has been the object of much discussion in traditional research. The basic principle in 1-2 is a philosophical humanist conception of history based on the idea of alienation. In this it surpasses all prior critiques of bourgeois political economy. I believe that this is a new critical line of thinking in Marx's self-identification (**the third kind of discourse**), a new humanist logic emerging in the process of Marx's philosophical shift. In this new logical structure, Marx first expresses a critical **humanist social**

phenomenology that penetrates bourgeois economic phenomena. *In the introduction of Norman Levine's Dialogue within the Dialectic, he astutely identifies Marxism as a kind of "social phenomenology." Unfortunately Levine's logic is confused because he is unable to differentiate between the characteristics of Marx's thinking at different stages of his life. This renders him incapable of discerning the similarities and differences between the phenomenological analysis rooted in an un-historical explanation of social reality advocated by the humanist young Marx and Marx's later scientific historical phenomenology based on historical materialism.*¹² *I have also remarked that in Loic Waquant's work, he refers to the analysis of the humanist dialectic of later Sartre as "social phenomenology" in his rejection of it. The position of Waquant's theory at this point is similar to the context of social phenomenology of which I speak here.*¹³ This is a true reflection of the leap from the objective description and criticism in the early part of *Paris Notes* to the humanist critique in *Notes on Mill*. At the same time, this shift in Marx's line of thinking represents a criticism and supersession of young Engels and Proudhon in 1–1. Marx thus affirms Hess' viewpoints at the same time as he surpasses them. In Marx's opinion, Hess' discussion was imprecise, because he had no real philosophical foundation, lacking, in particular, a deep understanding of Feuerbach and Hegel. More importantly, **Hess' concept of the alienation of relations of exchange (money) had already been replaced by Marx's more profound and more comprehensive concept of complete economic alienation stemming from the alienation of labor production (objectification).** Here I put forward a somewhat inchoate viewpoint, namely that **relative to the objective line of thinking embodied by classical economics, Marx's humanist logic — the idealized postulate of the species-essence of labor — was a latent idealist conception of history.** In order to come to the conclusion that **revolution would be necessary, Marx had to ethically criticize reality.** Of course, behind the social materialism of classical economics there lay a hidden layer of idealism, namely the unhistoric and eternal affirmation of bourgeois methods of production by bourgeois economists. This was the irremovable ideological essence of bourgeois society. It was not until after Marx established historical materialism and the historical dialectic that he would be able to resolve this difficult question. In the next section we will turn to an analysis of the first notebook in the *1844 Manuscript*.

3.2.2 The two discourses of the first part of the first notebook

In writing the first section of the first notebook, Marx originally planned to divide each page into three columns and list the three great elements of bourgeois social distribution. This is the only section in the entire manuscript (with the possible exception of the missing parts) that contains these three large head-

¹²See Norman Levine, *Dialogue within the Dialectic* (New York: Harpercollins, 1984) and its Chinese translation Norman Levine [Nuoman Laiwen 诺曼·莱文], *Bianzhengfa neibu duihua*, 辩证法内部对话, trans. Zhang Yixing 张翼星, Huang Zhending 黄振定, and Zou Qin 邹臻 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe 云南人民出版社 [Yunnan People's Press], 1997).

¹³See Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant [Bu'erdiwei 布尔迪厄], *Shijian yu fansi*, 实践与反思, trans. Li Meng 李猛 and Li Kang 李康 (Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe 中央编译出版社, 1998), p. 8.

ings. We can see that the first subsection delves deeper into analysis of the three columns, but that the heading of the second subsection is the only subheading in the third column; indeed, it is the only subheading in the entire manuscript. In the second and third subsections, informational excerpts take up the majority of the space. The entire first part is incomplete; it demonstrates a completely new style of writing and logic as it **all of a sudden breaks the column-style** of note taking. This completely new line of thinking characterizes the flashy, untitled, unorganized content of the second and third notebooks.

The first important viewpoint that Marx proposes in the first column is that the separation of capital, rent, and labor is fatal for the worker. This is because “only for the workers is the separation of capital, landed property, and labour an inevitable, essential and detrimental separation.”¹⁴ It is this separation that causes workers’ wages to depend on the whims of the market, resulting in the eternal victimization of workers. Marx at this time was still unable to understand that this separation (to be precise, it is the separation between the worker and the means of production) was the historical premise of bourgeois social production.

Furthermore, in this section Marx uses many categorizations and basic viewpoints of economics, such as market prices and natural prices, competition and price fluctuations, division of labor and the one-sidedness of workers. *It is obvious that Marx had not yet begun to use his own humanist philosophical discourse at this point.* Let us take labor as an example. Marx observes that “the ruin and impoverishment of the worker is the product of his labor and of the wealth produced by him. The misery results, therefore, from the **essence** of present-day labor itself.”¹⁵ It was the advancement of the division of labor that resulted in “one-sided and mechanical labor.” In Marx’s declaration that he would “rise above the level of political economy,” he still derisively uses the concepts of “abstract labor” and “activity as a source of livelihood,” as well as the concept of labor being abstractly viewed as a thing.¹⁶ *These three concepts had already appeared in Paris Notes.*

The most theoretically valuable point made in the first column is Marx’s listing of objective contradictions between reality and theory based on the objective logic of economics (what Marx refers to as the “standpoint of political economy”):

1. According to the theoretical standpoint of political economy, the whole product of labor originally belongs to the worker, but in reality, workers only receive that small part which is necessary for “the propagation of workers.”
2. In theory, all things can be bought with labor, but in reality, workers can buy nothing and must sell themselves.
3. In theory, “it is solely through labor that man enhances the value of the products of nature,” but in reality, landowners and capitalists are everywhere superior to the worker and lay down the law to him.

¹⁴Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 327 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 49).

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 332 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 55–56).

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 337 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 60).

4. In theory, labor is the sole unchanging price of things, but in reality, nothing is exposed to greater fluctuations than the price of labor.
5. In theory, the interest of the worker never stands opposed to the interest of society, but in reality, labor to increase wealth is “detrimental.”
6. “In theory, rent of land and profit on capital are *deductions* suffered by wages. In actual fact, however, wages are a deduction which land and capital allow to go to the worker.”¹⁷

Here we can make an interesting comparison, between the objective social contradictions in an economics context that Marx discusses at this point and the aesthetic description of **alienated relationships** within a philosophical context in *Notes on Mill*. This economics context, **rooted in empirical fact**, was the line of thinking found in young Engels’ *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. This was a **strategical** “borrowing” of Engels’ logical method by Marx. According to Marx’s descriptions at this point, the theory and reality of political economy was in contradiction, explaining **why it was impossible to use the standpoint of political economy to analyze the realities of bourgeois society**. *However, young Marx had yet to discover at this point that his analysis of the objective contradictions of bourgeois society would later form the sole foundation of his scientific socialism.*

I believe that in the three columns of the first part of the first notebook, the section on wages was written the best. It was not until after seven pages that we begin to see a large quantity of excerpts. At the end of page seven, Marx proposes the following two questions:

- 1) What in the evolution of mankind is the meaning of this reduction of the greater part of mankind to abstract labor?
- 2) What are the mistakes committed by the piecemeal reformers, who either want to raise wages and in this way to improve the situation of the working class, or regard equality of wages (as Proudhon does) as the goal of social revolution?¹⁸

These questions posed by Marx are illuminating in the utmost. According to his thinking at this time, the labor of the worker had become a kind of abstract, personality-less labor. At its core, this goes against humanity, proving the reactionary nature of bourgeois social production. *However, Marx was yet unable to realize the objective, historical necessity of abstract labor. Nor did Marx comprehend that it was this abstract social labor that constituted the essence of modern bourgeois relations of production; only basing analysis on this realization could he have unearthed the secret of bourgeois social production! We will visit this topic in greater detail later in this book.* Furthermore, Marx emphasizes the fact that simply increasing wages was not the meaning and goal of the proletariat revolution. He obviously realized that only through overthrowing the bourgeois system

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 332 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 54–55).

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 333 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 56).

of private property could the ultimate liberation of mankind be realized. Thus the second of Marx's questions becomes a powerful critical weapon aimed at bourgeois economics and Proudhon's system of philosophy, because with it Marx shows that **there is a more fundamental problem with the system than allocation of resources**. The first subsection was written as a coherent whole, but starting with page seven, Marx turns from critical research to excerpts.

The second subsection was one that Marx originally intended to analyze carefully — the fact that the only subheading in the entire manuscript is found at this section is proof of this. This subsection contains a large amount of excerpts from economics texts and a relatively small amount of analysis. The majority of this theoretical analysis is summary of the viewpoints of various economists. Though he mentions concepts such as “capital,” “the profit of capital,” “the rule of capital over labor and the motives of capitalists (der Kapitalist),” and “the accumulation of capitals and the competition between capitalists,” etc., he does not delve into a deeper study and analysis of these subjects. This is because as long as Marx did not comprehend that capital was a historical social relation, he would be unable to break out of the restrictions of the ideological views of bourgeois economics. Ironically, this situation confirmed Marx's viewpoint — it revealed the difficulty involved in criticizing political economy from within the field of political economy. To borrow Marx's later summary, this section of analysis primarily explains how, in competition, capital continuously accumulates in the hands of the minority.

The third subsection deals with rent. Perhaps under the influence of the second subsection, the third begins with excerpts. After six pages, there is a break of one page. Beginning with the seventh page, Marx reverts to the powerful theoretical criticism that characterized the first subsection. According to Marx's summary comments at the beginning of the second part, this discussion is centered on the formation of two opposed classes in modern bourgeois society: the proletariat and bourgeois classes.

I must point out that in the first part of the first manuscript, Marx was trying to explain the truth that **it was impossible to truly comprehend the essence of bourgeois society's system of private property while using the viewpoint of political economy**. I believe that here Marx was simultaneously criticizing young Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* and Proudhon's *What is Property*, because these two works were unable to move beyond a simple refutation of **social phenomena**, while Marx wanted to criticize the **essence** of bourgeois society. How to go about criticizing? In Marx's opinion there was only one way: philosophy, and in particular, a critique based in humanist philosophy. *This was also Hess' goal, though he did not achieve it in any ideal way.*

Before turning to an analysis of the specific content of the second part of the first notebook, I must reiterate a point I made earlier: the first part holds to the viewpoint of political economy, and in terms of research methodology, it can be thought of as materialist. I even go so far as to believe that the analysis in this section is very similar to *Capital*.

3.2.3 Humanist social phenomenology: Young Marx's conception of history based on labor alienation

The second part of the first notebook establishes the entire structure of Marx's unique philosophical critical framework, displaying what Marx himself believed to be a distinctive line of thinking that distinguished him from Proudhon, Engels, and even allowed him to surpass Hess. This is what traditional studies of the *1844 Manuscript* have focused on, namely the labor theory of alienation. According to my interpretation, this was an extremely profound, critical **humanist social phenomenology**. I will attempt to provide concrete textual explanations for why I believe this way.

This part of Marx's writing begins at page 22 of the first notebook. It is at this point that Marx breaks off all the columns on the page. This break in writing style can be considered as an outward manifestation of an important breakthrough in Marx's theoretical logic. *David McLellan also noticed this, though he did not remark the shift in Marx's theoretical logic at this point in time.*¹⁹ Here Marx changes his line of thinking, a transformation that can be thought of as a **shift in discourse**. I believe that **this is the first theoretical highpoint in the development of Marx's thought that is uniquely his**.

At the beginning of the second part, Marx first summarizes the three most important points that he discussed in the previous section of economics context: the separations and oppositions that arise given the premises of division of labor, competition, and exchange value under the private system, the accumulation of capital in the hands of the minority as a result of competition, and the formation of the two great classes. These concepts were discussed already in the first part. Marx, however, believes that "political economy begins with the facts of private property, but it never explains for us these facts."²⁰ Marx goes on to explain why not:

[Political economy] inserts the **material** process of property in reality into general, abstract equations, then views these equations as **laws**. It **does not understand** these laws, which is to say, it does not explain how these laws emerge from the essence of private property.²¹

It is important for us to take note of the three words in this citation that Marx emphasizes: the word "material" in "**material** process" refers to real, objective existence (social phenomena), which is distinct from the essence. The word "**laws**" is highlighted because Marx wishes to emphasize that political economists pay no heed to the competition and other complex economic activities, and that things (value laws) based on general, inhuman labor (natural value) and randomness form a false essence. The phrase "does not **understand**" is highlighted because with the private system as a premise, it was impossible for political economy to pose logical

¹⁹Refer to McLellan, *Karl Marx. Leben und Werk*, p. 117 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi zhuan*, p. 113).

²⁰Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 363 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 89).

²¹*ibid.*, p. 363 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 89).

of the system, and so political economy was concerned by nothing more than techniques of how to get rich. In other words, political economists took what should have been the subject of inquiry as a given premise. At a deeper level, although Proudhon (and young Engels) criticized political economy, they were unable to move beyond **existent economic phenomena that had already been twisted**. Therefore they were unable to truly understand the essence of the question, and were consequentially unable to grasp the essential laws governing the private system of bourgeois society. Here Marx attempts to truly stand with the proletariat, using complex economic phenomena, to expose the essence of the bourgeois economy beginning with the “essential connections” of the economic phenomena. This is the starting point of one of Marx’s new critical discourses: humanist phenomenology. Very much unlike Feuerbach’s humanist phenomenology, this was Marx’s own humanist **social** phenomenology.

It is widely known that classical philosophical phenomenology originated with Kant, later absorbing Hume’s empirical skepticism. Kant divides the outside world into two parts: first is the phenomenological world of sensory experience, and second is the category of things-in-themselves. As has been explained previously, Hegel reunited the broken world using critical, dialectical philosophical phenomenology; here true material existence becomes phenomena, while the Absolute Idea becomes the essence. Hegel allows us to idealistically “see the essence through the phenomena.” Up until Feuerbach’s humanist phenomenology, Hegel’s inverted world was re-inverted time and again; only after religious theology and what Hegel refers to as speculative idealist pseudo-phenomena were peeled back could the world of sensory material and the lives of humans truly come into view. Only then could true inter-human relationships, which had been alienated into the Holy Ghost, be revealed from within the pseudo-phenomena. Through Hess’ theory of economic alienation, Marx is explaining that the world of bourgeois economics is false, inverted, and alienated. His goal is to reveal and unearth the essence of society by using phenomena. This is the fundamental line of thinking of a new **critical phenomenology**. In a certain sense, Marx is actually a little more similar to Hess, although his critical philosophical theories are more systemized and profound. *Later we will see that in Marx’s criticism of Hegel’s phenomenology, Marx directly identifies his own humanist phenomenology (the fourth section of this chapter).*

After changing his discourse, Marx writes, “let us begin with **actual** economic facts.” This is a comprehension of the essence of the issue in a phenomenological sense. This also implies the beginning of humanist discourse and the logic of alienation.

The “economic facts” of which Marx spoke were observations made from the perspective of workers on the products of labor (Marx uses the word “commodity,” not yet realizing that products only become commodities under certain historical conditions); in other words, observations of the alienation and externalization realized in the objectification of labor. Here, the more wealth workers produce, the more impoverished they become. Marx realized that outside the heartless world of things described by political economy, there was a human world. He writes, “The **devaluation** of the world of men is in direct proportion to the **increasing value** of

the world of things.”²² Therefore the actual economic facts were certainly not composed of simple material progression. The products of labor in the world of things were fixed within certain objects, reified into the labor of objectified men; the material world of national economy is composed of this “objectified labor” (*Vergegenständlichung*). Labor’s realization is its objectification (reification). Although political economy had discovered social wealth distinct from natural things, it still only saw the reification (objectification) of labor, unable to discern the essential relation between workers and labor. It was especially unable to grasp the **alienation** of man in society that took place at the same time as this material progression. Marx continues: “The **alienation** of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an **external** existence, but that it exists **outside him**, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him.” Under the conditions set by bourgeois society, the realization of labor leads to the loss of human subjectivity and objectification as **loss of the object and bondage to it**; appropriation as **estrangement**, as **alienation**. Therefore, “the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself — his inner world — becomes, the less belongs to him as his own (Eigentum).”²³

At this point let us pause momentarily to discuss the first important logical element that Marx uses to realize his own theoretical structure — the question of the **objectification and alienation of labor**. This discussion, of course, must begin with Hegel and Feuerbach.

In the first chapter of this book, I explained that Hegel’s concept of the objectification and alienation of the subject had two levels of meaning: the first is a naturally realizing self-objectification; the second is the reification (externalization and alienation) of the essence of the human subjective idea. This reification leads to a false reality, and alienated relations become what is true. As we have previously discussed, labor, for Hegel, is a necessary method and means by which the ideal subject employs individual consciousness and the progression of social history in its process of realization. In the beginning, the essence of the Idea realizes itself through objectification into material existence, and although the Spirit “falls,” becoming natural material, this is only a transitory stage of self-affirmation. Thus alienation is equal to objectification. In the third stage of the expression of the Absolute Idea, the “passions” of man in reality become tools in the hands of the Creator. Therefore, the resulting process of alienation is the objectification and externalization of the Objective Spirit as the result of social activity, and man’s spirit is objectified as the product of labor.

In Feuerbach’s criticism of Hegel, he directly rejects Hegel’s general idea of objectification and alienation, because this is an idealist inversion of nature and the Idea as well as the subject and predicate. Therefore, material existence comes first, and is not a tool of idealist teleology. Feuerbach goes on to understand the sensuous objectification activity at Hegel’s second level. In his opinion, **objectification is not**

²²Marx, “*Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*,” p. 364 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 90).

²³*ibid.*, p. 365 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 91).

alienation, but is rather true life in reality; in contrast it is idealism and religious theology that become the alienation of the species-essence. Thus Feuerbach turns things on their head. Hegel's philosophy itself becomes the alienation of the Idea. In Feuerbach's opinion, it is the sensuous material life of men that produces the Idea, and the idea that abstracts man's species-relation ("One") gradually becomes the Absolute Subject. Finally, men created the alienated object of their own species-essence — God. It is this God who becomes the master of men. The more men give to God, the less they leave for themselves. Feuerbach **affirms objectification and opposes alienation**. This is Marx's logical reference point at this point in time.

Now let us answer one question: why does Marx begin with objectification? In *Notes on Mill* which he wrote not long before, Marx actually began with the alienation of money, obviously under the influence of Hess. It was not until the very end of that text that Marx realized that the alienation of the species-relations between humans formed in exchange were **based on production**. Human intercourse is not simply the exchange of ideas, but is first and foremost an exchange of products — this is the result of the objectification of labor. **Marx's supersession of Hess lies in his ability to move beyond the analysis of the alienation of money (exchange) to the analysis of the objectification of labor (production)**. *This is also the reason that many Soviet scholars illogically insist that Notes on Mill (specifically the concepts of relations of exchange and the alienation of money) were written after the 1844 Manuscript.*

Now that we have established this theoretical frame of reference, we can return to Marx's analysis of objectification. He writes, "the worker can create nothing without **nature**, without the **sensuous external world**. It is the material on which his labor is realized, in which it is active, from which, and by means of which it produces."²⁴ *This identification which takes the form of a logical premise is obviously a principled identification of general natural materialism.* Thus nature becomes not only the object of the labor of workers, but also the source of workers' life-material. However, in the productive process of bourgeois society, the result of the objectification of the labor of workers is revealed as the workers' loss of the object in the two ways discussed above. This objectification of labor is what Hegel refers to as the "second nature." Originally, the "second nature" was an elevation of the human subjective spirit over nature after reification. Thus the human spirit ought to become the master of nature, until it was interrupted by an even deeper level of alienation. Obviously Marx's internal line of thinking here begins with Hegel, and not Feuerbach, as other scholars have suggested before.

The result of the objectification of workers' labor is the alienation of the worker from the product of labor that he himself created. In Marx's philosophical logic of this time, the product of labor is the objectification of workers' labor-subject. The subject ought to realize itself and appropriate itself in the product of labor. However, in the production of bourgeois society, workers not only cannot possess

²⁴Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 365 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 92).

products of labor, but they also lose themselves in those products, becoming “slaves to their own objects.” Marx analyzes the problem thus:

The **alienation** of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an **external** existence, but that it exists **outside him**, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him.²⁵

Thus “the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more values he creates, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes; the better formed his product, the more deformed becomes the worker; the more civilized his object, the more barbarous becomes the worker; the more powerful labor becomes, the more powerless becomes the worker; the more ingenious labor becomes, the less ingenious becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature’s slave.”²⁶ We can see that Marx here refutes Hegel’s lumping together of objectification and alienation, astutely observing and analyzing the unnatural phenomenon of workers becoming the slaves of their own creations (objectified products of labor).

Here Marx immediately makes a phenomenological analysis of the alienation of the product of labor: **“Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labor by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production.”** *On Marx’s original manuscript, he drew two lines under the words “worker” and “direct” to draw special attention to them.* What are direct relations? They are the objectification of workers’ labor, namely that material production itself is the direct creative process that results in products. **“The direct relationship of labor to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production.** The relationship of the man of means to the objects of production and to production itself is only a *consequence* of this first relationship — and confirms it.”²⁷ This line illustrates Marx’s reason for beginning his analysis of labor alienation with objectification. *This point is the same as the concept of “social wealth” promulgated by the post-physiocrat classical economists.* With this sentence, Marx gives penetrating analysis of the relations between capitalists and production/products (exchange and allocation), showing that these are the products of the direct relation between workers and the products they produce. This line of thinking is extremely profound in that it surpasses Proudhon’s theory of improving resource allocation and Hess’ theory of the alienation of intercourse and exchange. Considering objectification from the perspective of production is an **objective** identification, demonstrating the objective alienation and confrontation of material products of labor and workers. The objectification discussed here is the gateway to Marx’s labor theory of alienation. Of course, objectification is also the alienation of material — this is the **first material level** criticized by social phenomenology.

Next, Marx shifts to an analysis of the issue from the perspective of the object, which is really the internal activity of the subject. Marx writes: “But the

²⁵*ibid.*, p. 365 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 91–92).

²⁶*ibid.*, p. 366 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 92–93).

²⁷*ibid.*, p. 366 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 93).

estrangement is manifested not only in the result but in the **act of production**, within the *producing activity*, itself.”²⁸ The alienation of the product is nothing but the result of the alienation of the activity of the producer-subject. The alienation of labor itself is relative to the **self-alienation** of the subjective activity of the “alienation of material.” This is a deeper level of alienation. “In the estrangement of the object of labor is merely summarized the estrangement, the alienation, in the activity of labor itself.”²⁹ The primary reason why workers are controlled by their own products is that as the act of subjective creative activity, they have already been alienated. Labor that ought to have been the activity of the essence of the human subject, now becomes something that does not belong to the essence of workers. “[the worker] does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind.”³⁰ In this state of affairs, “external labor, labor in which man alienates himself, is a labor of self-sacrifice, of mortification”³¹ In Marx’s opinion, labor should be the manifestation of subjective life. It should be the subject that actively creates the object in order to realize its own freedom, autonomy, and dynamic activity. However, in describing political economic reality, Marx writes:

It is activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating, the worker’s **own** physical and mental energy, his personal life — for what is life but activity? — as an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him. Here we have **self-estrangement** (*Selbstentfremdung*).³²

This belongs to the deeper **second level** of phenomenological criticism, the **alienation of subjective activity**.

Marx believed that the third rule of alienated labor “derived” from the first two which we have already discussed is the alienation of man from his own species-essence. In Marx’s opinion, humans are distinct from animals and other living things. On the one hand, Marx concedes Feuerbach’s assertion that humans, like animals, are species of natural life, though on the other hand, Marx emphasizes the differences between humans and animals, which Marx summarizes as “conscious life activity.” For Marx, free, conscious activity is a manifestation of life-activity. This is the unique species-essence of man. *On this point Marx was obviously heavily influenced by Hess*. Unlike animals, which are directly united with their life activity, man transforms his life-activity into his will and the object of his will. “Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity.”³³ Marx admits that animals can produce things as well, but goes on to differentiate this production from human production:

²⁸Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 367 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 93).

²⁹*ibid.*, p. 367 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 93).

³⁰*ibid.*, p. 367 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 93).

³¹*ibid.*, p. 368 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 94).

³²*ibid.*, p. 368 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 95).

³³*ibid.*, p. 369 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 96).

An animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his product. An animal forms only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty.³⁴

Similarly, the product of human labor, which is the objective world he creates, is the objectified species-essence of man, the humanized natural world. It is precisely in recreating the objective world that man truly proves his species-existence. This production is the dynamic species-life of man. *Here Marx's thinking is distinct from Hess' concept of the intercourse of species-essence.* Through this kind of production, man makes the natural world his creation and his reality. Therefore, the objectification of labor is also the objectification of man's species-life. Man not only intellectually duplicates himself consciously, but also dynamically and truly realizes himself, seeing himself in the world he creates. "Alienated labor, however, inverts this relationship," transforming this manifestation of the life of man into "a means of just maintaining life." At the same time, alienated labor deprives man of the object of his production, robbing him of his species-life and transforming his advantage over animals into a disadvantage; these two alienations become the alienated species-essence of man.³⁵ This "species" is in opposition to the human individuals. *I have noticed that here Marx does not mention the immediate relation between "species" and money in Notes on Mill. Perhaps we have here a true philosophical abstraction going beyond economics.* This is the **third level** of phenomenological criticism, **the level of the species-essence.**

Marx goes on to show that as man is alienated from his product, from his life activity, from his own species-essence, the ultimate result is that humans become **alienated from each other.** When a worker is in opposition to his product and his activity, then these things must necessarily belong to an outsider; this necessarily leads to the opposition and alienation of humans from each other. Marx writes:

Through estranged labor man not only creates his relationship to the object and to the act of production as to powers that are alien and hostile to him; he also creates the relationship in which other men stand to his production and to his product, and the relationship in which he stands to these other men. Just as he creates his own production as the loss of his reality, as his punishment; his own product as a loss, as

³⁴*ibid.*, pp. 369–370 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," pp. 96–97).

³⁵*ibid.*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," pp. 96–97).

a product not belonging to him; so he creates the domination of the person who does not produce over production and over the product.³⁶

This “person who does not produce” is the capitalist. *Quite obviously, we can see the shadow of Hegel’s dialectics of master and slave.* Although capitalists appear as dominators of production and products in the process of alienated labor, in Marx’s eyes, capitalists are not “human” (subject), but are rather things — the personification of capital (dead labor). He also believed that capitalists are alienated; they are a kind of immediately objectified false subject. Therefore Marx writes that in alienated labor, each person is alienated from other people, and each of them is alienated from the essence of humanity. This is the **final level** of phenomenological criticism, which, I believe, is the **level of man’s general alienation.**

In summary, the human subject creates a new world of things in reality through labor (the phenomenological world of what is — “this world”); in this world, he loses all the subjective essence that **should have been his** (“the other world”). The rights that the human subject should have possessed are invertedly manifested as the right to dominate capital (things); man loses himself, at the same time, ironically allowing his creation — capital — to become alive. Therefore, it is alienated labor that creates an object hostile to itself — and that object is property!

After analyzing the four relationships of alienated labor, Marx comes to the conclusion that property is the result of alienated labor and not vice versa. It is not until later the property concealed its true origins, placing itself in objective opposition to alienated labor. Therefore “this relationship becomes reciprocal.”³⁷ *Marx’s use of the word “reciprocal” refers to the three phenomenologically equivalent elements of political economy (wages, capital, and rent), as well as the exchange and allocation of these elements.*

What we see here is actually Marx’s debate with Proudhon. In Proudhon’s *What is Property*, he sees property as the cause of production inequality. Marx actually believes that Proudhon (and young Engels) have not left the logic of political economy. Marx argues that only in beginning from a new line of argument can the problem be truly resolved. Thus Marx writes about his own work, “This exposition immediately sheds light on various hitherto unsolved conflicts.”³⁸ The last two problems that Marx highlights at the end of his manuscript are criticisms directed at Proudhon.

Marx’s first problem is that “political economy starts from labor as the real soul of production; yet to labor it gives nothing, and to private property everything.”³⁹ Marx concedes that Proudhon is critical of political economy, because “Proudhon has decided in favor of labor against private property”; however, Marx points out that Proudhon uses the same premise as political economy, and this because the contradiction which forms the starting point of his analysis is not critical;

³⁶Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 372 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 99–100).

³⁷*ibid.*, p. 373 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 100).

³⁸*ibid.*, p. 373 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 100).

³⁹*ibid.*, p. 373 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 101).

this is a surface level deception. Analyzing this from Marx's new perspective, "this apparent contradiction is the contradiction of **estranged labor** with itself, and that political economy has merely formulated the laws of estranged labor."⁴⁰ The fact that Proudhon writes on this surface level contradiction means that he is necessarily constrained to criticism from within the framework of political economy. For instance, when discussing the fact that wages are the immediate result of alienated labor, Proudhon does not attempt to erase alienated labor, but would rather "therefore be nothing but **better payment for the slave** (Knecht)"; at the most, the result of "wage equality" would only lead to the creation of "society... as an abstract capitalist."⁴¹

Marx's second problem is that alienated labor is the immediate reason for private property. This is an essential relationship that Proudhon did not grasp, and is also the relationship that Marx believed he had discovered. This was also an improvement over the views of Engels and Hess. Thus Marx comes to an important conclusion:

The emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the **political** form of the **emancipation of the workers**; not that **their** emancipation alone is at stake, but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation — and it contains this because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and all relations of servitude are but modifications and consequences of this relation.⁴²

Up to this point, Marx has organized his criticism of reality into two categories: alienated labor and private property. The former is a theoretical logic that is unique to Marx, while the latter is his **conditional** acceptance of Proudhon's theoretical views. Marx believes that "we can develop every **category** of political economy with the help of these two factors; and we shall find again in each category, e.g., trade, competition, capital, money only a **particular** and **developed** expression of these first elements."⁴³ *An important comparative context to mention here is Marx's later contention in Capital that the dual contradiction between commodities and labor forms the fundamental contradiction of all capitalist relations of production.*

Marx's line of thinking thus becomes clear: alienated labor is a form of inverted essence, private property is the result of alienated labor, and economic categories are different expressions of this result. Explaining the formation of these categories becomes the primary objective of his *Manuscript*. This concept makes up the bulk of the second manuscript.

However, Marx first prepares himself to accomplish two tasks: first, "to define the general **nature of private property**, as it has arisen as a result of estranged labor, in its relation to **truly human** and **social property**." Second, Marx intends to

⁴⁰*ibid.*, p. 373 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 101).

⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 373 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 101).

⁴²*ibid.*, pp. 373–374 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 101).

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 374 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 101).

answer the question: “How, does **man** come to **alienate**, to estrange, his **labor**? How is this estrangement rooted in the nature of human development?”⁴⁴ These two propositions are very profound — they are questions that Proudhon and others like him were unable to face directly. In order to resolve the relation between the general nature of private property and truly human (social) property, Marx must first explain how social property is realized through alienated but still general private property. The second question builds on the first. The question of how man comes to alienate his labor and why this alienation is rooted in the development of human nature appears to be similar to Feuerbach’s criticism of religion, only that the realm of criticism has shifted here from religion to economics. In answering the first question, after discussing the three relations of how workers and non-workers (capitalists) come to appropriate nature through labor, Marx suddenly terminates the writing of this manuscript.

As the bulk of the content of the second manuscript has been lost, it appears from the remaining sections that Marx was not able to complete these two tasks.

This is a **theoretical generalization** that young Marx makes at this time.

3.3 A Dominant Discourse and a Complex, Latent Logical Paradox

In my opinion, Marx suddenly ended the writing of the first notebook because he realized that a philosophical proof such as that found in 1–2 was insufficient to truly deepen his theoretical criticism of bourgeois political economy. Therefore, where 1–2 was the philosophical logical premise that Marx himself highlighted, what followed was necessarily a concrete economics critique that faced the theoretical logic of political economy head-on. In other words, in 1–1 Marx addressed an economic socialist discourse with which he was not in agreement, then went on in 1–2 to a philosophical humanist discourse, and culminated in the second and third notebooks (the bulk of the *1844 Manuscript*) with an **economic philosophical discourse**. Of course, this discourse is not philosophy within the realm of economics, but rather an immediate criticism of economics based in the logic of philosophical humanism. However, Marx inadvertently weakens the framework of philosophical humanism in many places throughout his critical economics readings (for instance, in the four existing pages of the second notebook, Marx only uses the concept of alienation once). Compared with the third kind of logical discourse in the first notebook, this was a new, mixed discourse: a humanist economic philosophical discourse. *A definitional note that needs to be reiterated is that scholars of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (including the editors and translators of MEGA 2) view the nature of this shift in discourse as a simple increase in the amount of economic reading that Marx was doing (“adding a few more books”); they were unable to grasp the profound heterogeneity and dual nature of Marx’s shift in discourse.*

⁴⁴Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 374 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 102).

3.3.1 Economic philosophy: the new perspective opened by the second notebook

We have already discussed the fact that there are only four existing pages of the second notebook, pages XL to XLIII at the end of the notebook. The second notebook composes, in fact, the most important critical content of the *1844 Manuscript*. The bulk of the content of the second notebook revolves around the two categories of alienated labor and private property, systematically analyzing the four expressions of private property: “trade, competition, capital, and money.”⁴⁵ According to the outline that Marx included at the end of the first notebook, his goal was to specifically explain relations in private property as well as labor, capital, and the relation between the two. This is the movement from the unity and opposition between these elements to an analysis of the self-opposition within each separate element.⁴⁶ According to the Marx’s summary on page 18 (XVIII) of the third notebook, the first part of this manuscript (the unity of labor and capital) suggests seven problems in its discussion of national economy: 1) capital is accumulated labor, 2) the life of capital in production, 3) the worker is a capital, 4) wages belong to the costs of capital, 5) in relation to the worker, labor is the reproduction of his life-capital, 6) in relation to the capitalist, labor is an aspect of his capital’s activity, and 7) political economy postulates the unity of labor and capital as the unity of the capitalist and worker as “the original state of paradise.”⁴⁷

An analysis of the first three paragraphs of the third manuscript (which deal with the second notebook) reveals that on page 36 of the second notebook, Marx was already explaining the nature of capital in opposition to labor. Page 39, on the other hand, discussed the issue of the transcendence of labor and capital. But the latter paragraph is, in large measure, a theoretical “ornament” in another sense of the word.

Now let us turn to a textual interpretation of the remaining portion of the second notebook.

At the beginning of this fragment of the second notebook, Marx analyzes the labor of workers, which belongs to capitalists and exists as capital. Marx believes that this is a “a **living** capital, and therefore an **indigent** capital,” and that wages are the unique “interest” of this kind of capital.⁴⁸ In Marx’s view at this time, bourgeois society has unnaturally caused men to mutate into “**workers**,” or in other words, an alienated commodity-person who is with capital in the competition of trade. “The **value** of the worker as capital rises according to demand and supply, and **physically** too his **existence**, his **life**, was and is looked upon as a supply of a **commodity** like any other.”⁴⁹ *It was not yet possible for Marx to correctly understand that the transition of workers from farmer to worker is a historical advance; neither could he understand that workers in relations of exchange in the economy of bourgeois society are not commodities, because it is only the commodity of labor force that*

⁴⁵*ibid.*, pp. 381–382 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 110–111).

⁴⁶*ibid.*, pp. 381–382 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 110–111).

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 424 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 138).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. 376 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 104).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 376 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 104).

is exchange with capital, and wages are simply the value of labor-force. At this point in time, Marx continues to hold to the conclusion of Sismondi and Hess that political economy is a field of study opposed to humanity. This is because it is not concerned with “the workingman, insofar as he happens to be outside this labor relationship.” He continues: “Production does not simply produce man as a **commodity**, the **human commodity**, man in the role of **commodity**; it produces him in keeping with this role as a **mentally** and physically **dehumanised** being.”⁵⁰ At the same time, in this same critical vein Marx sarcastically quips that the “great advance of Ricardo, Mill, etc., on Smith and Say, [was] to declare the **existence** of the human being — the greater or lesser human productivity of the commodity — to be **indifferent** and even **harmful**.”⁵¹ This so-called “advance” was nothing but an advance of material outside of humans, specifically advances in the production and accumulation of wealth. Marx, under the influence of humanist discourse, did not identify this point approvingly. *However, it is important for us to recognize that an admission of this objective advance was precisely the basis of the scientific logic of Marx’s later historical materialism.*

Similarly, expanding this line of thinking, Marx goes on to criticize the two “great achievements” of English economics. The first of these accomplishments was the “elevation of **labor** to the position of the **sole** principle of political economy.”⁵² This theory primarily focuses on explaining the inverse proportional relationship between wages and capital interest; Marx believes that it reveals the fundamental opposition between labor and capital. *At this point we begin to find a large number of references to the concept of labor — “modern labor,” “abstract labor,” and “accumulated labor” — but in Marx’s eyes, these are all **concepts that belong to political economy**. Marx did not immediately realize the deeper significance of political economy’s elevation of labor to its “sole principal” (labor theory of value). The first significant point was that labor thus becomes the general “one” (the socialized abstract labor that Marx later discovered in Grundrisse) was actually an objective product of modern large-scale industry. The second significant point was that this theoretical standard could be flipped around and used to directly refute bourgeois society from economic reality. In fact, Ricardian socialism (“the opposition of the proletariat”) was already accomplishing this.*⁵³

An interesting point appears in Marx’s discussion of the second point in an explanatory section to which he pays little attention. Marx indicates that the second great achievement of English political economy is that it “declared rent of land to be the difference in the interest yielded by the worst and the best land under cultivation,” this “transforms the landowner into an ordinary, prosaic capitalist, and thus simplify and sharpen the contradiction [between capital and labour] and hastens its resolution.”⁵⁴ This objective progression is actually the

⁵⁰Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 376 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 104).

⁵¹*ibid.*, p. 377 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 105).

⁵²*ibid.*, p. 377 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 105).

⁵³Refer to chapter 5.2 on page 269 of this book.

⁵⁴Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 378 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 106).

victory of the bourgeois class over feudalism, as well as the victory of industry, production, and movable property over agriculture, land, and immovable property. This is much more profound than the commentary on rent in the third column of 1–1. More importantly, Marx remarks the “historical distinction” between industry and agriculture, and between movable and immovable property. This can be seen in several theoretical points that Marx makes. First, in industry, labor is “**indifferent**” to its own content, with a completely independent existence separate from all other existence. Unlike the particular form of concrete labor that depends on immovable property (land), this new labor obtains liberty for itself, becoming an “abstract” form in industrial production. *Marx had not yet realized that the theoretical “abstract” of political economists such as Smith and Ricardo was, in fact, the logical reflection of the objective historical “abstract.” Marx did not comprehend this point until he wrote Grundrisse.* Second, Marx explains how “liberated **industry**, industry constituted for itself as such, and **liberated capital**, are the necessary **development** of labor.” This is because industrial capital formed from the development of free labor and objective “accumulation” is fundamentally distinct from past “immovable property” — this is continuously changing and flowing wealth, or, in other words, movable property. Later we will specifically discuss this very significant concept of “movable property.” Third, “The power of industry over its opposite is at once revealed in the emergence of **agriculture** as a real industry.”⁵⁵

Therefore we can see that Marx is here reproducing the self-confirming proofs of classical economists rather than presenting the scientific results of his research on historical and actual economic conditions. As such, it was still impossible for him to understanding the specific mechanisms and laws that governed this objective progression.

However, we truly can see that Marx is already using a **historical** perspective to judge the relationship between industrial capitalists and landowners. Marx objectively observes the transition of slaves to indentured servants, of landowners to capitalists, and of the old feudal system to the bourgeois social system. This perspective is completely different from his previous theoretical judgment that workers are dehumanized commodities. At this moment, Marx maintains a position of historical criticism, focusing on the antagonism between capitalists and landowners. In a certain sense, Marx concedes the objective advancement of bourgeois society over feudalism. He writes:

The **real** course of development (to be inserted at this point) results in the necessary victory of the **capitalist** over the **landowner** — that is to say, of developed over undeveloped, immature private property — just as in general, movement must triumph over immobility; open, self-conscious baseness over hidden, unconscious baseness; **cupidity** over **self-indulgence**; the avowedly restless, adroit self-interest of **enlightenment** over the parochial, worldly-wise, respectable, idle and fantastic **self-interest of superstition**; and **money** over the other forms of private property.⁵⁶

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. 379 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 107).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 381 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 110).

This paragraph of text contains a great deal of important content that is deserving of our close analysis. The most critical of these theoretical points is one we have already identified: the fact that industrial production, and freely acting workers/capital (movable property) is the essential quality of the production of bourgeois society.

According to my understanding, this is the first emergence of Marx's objective logic rooted in reality that confronted social history. This is also the context of the **first formation of the unconscious opposition of the dual logics** of the *1844 Manuscript*. I have discovered that the closer Marx comes to approaching the theoretical logic of political economy, the clearer this objective logic becomes. *I am different from Professor Sun Bokui in that he derives this objective logic from labor alienation.* Although Marx's dominant theoretical logic at this time is still the discourse of humanist criticism, this unconscious, objective logic indeed represents a **new, general refutation** of political economy. Looking at this from a deeper level of the text, this refutation was inevitably a self-refutation. Of course, unlike the third notebook, the emergence of this objective logic is primarily expressed as a reiteration of the historical nature of the social materialism of classical economics.

Next, Marx begins to concentrate on reporting the viewpoint of Smith and other political economists on "movable property." **Movable property** is an extremely important historical concept that Marx comprehended in his study of economics. This is because movable property, identified first by Petty, is social wealth created by industrial labor that is distinct from natural wealth (such as immovable land and natural resources). Marx here realizes the enormous change to bourgeois society brought about by "movable property." For Marx, political economists believe that capital, as the essence of bourgeois society, is movable property: "Movable property, for its part, points to the miracles of industry and progress. It is the child of modern times, whose legitimate, native-born son it is." He then goes on to explain why this is the case:

Landed property in its distinction from capital is private property — capital — still afflicted with **local** and political prejudices; it is capital which has not yet extricated itself from its entanglement with the world and found the form proper to itself — capital **not yet fully developed**. It must achieve its abstract, that is, its **pure**, expression in the course of its **cosmogony**.⁵⁷

Dispensing with such metaphysical ideas as "not fully developed capital," this passage explains the narrow localism of agricultural production established on the land, as well as the dependence of this kind of production on the natural world ("entanglement with the world"). Unlike this kind of production is the **global** and **abstract** nature of the production of bourgeois society. "Global" refers to the expansion of moving capital beyond local areas, and "abstract" refers to the non-natural nature of production, as well as the dynamism of the subject of human labor. I do not believe that Marx yet understood the deep scientific connotations

⁵⁷Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 381 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 110).

of this viewpoint. *This understanding would not come until after 1845, with The German Ideology and then again with the Communist Manifesto.*

I have discovered that Marx begins here to very conservatively identify the fact that the economic development of bourgeois society led to the advancement of society. Therefore, Marx specifically cites two “claims” of movable property. First, “it claims to have obtained political freedom for everybody; to have loosed the chains which fettered civil society; to have linked together different worlds; to have created trade promoting friendship between the peoples; to have created pure morality and a pleasant culture; to have given the people civilised needs in place of their crude wants, and the means of satisfying them.”⁵⁸ Second, “its civilised victory has discovered and made human labor the source of wealth in place of the dead thing.”⁵⁹ Relative to the introduction in *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx now has a new foundation for his understanding of the historical advancement (“political liberation”) of bourgeois society; this is that objective social economic development is what determines the liberation of man. *This is the social materialist thinking that we have already explained existed in classical economics theories. Marx later profoundly understood that there had been history for the bourgeois class but not for bourgeois society.* Unfortunately, Marx did not confirm this logical line of thinking in a philosophical at this time. On the contrary, this theoretical point unconsciously existed in classical economics. *I have already pointed out that this is the true starting point for historical materialism.* This is also the important foundation for what we will discuss below, namely the second kind of objective theoretical logic that unconsciously came to distinguish Marx’s thinking from humanist logic in the third notebook.

Unfortunately, Marx at this point passes right by this line of thinking without remarking it.

3.3.2 A general appraisal of the third notebook

It is important to note that of the three notebooks that make up the *1844 Manuscript*, there is only one primary theoretical section and that is the second notebook. The first notebook is only a preliminary identification, one that established a **methodological premise and standard of critique**; the third notebook provides additional information, organization, and correction to the second. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the content of the second notebook has been lost. This has doomed us to never fully understand this text.

In terms of the nature of the text, the third notebook is not a systematic theoretical document, but can rather be thought of as the record of a thought experiment. As such, it appears to be closer to Marx’s true thinking at this time. The bulk of the third notebook is made up of additional notes and thoughts added to the second notebook. It is written in the form of three “interpolations.” These three interpolations are basically philosophical expositions, including added content on demand, division of labor, money, and other economic philosophical

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 380 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 109).

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 381 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 110).

topics. The first interpolation expands on the theoretical thinking at the end of the second notebook. The second interpolation includes brief additional points. The third interpolation makes up the bulk of the third notebook; its content includes Marx's basic views on communism. Marx uses Arabic numerals (1–7) to divide each interpolation into subsections and explain each issue in more detail. In the sixth subsection, Marx suddenly begins an all-out criticism of Hegel, which is broken up in two places by the seventh subsection (which deals with questions of the division of labor and demand, etc.). On page 38 of the third notebook, Marx writes the preface to the entire manuscript. The manuscript finally ends in the middle of a discussion of money.

Before we begin a detailed discussion of the specific content of the third notebook, there are a few issues to which we must pay particular attention. The most important of these is the issue of **dual lines of logical thinking** in Marx's economic philosophical discussion, an issue we brought up earlier. In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectics*, I pointed out that in the logical development of the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx primarily criticized the phenomenon of labor alienation and all oppression of the human subject (workers) in the economic process of bourgeois society according to his humanist logic. Marx revealed the various illogical elements of bourgeois society, but as he delved deeper into the processes of economic phenomena and approached economic reality, he began to experience an unconscious shift in theoretical logic; that is to say, Marx began to abandon the humanist line of thinking rooted in *a priori* logic and instead began to root his arguments in reality, on the true foundation of the development of social history. Just as metal unconsciously gravitates towards a magnet, on many theoretical points Marx began to unconsciously gravitate towards his philosophical revolution and first great discovery: historical materialism. In a general sense, this identification is correct. However, the actual textual evidence demonstrates that this complex, contradictory developmental process primarily took place in the writing of the **second and third notebooks**. What we saw in the existing fragments of the second notebook was a new possibility; in the first interpolation of the third notebook, Marx once again uses a political economy line of thinking to critically explain the advancement of actual history from agricultural civilizations to an industrial societies. At the same time, he clearly saw the immediate expression of this objective advancement within political economy.⁶⁰ This led to a new historical viewpoint: an **objective logic based in the laws of actual social progress**. However, just as I explained earlier, this was not an autonomous logic that Marx decided on himself, but was rather the social materialism of political economy that Marx criticized in the first notebook!

As has already been discussed, in the first section of the first notebook (including the primary portion of *Paris Notes*), Marx neglects the methods and viewpoints based on objective reality and connected to economics study at the same time as he engages in political refutation. In the economic philosophical discussion of the second and third notebooks, things that had been refuted at first somehow rise

⁶⁰Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," pp. 383–386 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," pp. 112–116).

up out of economic facts to reappear in the text, almost a logical line of thinking that is almost the same as the humanist alienation conception of history. While social materialism is only implied in Marx's refutation of political economy and Engels/Proudhon's socialist critiques, in the second and third notebooks, Marx, in a new sense, reaffirms this important viewpoint based in historical reality. *It is evident that in Marx's early economics research, Marx's investigations of the social materialist methodology and objective line of thinking of classical economics had experienced a huge zig-zag.* Relative to the dominant humanist alienation conception of history that makes up the bulk of Marx's theoretical work in this manuscript, **this new logical line of thinking truly formed the scientific beginning of Marx's move towards historical materialism.** This important theoretical growing point is not Feuerbach's natural materialism that traditional scholars understand, but rather the social materialism of classical economics. This once again proves that the theoretical source of Marx's historical materialism is not Feuerbach's philosophy, but rather classical economics! This is an extremely important theoretical correction.

3.3.3 Actual history in economics

In the first interpolation, Marx makes the note "Re. p. 36," indicating that the text was to be inserted onto page 36 of the second notebook. In theory, if we conform rigidly to the logical ordering of the text, then this text should come before the fragments of notebook two that we analyzed previously. However, we should not eliminate the possibility that Marx's writing is demonstrating a new line of thinking here. It is my opinion that the first interpolation of the third notebook was a theoretical reflection and expansion on his ideas as he finished the second notebook. Here he once again uses the logic of political economy to critically explain how actual history had gradually progressed from agricultural civilizations to industrial societies. Marx also clearly discovered that the immediate expression of this advancement in political economy. This was undoubtedly what led to a new view of history, namely **an objective logic based on the actual laws of social development.** Just as we have already discussed, this was not an autonomous logic that Marx recognized himself, but was rather implied within the logic of political economy's social materialism.

At the beginning of the first interpolation, Marx identifies the new subjective nature of bourgeois society's private property, which is the essence of labor. "The **subjective essence** of private property — **private property** as activity for itself as **subject**, as **person** — is **labor.**"⁶¹ Marx correctly points out that Adam Smith's political economy, in its acknowledgement of **labor** as its principle and in not viewing private property as a mere **condition** external to man is a product of modern industry.⁶² Marx profoundly differentiates between the monetary system, which advocates the objective essence of wealth, and the mercantilist fetishisms on the one hand, and the "enlightened essence" of Smith, Ricardo, and others on the

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 383 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 112).

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 383–384 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 113).

other hand. The “enlightened political economy” of which Marx speaks is what he would later identify as classical economics. It is in this same vein that Marx agrees with one particular viewpoint the Engels expresses in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, which is that Smith is the “Luther of political economy.” As we have already discussed, the internal logic of Luther’s religious reformation was to internalize faith, religious ideas, and priests into the human subjectivity; the advancement that Smith and others had made in political economy was to transform the essence of wealth from an external object (money) into the human subject (labor). However, Marx insists that since Smith sees labor (the subjective essence of wealth) as an alienated, external activity, therefore labor must necessarily be hostile to man. Marx writes:

Under the semblance of recognizing man, the political economy whose principle is labor rather carries to its logical conclusion the denial of man, since man himself no longer stands in an external relation of tension to the external substance of private property, but has himself become this tense essence of private property. What was previously **being external to oneself** — man’s actual externalization — has merely become the act of externalizing — the process of alienating.⁶³

Marx remarks here that while bourgeois political economy seems to have developed from the recognition of man, his independence and his self-activity, this is a hypocritical semblance. This is because bourgeois society only recognizes the growth of wealth (private property that is the subjective essence of man), in order to break the ethnic and local ties to the land that existed in feudal society, in order to develop “a **cosmopolitan**, universal energy which overthrows every restriction and bond.”⁶⁴ However, the result of this development is the alienation and impoverishment of man himself. This is why Marx declares that bourgeois political economy is “**anti-human!**”⁶⁵ Furthermore, the more political economy develops, this “cynicism” that only focuses on the accumulation of wealth and ignores the survival of humans will only become worse. Marx points out:

There is not merely a relative growth in the **cynicism** of political economy from Smith through Say to Ricardo, Mill, etc., inasmuch as the implications of **industry** appear more developed and more contradictory in the eyes of the last-named; these later economists also advance in a positive sense constantly and consciously further than their predecessors in their estrangement from man. They do so, however, **only** because their science develops more consistently and truthfully.⁶⁶

This is obviously an unconscious affirmation of Engels’ declaration that Ricardo was more guilty than Smith and that McCulloch and Mill were more guilty than Ricardo, which he made in *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*.

⁶³Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 384 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 113).

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 384 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 113).

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 384 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 113).

⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 384 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 113).

I believe that Marx's analysis here contains a few problems. This is because he is using the opposite logic of the development of the productive forces of large-scale industry to observe bourgeois social reality. This prevents him from correctly understanding that, relative to feudal ownership, bourgeois society implies a true historical liberation for man; this liberation is founded on the great development of the material productive forces of large-scale industry. Marx incorrectly equates "industry" with bourgeois society, which is why Marx writes, "far from refuting it, the ruptured **world of industry** confirms their **self-ruptured** principle."⁶⁷ *It was not until after 1845 that Marx differentiated between productive forces and relations of production; then he finally realized that industry is only a historical stage in the development of productive forces, thus leading to his scientific criticism of bourgeois society's relations of production. After the 1850s, Marx finally moved to the position of great capitalist industrial civilization affirmed by Ricardo.*

Next Marx moves to a historical analysis of political economy. This is first specific analysis that Marx conducts of the history of bourgeois political economy. Although Marx had not yet formally differentiated between classical economics and vulgar economics, his understanding had already attained a remarkable level of depth. Here Marx comes under the influence of the historical analyses of Smith and McCulloch, first remarking the historical place of the physiocrats. He sees Quesnay's theories as a "transition from mercantilism to Adam Smith." The mercantilism that had existed before the physiocrats viewed precious metals as the manifestation of wealth, and as such was still a form of "immediate objective wealth." For Quesnay, on the other hand, "transferred the subjective essence of wealth to labor" (this is the first appearance of the concept of the subjective essence of wealth, which we have discussed many times previously). Only through labor and cultivation does land exist for **man**. However, at the same time, the physiocrats declare that agriculture is the "**only productive** labor... [it] is not yet grasped in its generality and abstraction: it is still bound to a particular **natural element as its matter**, and it is therefore only recognized in a **particular mode of existence determined by nature**." Marx goes on to point out that Smith's economics take "the necessary step forward in revealing the **general nature** of wealth and hence in the raising up of **labour** in its total absoluteness (i. e., its abstraction) as the **principle**."⁶⁸ This is because "**agriculture**, from the economic point of view does not differ from any other industry; and the **essence** of wealth, therefore, is not a **specific** form of labour bound to a particular element — a particular expression of labor — but **labor in general**."⁶⁹ *The "general labor" that Marx speaks of here is different from the "labor in general" that he discusses in Grundrisse.* Here Marx answers the question he posed himself in the first part of the first notebook: "What in the evolution of mankind is the meaning of this reduction of the greater part of mankind to abstract labour?"⁷⁰ Marx's answer is:

⁶⁷*ibid.*, p. 384 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 114).

⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 385 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 115).

⁶⁹*ibid.*, p. 385 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 115).

⁷⁰*ibid.*, p. 333 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 56).

All wealth has become **industrial** wealth, the **wealth** of **labour**, and **industry** is accomplished labour, just as the **factory system** is the perfected essence of **industry**, that is of labour, and just as **industrial capital** is the accomplished objective form of private property... We can now see how it is only at this point that private property can complete its dominion over man and become, in its most general form, a world-historical power.⁷¹

This viewpoint is not identical to the viewpoint expressed in the second notebook, but rather expressed an actual philosophical advance in Marx's economics research.

In the second interpolation, Marx writes "Re. p. XXXIX." This portion of the manuscript lays out Marx's **goals**. The content is no longer economic, but directly philosophical. However, we can still see the influence that economics had on Marx. In order to effectively express his own standpoint, Marx had to first evaluate the existing criticisms of bourgeois society, as well as the various other communist theories. Using these as a frame of reference, he was able to reflect his basic thoughts on transcendence/alienation and the liberation of mankind.

In the first paragraph of this page, we actually return to the political economic "facts" of the first manuscript; this is an analysis of the abstract opposition between the bourgeois and proletariat classes from the **perspective of allocation of resources**, specifically the problem of the unfair allocation of private property. In discussing this viewpoint, Marx writes, "so long as it is not comprehended as the antithesis of **labor and capital**, [it] still remains an indifferent antithesis, not grasped in its **active connection**, in its **internal** relation, not yet grasped as a **contradiction**."⁷² This is a crucial sentence. In essence, it outlines young Marx's unique philosophical logic, as well as its divergence from all the other communist and socialist viewpoints of the time. These viewpoints were largely unable to move beyond a critique of bourgeois society from under the premise of the economic realities of bourgeois society.

3.3.4 Philosophical Communism

The third interpolation is basically a discussion of philosophical communism, including a critique of the methodology of Hegel's philosophy, as well as an economic philosophical discussion of demand, division of labor, and money.

Under the note "Re the same page," Marx concretely identifies his views on other forms of communism and socialism, beginning to explain his own revolutionary standpoint. Marx summarizes these other forms of communism and socialism, writing, "The transcendence of self-estrangement follows the same course as self-estrangement."⁷³ In other words, Marx believed that these radical philosophical trends of thought simply reflected the opposing side of the same body as private property. Marx believed that communism viewed relations of private property

⁷¹Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 386 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," pp. 115–116).

⁷²*ibid.*, p. 386 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 117).

⁷³*ibid.*, p. 387 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 117).

through the **universality** of private property — put vulgarly, this meant that everyone should become a capitalist.⁷⁴ Marx first lists progressive socialist ideas, including Proudhon (annulled capital, the objective aspect of private property), Fourier (idealized agricultural labor), Saint-Simon (idealized industrial labor) and the four characteristics of communism, emphasizing this last criticism of bourgeois society.

Marx next uses Arabic numerals to subdivide his text and provide a more detailed explanation of this last point.

The first subsection explains the earliest form of communism. Marx believes that this form of communism is “only a **generalisation** and **consummation** of relations of private property.”⁷⁵ Its form is two-fold. The first of these is crude, primitive communism. *In an 1843 letter to Ruge (Kreuznach, September 1843), Marx calls this form of communism “only a special expression of the humanistic principle, an expression which is still infected by its antithesis — the private system.”*⁷⁶ More specifically, there are four characteristics of this form of communism: 1) the sole purpose of life and existence is direct, physical **possession** [of material]; 2) estranged labor becomes the universal form of existence, because “category of the **worker** is not done away with, but extended to all men”; 3) private property is not truly annulled, but rather redistributed equitably. Therefore, “The relationship of private property persists as the relationship of the community to the world of things”; Finally is communal marriage, which is the formal transformation of women from private property to public property.⁷⁷

The second subsection identifies the second form of communism, which is the establishment of communism using the power of the state or the realization of communism through the abolition of the state. Marx does not delve very deeply into his analysis of this form of communism. Marx believes that although these two forms of communism understand themselves as being the transcendence of self-estrangement and therefore the reintegration or return of man to himself, they have not yet escaped a passive understanding of private property and therefore cannot truly understand the essence of private property.

In the third subsection, Marx defines his own conception of communism:

Communism as the **positive** transcendence of **private property** as **human self-estrangement**, and therefore as the real **appropriation** of the **human** essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a **social** (i. e., human) being — a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the **genuine** resolution of the conflict between man and nature and

⁷⁴*ibid.*, p. 387 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 117).

⁷⁵*ibid.*, p. 387 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 117).

⁷⁶Karl Marx an Arnold Ruge in Paris, Kreuznach, September 1843 September 1843, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/1, p. 55 (Chinese transl.: M zhi R. 1843 nian 9 yue yu Keluocinahe, p. 416).

⁷⁷Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 387 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 118).

between man and man — the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.⁷⁸

This is a very famous exposition of Marx's ideas. Unlike the previous forms of communism, Marx believed that it was necessary to actively deny and transcend the self-estrangement of man (private property). The passive form of communism deepened alienation by attempting to ensure that people would fairly receive the results of alienation (everyone becomes a capitalist). Marx, on the other hand, believed in preserving all the wealth of society while at the same time returning it to man himself — the return of man from a self-estranged state to being a "**social being**." According to our earlier discussion of *Notes on Mill*, the emergence of Marx's social concept was always connected to the question of man's **species-relationships**. I have remarked that the category of "society" is a central qualification that appears again in Marx's thinking. This is distinct from the objectified and alienated social interest that is in opposition to man's interest (which Marx describes in the first section of the first notebook),⁷⁹ and is similar or approaches the un-estranged, true "species" which Marx describes in the second section of the first notebook.⁸⁰ Marx discusses these differences in the last two questions of the first notebook in his use of the word "social:" "true human property or **social** property." In *Notes on Mill*, on the other hand, Marx's use of the concept "social" still emerges in a Feuerbachian context. Here we see that Marx has attained a new level of understanding. The importance of this **social qualification** can be seen in Marx's elevation of it to resolve the **six great contradictions of the riddle of history**.

Before we begin an analysis of Marx's "social" qualification, we need to point out another important shift in his thinking; this change is the premise and origin for our understanding of Marx's social qualification. I have discovered that through the philosophical criticism of political economy in the second notebook, Marx's thinking is undergoing an unconscious shift, for the first time placing the foundation of revolution on the actual development of history rather than simply opposing historical reality with an **abstract essence that ought to exist** (value postulate). Marx writes that communism is the **result of history**: "The entire movement of history, just as its [communism's] **actual** act of genesis — the birth act of its empirical existence — is, therefore, for its thinking consciousness the **comprehended** and **known** process of its **becoming**."⁸¹ It is important to note the relation between this viewpoint and Hegel's **teleology** in which the Absolute Idea realizes itself in history. The next sentence is extremely important, revealing the true starting point of Marx's new worldview and scientific socialism: "It is easy

⁷⁸Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 389 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 120).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, p. 332 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 54).

⁸⁰*ibid.*, pp. 368–371 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," pp. 95–98).

⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 389 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 120).

to see that the entire revolutionary movement necessarily finds both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of **private property** — more precisely, in that of the economy.”⁸² This point is obviously different from the humanist logic in the second section of the first notebook. I believe that as soon as Marx grasped this logical contradiction, he necessarily transcended and ended the writing of this manuscript.

As we have already discussed above, in the logical progression of the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx consistently used humanist logic to criticize the phenomenon of labor alienation in the economic process of bourgeois society. However, the closer he approached economic reality, the more he began to unconsciously base his analysis in reality, in the historical development of society. The text we have just analyzed is a good example of this type of situation. In the concrete analysis that follows, Marx unconsciously brings up this point of view: the production of material means is the most basic form of human production (“the realization or reality of man”), while “Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only **particular** modes of production, and fall under its general law.”⁸³ The “general law of production” that Marx discusses here is obviously not the “species-essence of man,” but rather refers to the objective principles that were already identified and affirmed by economics. This is a new and extremely important theoretical growing point, a new theoretical philosophical logic. Of course this line of thinking was, in general, still influenced by a humanist alienation conception of history, but it had already begun to become more clear and distinct as Marx deepened his understanding of economics.

3.3.5 Young Marx’s concept of society

We turn now to a discussion of the concept of society that Marx uses here. I believe that the most important concepts in the third notebook are **society** and **social man**. This is an area that has been completely ignored by prior research. Marx often directly equates this qualification as “human social existence” (not to be confused with alienated and estranged “worker social existence”).

From a historical context, Marx’s qualification of society here is related to Hegel’s philosophy, because it approaches the non-alienated, true species-existence that opposes state and law of civil society. Marx’s qualification is also related to Feuerbach’s concept of true social relations and species-essence. More importantly, it is also related to the concept in French and German socialism of idealized “society,” as opposed to bourgeois society, which took individuals as its basic unit. From a theoretical context, we begin to see an obvious duality in Marx’s understanding of man’s species-essence. The first aspect is **true, free activity of the individual subject**, and the second is the **true, unalienated social relationship between humans**. The first aspect is emphasized in Marx’s discussion of the theory of labor alienation in the second part of the first notebook, while the second is discussed in Marx’s treatment of the transcendence of alienation. This indicates

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 389 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 120–121).

⁸³*ibid.*, p. 390 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 121).

an important shift in Marx's theoretical direction. I have observed that in Hess' theory of economic alienation in *On the Essence of Money*, he replaces the concept of the alienation of free, autonomous activity in *The Philosophy of the Act* with the concept of the alienation of the **species-essence of intercourse**. In Notes on Mill, *Marx also approaches the concept of society from this perspective*. After careful analysis, we find that in 1–2, Marx's concept of "social man" has a different meaning.

We ought to be clear as to which meaning of "social man" Marx was using in his answer to the "riddle of history." Why is transcended alienation social existence? Why is it the unity of man and nature? What is the meaning of "nature" in this case? According to my understanding, "nature" here refers to something that is **originally true**, and is not a simple reference to the natural world of things. Marx believed that "The positive transcendence of **private property** as the appropriation of **human** life, is the positive transcendence of all estrangement — that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his **human**, i. e., **social**, existence."⁸⁴ Private property is the estrangement of the species essence of man, and the concepts of religion and the state are the reflection of this estrangement. **Abolishing the estrangement of the species is a return to the species-relations jointly established between humans; this is the true social existence of mankind.** This social existence is the primary confirmation that Marx offers at this time for communist revolution.

In Marx's opinion, communism is the active transcendence of private property, which is to say, it transcends alienation while not denying objectified labor. Because the objective world is the objectification of man's essence, re-appropriating the objective world is the reintegration of the essence that man had lost for only a time. Of course, this appropriation is no longer the one-sided appropriation of the individual, but rather social(ist) appropriation using a "comprehensive method;" the true, complete appropriation of the whole essence of man (not the selfish appropriation and dominance under the rule of private property). At the same time, communism is the process by which the natural world becomes human. Through the productive activity of men, the natural world comes to belong completely to humans, and only as social beings can people truly appropriate nature. Marx writes:

Thus the **social** character is the general character of the whole movement: **just as** society itself produces **man as man**, so is society **produced** by him. Activity and enjoyment, both in their content and in their **mode of existence**, are social: **social** activity and **social** enjoyment. The **human** aspect of nature exists only for **social** man; for only then does nature exist for him as a **bond** with man — as his existence for the other and the other's existence for him — and as the life-element of human reality. Only then does nature exist as the **foundation** of his own **human** existence. Only here has what is to him his **natural** existence become his **human** existence, and nature become man for

⁸⁴Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 390 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 121).

him. Thus **society** is the complete unity of man with nature — the true resurrection of nature — the consistent naturalism of man and the consistent humanism of nature.⁸⁵

I believe that this is Marx's first attempt at proving the historical necessity of socialism and communism using philosophical logic; at the same time, up to today, this is the **most profound philosophical logical proof of socialism and communism**.

Marx next uses an example to explain his thinking:

But also when I am active **scientifically**, etc. — an activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others — then my activity is **social**, because I perform it as a **man**. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my **own** existence **is** social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being.⁸⁶

This is because, “my **general** consciousness is only the **theoretical** shape of that of which the **living** shape is the **real** community, the social fabric, although at the present day **general** consciousness is an abstraction from real life and as such confronts it with hostility. The **activity** of my general consciousness, as an activity, is therefore also my **theoretical** existence as a social being.”⁸⁷ In Marx's opinion, social existence had become the most important form of human existence, though the bourgeois private system had inverted this social existence, opposing it to individual life, a completely abstract thing forced upon individuals. This is an anti-human alienation of society in general.

Therefore, “we must avoid postulating ‘society’ again as an abstraction vis-à-vis the individual. The individual **is the social being**. His manifestations of life — even if they may not appear in the direct form of **communal** manifestations of life carried out in association with others — are therefore an expression and confirmation of **social life**.”⁸⁸ Society, man's unalienated species-essence relations, is Marx's idealized assumption of inter-human relations. He believes at this time that **free, autonomous labor is the essence of man, and society is the “communal” existence of man's species-relations**. As such, he necessarily opposes bourgeois society, upholding instead the conscious, social existence for itself:

In his **consciousness of species** man confirms his real **social life** and simply repeats his real existence in thought, just as conversely the being of the species confirms itself in species consciousness and exists for itself in its generality as a thinking being.

Man, much as he may therefore be a **particular** individual (and it is precisely his particularity which makes him an individual, and a real **individual** social being), is just as much the **totality** — the ideal totality

⁸⁵*ibid.*, pp. 390–391 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 121–122).

⁸⁶*ibid.*, p. 391 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 122).

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 391 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 122).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 391 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 122–123).

— the subjective existence of imagined and experienced society for itself; just as he exists also in the real world both as awareness and real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of human manifestation of life.⁸⁹

In the fourth subsection, Marx once again returns to a criticism of human living conditions under the restrictions of private property, thus reevaluating his socialist conclusions. Under the rule of private property, “man becomes **objective** for himself and at the same time becomes to himself a strange and inhuman object; just as it expresses the fact that the manifestation of his life is the alienation of his life, that his realisation is his loss of reality, is an **alien** reality.”⁹⁰ Here Marx concentrates on the one-sidedness of man under the rule of private property: “Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only **ours** when we have it — when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc., — in short, when it is **used** by us,” therefore, “in the place of **all** physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer estrangement of **all** these senses, the sense of **having**. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yield his inner wealth to the outer world.”⁹¹ Marx believed that man must positively transcend the private system, writing:

The **perceptible** appropriation for and by man of the human essence and of human life, of objective man, of human **achievements** should not be conceived merely in the sense of **immediate**, one-sided **enjoyment**, merely in the sense of **possessing**, of **having**. Man appropriates his comprehensive essence in a comprehensive manner, that is to say, as a whole man.⁹²

In Marx’s opinion, this is the “the complete **emancipation** of all human senses and qualities,” because these senses and qualities “have become, subjectively and objectively, **human**.” He continues: “Man does not lose himself in his object only when the object becomes for him a *human* object or objective man. This is possible only when the object becomes for him a **social** object, he himself for himself a social being, just as society becomes a being for him in this object.”⁹³ In other words, man’s subject and matching object must both become his social existence; it cannot simply be composed of man’s one-sided subject and a natural object that has “mere **utility**.” To explain this point, Marx uses another example: “look[ing] at this in its subjective aspect, only music awakens in man the sense of music, and the most beautiful music has **no** sense for the unmusical ear... **human** sense, the human nature of the senses, comes to be by virtue of **its** object, by

⁸⁹Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” pp. 391–392 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 123).

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 392 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 123).

⁹¹*ibid.*, pp. 392–393 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 124).

⁹²*ibid.*, p. 392 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 123).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 393 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 125).

virtue of **humanized** nature. The **forming** of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present.”⁹⁴

Here we notice that Marx has begun to admit that the movement of private property which he criticizes, as an “**established** society produces man in this entire richness of his being produces the **rich** man **profoundly endowed with all the senses** — as its enduring reality.”⁹⁵ Please note that the word “society” here does not refer to the ideal, true existence (the “should”) that Marx discussed previously, but rather refers to objective reality (the “is”) of bourgeois society. Based on this point, Marx continues, “the history of **industry** and the established **objective** existence of industry are the **open** book of **man’s essential powers**.”⁹⁶ If the history of industry is a “book” on man’s essence, then the human essence is thus **historically** opened. Therefore, continuing in this line of logic, Marx could not help but discover that “natural science has invaded and transformed human life all the more **practically** through the medium of industry, and has prepared human emancipation,” while at the same time, “**Industry** is the **actual**, historical relationship of nature, and therefore of natural science, to man.”⁹⁷ The latter reference to industry already carries the connotation of “general,” and thus Marx comes to the following conclusion:

If, therefore, industry is conceived as the **exoteric** revelation of man’s **essential powers**, we also gain an understanding of the human essence of nature or the natural essence of man. In consequence, natural science will lose its abstractly material — or rather, its idealistic — tendency, and will become the basis of **human** science, as it has already become — albeit in an estranged form — the basis of actual human life, and to assume **one** basis for life and a different basis for **science** is as a matter of course a lie.⁹⁸

The science of which Marx speaks here is not natural science in general, but rather “natural science” in Say’s terms: political economy! This is, without a doubt, a much more profound theoretical criticism.

It is evident that although Marx’s words appear to be humanist, in reality they reflect a viewpoint outside of the humanism that dominates most of the manuscript. Standing before a new philosophical window, Marx writes: “the resolution of the **theoretical** antitheses is **only** possible in a **practical** way, by virtue of the practical energy of man. Their resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of understanding, but a **real** problem of life.”⁹⁹ This new understanding nearly opens a new realm of philosophical thinking: how to find a real way to objectively abolish labor alienation and private property. “Industry” here refers to the reality of bourgeois social production in classical political economy; this objective logic spontaneously grew into Marx’s philosophical thinking in the midst of

⁹⁴*ibid.*, p. 394 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 125–126).

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 394 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 126–127).

⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 395 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 127).

⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 396 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 128).

⁹⁸*ibid.*, p. 396 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 128).

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 395 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 127).

his economics research. At the same time, the step from concrete labor to “labor” in general was another step towards practical human material activity; this would be a more difficult revolutionary task. *Not long after this, after Marx had already begun the second phase of his economics research in 1845, and particularly in the writing of Brussels Notes and On List, Marx’s groundbreaking theses — Theses on Feuerbach — comprehensively realized a new Gestalt shift, to practical materialist logic.*

We have discussed the viewpoints in this section to provide additional proof of the profound textual fact that in Marx’s *1844 Manuscript* there exist two lines of theoretical logic. The first is a humanist phenomenology based on an *a priori*, humanist alienation conception of history (“should”), while the second is an objective logic based on actual material production (practice and industry) that looks back at social history (“is”). The intertwining of these two logics is very obvious at this point in the text. Furthermore, the real historical line of logic began here to gain some advantage, though of course it does not challenge the dominant position of Marx’s humanist logic in the whole manuscript. I have mentioned several times that the former is Marx’s dominant logical framework at this time, while the latter is only an element of refutation in a new theoretical line of thinking. Because these two lines of thinking appear to be so deeply paradoxical, Marx was, as yet, unable to unify the objectively necessary “is” of the latter line of thinking with the evil “is” of the first line of thinking. Therefore I am unable to agree with the French philosopher Althusser in his “epistemological rupture theory” that suggests a simple “rupture” in the development of Marx’s thinking. In fact, the formation of Marx’s scientific worldview also experienced a historical progression. In the *1844 Manuscript* we can clearly see the early stages of this progression.

At the very end of the fifth subsection, Marx identifies the goals of socialism, insofar as they are distinct from communism in general. He writes: “for the socialist man the **entire so-called history of the world** is nothing but the creation of man through human labor,”¹⁰⁰ while, “Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the **actual** phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. **Communism** is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society.”¹⁰¹

3.3.6 Marx’s economic philosophical discussion

In the sixth subsection Marx records his criticism of Hegel’s dialectic; this is the topic of our discussion in this section. We will also consider some of the other questions that Marx raises at the end of the third notebook. After his criticism and discussion of Hegel’s dialectic, Marx returns often to his own economic philosophical discussion. Of course, this time he bases his explanation of all of economic alienation on the economic realities of bourgeois society. Marx primarily focuses

¹⁰⁰Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 398 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 131).

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, pp. 398–399 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 131).

his analysis on three aspects. First, he analyzes demand in the section added before the criticism of Hegel; second, after analyzing Hegel, he analyzes the estrangement of the division of labor under bourgeois social conditions; third, after the “preface,” he adds a discussion of the fact that money is the estrangement of human relations. These are the three concrete expressions of alienated labor in the economic process.

First is the issue of **demand** in economics. Marx points out that in opposition to the abundance of true human needs under conditions of socialism, under the rule of private property, “every person speculates on creating a **new** need in another;” however, this is not to satisfy his needs, but rather “to drive him to fresh sacrifice, to place him in a new dependence and to seduce him into a new mode of **enjoyment** and therefore economic ruin.”¹⁰² Market demand attempts to swindle money from people. In bourgeois production, “every new product represents a new **potentiality** of mutual swindling and mutual plundering... every product is a bait with which to seduce away the other’s very being, his money; every real and possible need is a weakness which will lead the fly to the glue-pot.”¹⁰³ *Marx’s views here on false consumption and the alienation of demand were expanded in the socially critical theories of the Frankfurt School.* Therefore, this type of production was not to satisfy man’s true needs, but rather to “establish over another an **alien** power, so as thereby to find satisfaction of his own selfish need.” This alien power is money, whose purpose in production is exchange. This is power that represses man whose essence is alienated. Marx writes that in this process of production, the substance related to man’s true needs has already disappeared, leaving only an inhuman quantity of productions. “Man becomes ever poorer as man, his need for **money** becomes ever greater.” Because the need to pursue money was created by bourgeois political economy, “the **quantity** of money becomes to an ever greater degree its sole **effective** quality. Just as it reduces everything to its abstract form, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to **quantitative** being. **Excess** and **intemperance** come to be its true norm.” This is a humanist analysis of the alienation of demand in bourgeois society.

At the same time, Marx gives a description of demand in bourgeois society. This is a concrete, dual analysis of workers’ and capitalists’ demand. Marx points out that in 19th century factories, the living conditions of workers were deplorable; they were unable to pay rent, and they eat the worst food (“the worst kind of potatoes”). Marx writes, “It is not only that man has no human needs — even his animal needs cease to exist.”¹⁰⁴ “[The political economist] turns the worker into an insensible being lacking all needs, just as he changes his activity into a pure abstraction from all activity.” The crude needs of workers are the source of the refined needs of the wealthy. To explain this point, Marx discusses the dark “cellar dwellings” in London as well as the extravagant palaces of the rich. This is an empirical analysis of objective reality.

Marx next gives an explanation of the **division of labor**. For Marx, in bourgeois society, “every individual is a totality of needs and only exists for the other person,

¹⁰²*ibid.*, p. 418 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 132).

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p. 419 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 132–133).

¹⁰⁴*ibid.*, p. 420 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 134).

as the other exists for him.” However, the “society” here is not the true human species-existence of which Marx wrote earlier, but is rather the alienated expression of human estrangement. The division of labor is the essence of this “society.” Marx continues:

The **division of labor** is the economic expression of the **social character of labor** within the estrangement. Or, since **labor** is only an expression of human activity within alienation, of the manifestation of life as the alienation of life, the **division of labor**, too, is therefore nothing else but the **estranged, alienated** positing of human activity as a **real activity of the species or as activity of man as a species-being**.¹⁰⁵

Division of labor is the form of the estrangement and alienation of the human activity of human species-activity; this is a humanist, unscientific expression. *In Marx's later German Ideology, this concept of the division of labor, considered under the logic of alienation, became the foundational element of his criticism of reality.* After citing the views of a great number of economists (Smith, Say, Mill, and Skarbek), Marx returns to this point, this time accepting some of the opinions of these economists, specifically that the division of labor and exchange are related. “The **division of labor** and **exchange** are **perceptibly alienated** expressions of human **activity and essential power** as a **species** activity and species power.”¹⁰⁶ Marx is opposed to political economists’ affirmation of the “social character of their science” in terms of the division of labor and exchange, because it is dependent on “unsocial, particular interests.” Marx discusses the issue from outside the realm of economics, and therefore could not have realized that the division of labor is what leads to exchange. Neither could he have understood the different forms of the division of labor (the division of labor in society and the division of labor in work) or the objective meaning of the division of labor in production. *These issues were gradually resolved after The German Ideology.*

Marx’s third point is a discussion of **money**. This is an addition that Marx includes after his “preface,” and appears to be echoing some of his discussion in *Notes on Mill*. The discussion is a philosophical humanist sublimation, and therefore almost completely departs from economics. The beginning and end of this section address the idealized genuine state of man, while the middle discusses alienated for which money is the medium. Marx begins with what he refers to as “passionate ontology.” He lists five points: first, the true method of man’s affirmation is the distinct character of life; second, sensuous affirmation is an affirmation of the independent object; third, insofar as man has human feelings, then the affirmation of the object is also his gratification. These first three points are interconnected, but the fourth is different. Marx writes, “Only through developed industry — i. e., through the medium of private property — does the ontological essence of human passion come into being, in its totality as well as in its humanity; the science of man is therefore itself a product of man’s own practical activity.”¹⁰⁷ This is a

¹⁰⁵Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 429 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 144).

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 433 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 148).

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, p. 434 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 150).

surprising phrase, because it appears as though Marx is proving the necessity of the private system! In his next point, Marx continues, “The meaning of private property — apart from its estrangement — is the **existence of essential objects** for man, both as objects of enjoyment and as objects of activity.”

After writing to this point, Marx changes the subject, returning to to actual bourgeois economic life, this time to sarcastically explain the philosophical essence of money. *This seems to be an expansion of the explanation in Notes on Mill that reveals Marx's humanist discourse.* Marx writes that “Money is the **procurer** between man's need and the object, between his life and his means of life... But **that which** mediates **my** life for me, also **mediates** the existence of other people for me.” After quoting the description of money and gold in Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, Marx gives a further description of the profound meaning to be found in these passages: money is the “alienated power of **mankind**.”¹⁰⁸ “**Money** as the external, universal **medium** and **faculty** (not springing from man as man or from human society as society) for turning an **image into reality** and **reality into a mere image**, transforms the **real essential powers of man and nature** into what are merely abstract notions.”¹⁰⁹ Marx's important viewpoint here is that money is a power that inverts black and white — it is money that has led to the inverted world.¹¹⁰

3.4 Young Marx's Second Critique of Hegel

The sixth subsection of the third notebook is a critique of Hegelian philosophy. Why does Marx suddenly begin criticizing Hegel at the very end of the *1844 Manuscript*? This is an unavoidable theoretical question that is essential to our understanding of the logical structure of the whole manuscript. In past research, most scholars have not moved past non-critical explanations of this phenomenon, claiming that Marx wished to “build a materialist recreation of Hegel's dialectic” and completely agreeing with Marx's theoretical views on Hegel. I am of the opinion that Marx's decision to suddenly turn to a discussion of Hegel after his research on communism was not because of some kind of exoteric philosophical research, but rather to confirm the method of theoretical logic that he employed in writing the *1844 Manuscript*. He would thus be able to differentiate himself from the research context of the German Young Hegelians, as well as all other German and French socialist thinkers. He would then be able to establish a Feuerbachian humanist phenomenology based on the denial of Hegel's idealist phenomenology of the spirit. Marx believed that this line of thinking was the only actual, critical way to avoid the theoretical fallacies that plagued the Young Hegelians.

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 437 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 152).

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, pp. 437–438 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 154).

¹¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 438 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 155).

3.4.1 The long-standing logical fallacies of the Young Hegelians and Feuerbach's critical method

In his “preface,” Marx refers to the sixth subsection as the “last chapter” in the book. In this chapter, Marx attempts to complete some “unfinished business” of the German philosophical world at the time.¹¹¹ This business is explained for us at the beginning of the sixth subsection: “To offer some considerations in regard to the Hegelian dialectic generally and especially its exposition in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and *Science of Logic* and also, the relation (to it) of the modern critical movement.”¹¹² From the text that was actually written, we can see that Marx was here addressing three issues: first, the mistakes of the Young Hegelians in dealing with Hegel’s dialectic; second are the results of a critique based on Feuerbachian philosophy; third is an explanation of how to critically understand Hegel’s dialectic. I have observed that it is the third issue that Marx most desires to resolve, writing that it is an “**apparently formal**, but really **vital** question.” Let us begin with the first two questions.

Marx believed that although Young Hegelians such as Strauss and Bauer attempted to criticize Hegel and “the past,” “so completely was [their] development entangled with the subject-matter — that here prevailed a completely uncritical attitude to the method of criticizing.”¹¹³ The “past” that the Young Hegelians criticized refers to religious theology, as well as the feudal despotism that lurked behind it. However, these philosophers had become entangled in the inverted world they criticized. Although they borrowed the “self-conscious” link from Hegel’s philosophy (insinuating the abstract individual subject called for by the German bourgeoisie) as their theoretical starting point, in terms of methodology they never surpassed Hegel. Marx argued that the “critical” works of Bauer and others, at the most, change Hegel’s method slightly: “These expressions do not even show any verbal divergence from the Hegelian approach, but on the contrary repeat it word for word.”¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, “Idealism... has not expressed the suspicion that the time was ripe for a critical settling of accounts with the mother of Young Hegelianism — the Hegelian dialectic.”¹¹⁵ I do not believe that Marx’s “criticism” of the Young Hegelians here was simply a narrow proof of their falsehood; actually, he was explaining a revolutionary methodology, which was that in criticizing an object, Bauer and others like him had unconsciously fallen into the logical trap set for them by that object. This is because the critical method they use originates from the object itself, so although they refuted and criticized Hegel, this was still based on the “old world” premise on which Hegel’s speculative philosophy was founded. Linking this to our earlier discussion on the third form of discourse in the first notebook, we immediately see that the revolutionary significance of Marx’s critical methodology is basically **leaping out of the confines** of the object

¹¹¹Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 326 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 46).

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 399 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 156).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 399 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 156).

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 399 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 156).

¹¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 157).

of criticism; this is the area in which Marx believes himself to be one step ahead of the other theorists of his day. In terms of the critical logic of this book, Marx only breaks out of the trap of “political economy” (especially in terms of methodology), thus escaping the confines on his worldview, discovering the falseness of the bourgeois political economists’ “facts,” and truly peeling back the outer phenomenon to criticize the inner essence. Through this deep, metaphorical definition, Marx was able to clearly explain the philosophical method of criticism that he wished to affirm.

Later, Marx goes on to point out the transitory link in the logic of his critical method — Feuerbach. The reason that Marx does not mention Proudhon, Hess, or young Engels at this point is because he felt that in terms of philosophical critical logic, their work was not **creative**. In Marx’s opinion at the time, “**Feuerbach** is the only one who has a **serious, critical** attitude to the Hegelian dialectic and who has made genuine discoveries in this field. He is in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy.”¹¹⁶ According to Marx’s identification, Feuerbach “in his *Thesen* in the *Anekdoten* and, in detail, in the *Philosophie der Zukunft* has in principle overthrown the old dialectic and philosophy.”¹¹⁷ According to the line of thinking that we introduced above, it was precisely because Feuerbach was able to fundamentally step away from Hegel’s logical (methodological) framework, effectively criticize Hegel’s way of thinking, overthrow idealism with materialism, and replace abstract God (the Absolute Idea) with the real life of sensuous man, that he was able to attain a new theoretical field of vision and discover a new, real world.

Marx believed that Feuerbach’s “great achievements” were:

“(1) The proof that philosophy is nothing else but religion rendered into thought and expounded by thought, i. e., another form and manner of existence of the estrangement of the essence of man; hence equally to be condemned.”¹¹⁸ The “philosophy” of which Marx writes here is Hegel’s philosophy. As we have previously discussed, the Absolute Idea in Hegel’s philosophy is actually the omnipotent God in Christian theology; therefore, Hegel’s idealism is nothing but a more refined form of religion. Expressed in terms of Feuerbach’s alienation discourse, this idealism is another philosophical theoretical form of existence of the alienation of the essence of God.

“(2) The establishment of **true materialism** and of **real science**, by making the social relationship of ‘man to man’ the basic principle of the theory.”¹¹⁹ In overthrowing the sub-theology of Hegel’s idealism, Feuerbach necessarily moved towards materialism and man. Between the two logical bases of materialism, natural materialism and humanism, Marx emphasized the critical force of the second. Therefore, he focuses on an identification of true inter-human social relations after Feuerbach’s transcendence of alienation. From this discussion we learn that the concept of “society” that Marx uses here is an unnatural “species,” i. e., as differentiated from the Feuerbach’s “silent species,” based on natural existence,

¹¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” pp. 157–158).

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 157).

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 158).

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 400 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 158).

that connects humans together. What Marx emphasizes here is actually a social “species” that exists above the natural species and that connects humans to one another. However, what Marx does not understand here is that this “species” itself is still abstract.

“(3) His opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-supporting positive, positively based on itself.”¹²⁰ Feuerbach’s “third achievement” is more difficult to understand. Because Hegel begins with absolute and unchanging abstract essence (this is a theoretical modification of the absolute essence in Christian theology) that is affirmed through the alienation and sublation (negation of the negative) of the Absolute Idea (substance). Feuerbach, on the other hand, turns Hegel on his head, directly beginning with sensually known things (affirmation): “He annuls the infinite, and posits the actual, sensuous, real, finite, particular (philosophy, annulment of religion and theology).”¹²¹ We must note here, that Marx’s affirmation of those immediate, real, sensuous things that Feuerbach emphasizes is flawed. This is because the economic realities of bourgeois society with which Marx is concerned at this time cannot be immediately grasped through **sensuous things**, and because these things are still expressed in inverted form. Just as we discussed in chapter one, Hegel’s inverted Absolute Abstract corresponds to the inverted real abstract of civil society. Marx was also unable to comprehend this point.

I believe that although Marx has already expressed his desire to maintain a “critical attitude” towards Feuerbach, he did not comprehend the **ahistorical** fundamental mistakes of the humanist logic that supported Feuerbach’s correct materialist standpoint. Thus Marx was unable to perceive the profundity of the historical dialectic that supported Hegel’s incorrect idealism. *In Marx’s later German Ideology, this is how he judges Hegel: “If, like Hegel, one designs such a system for the first time, a system embracing the whole of history and the present-day world in all its scope, one cannot possibly do so without comprehensive, positive knowledge, without great energy and keen insight and without dealing at least in some passages with empirical history.”*¹²² More importantly, Marx was not yet able to delineate and connect Feuerbach’s general materialism and the social materialist logic of political economy. *Comparing Marx’s criticism of the Young Hegelians at this time with his later German Ideology, we will find that there is a great difference between his treatment of this same subject in the two works. The focal point of Marx’s criticism in the 1844 Manuscript is general philosophical idealism, and so his basis is Feuerbach and the emphasis of his thinking is to define the delineation between **materialist philosophers and Hegel’s theories**. The focal point of his criticism in the German Ideology is historical idealism, and so he primarily criticizes Feuerbach, and his emphasis is to explain the **real relation between philosophers and objective economic life**.*

¹²⁰Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 401 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 158).

¹²¹ibid., p. 401 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 158).

¹²²Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 158 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 190).

3.4.2 Two phenomenologies: Uncovering and veiling in Hegel's dialectic

After criticizing the false refutation of the Young Hegelians towards Hegel, he begins to discuss his own views on Hegel. This is the second comprehensive criticism of Hegel that Marx makes, with the other being *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. On the surface Marx focuses on Hegel's dialectic, but actually he is discussing how to restructure Hegel's critical method, which is a ideal **phenomenology** that goes against empirical common sense. "the **critical** form of this in Hegel still uncritical process"¹²³ In fact, as we have already analyzed and defined, phenomenology itself is a profound critical logic of alienation. I have discovered that here Marx is **using Feuerbach's materialist humanist phenomenology to deepen Hegel's idealist phenomenology.**

It is evident that Marx already understands the essential differences between the critical philosophies of Feuerbach and Hegel. Feuerbach attempts to return to this world (direct affirmation) from the other world of religious theology (negation of the negation). This is the process of returning from abstract things to concrete, sensuous substance (the directly perceived, natural, substantive man). Feuerbach's logical development begins in the sensuous, perceivable world, and his critical logic returns from man's inverted, false essence (God) to his true essence (species-relations). This is a humanist phenomenology that re-inverts Hegel's inverted ideal phenomenological logic. Hege's criticism, on the other hand, emphasizes the falseness of the real world. He denies the surety of the senses as a false phenomenon; thus beginning with the ideal essence, he returns to the abstract concrete in reality. The negation of the negation becomes the "true and only positive." In describing Hegel's views on the transcendence of the absolute essence, Marx writes: "[Hegel views it] as the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being, he has only found the **abstract, logical, speculative** expression for the movement of history, which is not yet the **real** history of man as a given subject, but only the **act of creation, the history of the origin** of man."¹²⁴ Marx obviously wants to affirm the life of Feuerbach's substantive man while refuting the inverted, abstract historical activity of Hegel's man that departs from reality. This is the choice that Marx has made between these two critical phenomenologies.

If we were to conduct our observations and assessments of these two phenomenologies using only traditional philosophical interpretive frameworks, then we would naturally see the opposition between Feuerbach the materialist and Hegel the idealist. However, as we enter the economic reality of bourgeois society that Marx faced at the time, the situation becomes dramatically different. This is because the natural (perceivable) materialist viewpoint of Feuerbach's humanist phenomenological criticism is unable to grasp the inverted, reified essence of the economic relations unique to bourgeois society. By limiting one's thinking to sensual reality and material substance, it is ultimately impossible to escape the ideological chains of brougeois fetishisms. Therefore, in reality, Feuerbach's philosophical revolution is **uncritical**. At the same time, although Hegel's inverted

¹²³Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 401 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 159).

¹²⁴*ibid.*, p. 401 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 159).

phenomenology of the spirit is idealist, it is an essential reflection of bourgeois society's inverted actual relations. Compared to Feuerbach, Hegel truly **criticizes** (though, of course, this is an incorrect idealist criticism) the economic reality of bourgeois society. *Marx did not realize this until the advent of his special theory of historical materialism in Grundrisse. This is an extremely complex theoretical question, full of theoretical logical contradictions — it is certainly not as simple as we have imagined in the framework of our traditional philosophical research.*

Next, Marx conducts a comprehensive systematization of Hegel's dialectic. This critique is certainly not based in a restructured Marxist "materialist dialectic," but was rather a theoretical refutation projected from Feuerbach's general materialism, and especially from his humanism. Unlike Marx's first criticism of Hegel that targeted his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Marx's critique at this time begins with *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which, according to Marx, is the "true point of origin and the secret of the Hegelian philosophy." Furthermore, unlike Marx's first criticism of Hegel that was based on a materialist philosophical foundation, this time he focuses on Hegel's critical method. Marx begins this critique by providing a simple outline of the table of contents of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Marx moves from Hegel's refutation of sensuous affirmation, to the non-independent confirmation of self-conscious certainty, and finally to the final stage of rational certainty — absolute knowing. He concludes by explaining that absolute knowing, this **pure speculative thought** that eliminated all real qualifications of phenomena, formed the point of origin of the first part of Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences — The Logic of Hegel*. Marx provides very clear and penetrating analysis of Hegel's system. He writes:

Logic — mind's **coin of the realm**, the speculative or **mental value** of man and nature — its essence which has grown totally indifferent to all real determinateness, and hence unreal — is **alienated thinking**, and therefore thinking which abstracts from nature and from real man: **abstract thinking**.¹²⁵

The alienation and estrangement of this abstract essence is the real natural world and human society. Ultimately, through the essential abstraction of man's thought (not yet its own anthropology, phenomenology, psychology, ethics, art, or religion), this idea "coin" passes through all material existence in sensuous reality, "returns home to its own point of origin" — the Absolute Spirit. "Its real mode of existence is **abstraction**."¹²⁶ In considering the discussion of Hegel's essential, abstract affirmation of Smith and Ricardo's bourgeois social economic relations in chapter one, we realize that Marx's summary of Hegel's views here is very profound.

Next Marx declares that Hegel has a "double error."

The first of these is that Hegel's thinking is the abstract form of estranged man, though he uses his ideas as the criterion of the estranged world. Therefore, even as

¹²⁵Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 402 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 160).

¹²⁶*ibid.*, p. 403 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 161).

Hegel correctly sees wealth and state-power, etc., as “entities estranged from the **human** being,” he is only re-affirming his genuine philosophical form, i. e., spiritual essence. This implies that Hegel has not discovered that estrangement in reality is actually the estrangement of the human essence, not the estrangement of the ideal that reflects this estrangement of reality. “The whole *history of the alienation process* [*Entäußerungsgeschichte*] and the whole *process of the retraction* of the alienation is therefore nothing but the *history of the production* of abstract (i. e., absolute) thought — of logical, speculative thought.”¹²⁷ This is irreconcilable idealism.

The second error is that Hegel does not realize that the true essence of the refraction of the estrangement of the Idea is the “return of the objective world to man.”¹²⁸ *It is evident that this is Feuerbach's ethical logical discourse, not scientific historical materialism.* In Marx's opinion at this time, the sensuous consciousness (certainty) that Hegel refutes is not some sensuous consciousness of the abstract idea **external to man**, but is rather **man's** sensuous consciousness. For instance, “The **human character** of nature and of the nature created by history — man's products” are certainly not the products of some abstract spirit. Things such as religion and wealth are not estrangements of the idea either, but can only be “the estranged world of **human** objectification, of **man's** essential powers put to work and... therefore but the **path** to the true **human** world,” and not the path towards the transcendence that comes in the disappearance of the Absolute Idea.¹²⁹ Of course, Marx concisely points out at the same time that Hegel's phenomenology already carried the implications of revolutionary criticism:

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is, therefore, a hidden, mystifying and still uncertain criticism; but inasmuch as it depicts man's *estrangement*, even though man appears only as mind, there lie concealed in it **all** the elements of criticism, already **prepared** and **elaborated** in a manner often rising far above the Hegelian standpoint. The “unhappy consciousness,” the “honest consciousness”, the struggle of the “noble and base consciousness,” etc., etc. — these separate sections contain, but still in an estranged form, the **critical** elements of whole spheres such as religion, the state, civil life, etc.¹³⁰

It was precisely this Hegelian dialectic, under the influence of Feuerbachian humanist logic, that Marx used as a critical weapon targeted at bourgeois political economy. This is also how Marx surpasses Hegel's dialectic.

Therefore Marx observes that “the outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of **labour**

¹²⁷*ibid.*, p. 403 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 161).

¹²⁸*ibid.*, p. 403 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 162).

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p. 403 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 162).

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 404 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 162).

and comprehends objective man — true, because real man — as the outcome of man's **own labour**.”¹³¹ Here Marx begins to directly use humanist discourse to uncover Hegel's historical dialectic, though this was not in focusing on the general characteristics of the so-called “connections” and “developments” in the dialectic, but rather in emphasizing the revolutionary and critical character of the dialectic — a dialectic of negation. The results of Marx's interpretation are as follows: the real, active relation between man and his own species-being can only realize “**species-power**” through the cooperative action of all mankind, as the result of history; however, this can only be seen as the object, and can only be realized in an estranged form. More specifically, Marx believes that Hegel has already seen that the essence of man is labor, this real, active relation. Real man can only truly realize himself through moving from labor to natural objectification (estrangement). *We must also point out that in the progression of Marx's criticism of Hegel, once he had written to page 13 (the sixth subsection of the third interpolation in the third notebook), he all of a sudden returns to political economy, writing under the heading of the seventh subsection a criticism of political economy. The content of this section is a study of the estrangement of demand under the economic requirements of bourgeois society. I believe that this is an early expression of a conscious confirmation of the **social-historical significance of Hegel's philosophy**.*

Marx thus continues, pointing out that “Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy. He grasps **labor** as the **essence** of man — as man's essence which stands the test: he sees only the positive, not the negative side of labor.”¹³² The majority of past research has immediately approved of this identification; it has approved of Marx's critique that Hegel simultaneously affirms the objectification (the active side) and estrangement (the negative side) of labor, as well as Marx's own desire to affirm the objectification of labor while refuting the estrangement of labor. I believe that a deeper analysis is called for here. There is no doubt that it is important that Marx understood that Hegel's identification of man's essence was based in political economy. However, because Marx did not understand the historical significance of the labor theory of value, he could not understand why Hegel would simultaneously affirm objectification and estrangement. This is because in bourgeois economic existence based on exchange, production necessarily, objectively appears in the form of “estrangement.” To scientifically describe this so-called “estrangement,” it is inverted expression of inter-human relations as relations between things. Considering this “estrangement” from the perspective of the historical happening of bourgeois society, it always appears at the same time as the production totality, and therefore “estrangement” is inseparable from the mode of production of bourgeois society. In his understanding of this point, though a Feuerbachian humanist, ethical, critical phenomenology is correct, it is not very profound. *It was not until after 1846 that Marx would once again agree with Hegelian phenomenology's affirmation of the necessity of this kind of estrangement.* It is evident that there are many drawbacks to the traditional understanding of this point.

¹³¹Marx, “*Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*,” pp. 404–405 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 163).

¹³²*ibid.*, p. 405 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 163).

3.4.3 Objective transcendence of alienation: Criticizing Hegel's theory of surmounting the object of consciousness

Further on, Marx's critique of Hegel's dialectic (phenomenology) was centered on one idea in "Absolute Knowing," the last chapter of *Phenomenology of the Spirit*: overcoming the conscious object. Here Marx is actually trying to bring forward his own humanist logic, this is undoubtedly a **humanist rewriting** of the active dialectic relationship between the subject and object that Hegel understood.

Marx writes that this chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* primarily explains that consciousness is the essence of the object: "the **object of consciousness** is nothing else but **self-consciousness**." Objectification is the estrangement of consciousness, and so estrangement must be transcended in order to return to self. In Marx's humanist context at this time, Hegel's self-consciousness was actually man, and man's essence. *This is the historical essence of the self-conscious philosophical logic of the Young Hegelians revealed by Feuerbach*. As such, it was only natural for Marx to invertedly understand Hegel from the perspective of humanist general materialism. For instance, Marx writes:

All estrangement of the human being is therefore **nothing** but **estrangement of self-consciousness**. The estrangement of self-consciousness is not regarded as an **expression** — reflected in the realm of knowledge and thought — of the **real** estrangement of the human being. Instead, the **actual** estrangement — that which appears real — is according to its **innermost**, hidden nature (which is only brought to light by philosophy) nothing but the **manifestation** of the estrangement of the real human essence, of **self-consciousness**. The science which comprehends this is therefore called **phenomenology**.¹³³

According to Marx's views here, Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* should be renamed "Phenomenology of the Estrangement of the Essence of Man." I believe that in Marx's manuscript, he was using this critical, revolutionary humanist phenomenology to oppose political economy and the real estrangement of bourgeois society, thus seeing what was behind the phenomena (so-called "economic facts") that were refuted by young Engels and Proudhon: the estrangement of the essence of labor. It is in this sense that I suggest that humanist social phenomenology is the dominant line of thinking in Marx's *1844 Manuscript*. **This is a particular critical phenomenology and historical epistemology within a humanist logic.**

Marx summarizes the idea of "surmounting the object of consciousness"¹³⁴ in the first paragraph of "Absolute Knowing" into eight points, criticizing them one by one.

Marx combines the first two points in his discussion. The first point is, "the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something vanishing," and the second point is, "[the object as such] is the alienation of self-consciousness which

¹³³*ibid.*, p. 406 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 165).

¹³⁴Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 422 (Chinese transl.: *Jingshen xianxiangxue*, vol. 2, pp. 258–259).

posits thinghood.” According to Marx’s understanding at this time, the first point refers to the return of the object to the self.¹³⁵ The second point is the emphasis of Marx’s investigation. Here Marx launches into an extended discussion of the alienation of self-consciousness positing thinghood.

Before entering our analysis of Marx’s important thinking on this point, we must first understand Hegel’s expression in the original text. In *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Hegel explains the concept thus:

The Thing is ‘I’; in point of fact, in this infinite judgement the Thing is superseded; in itself it is nothing; it has meaning only in the relation, only **through the ‘I’** and its **connection** with it. This moment manifested itself for consciousness in pure insight and enlightenment. Things are simply **useful** and to be considered only from the standpoint of utility.¹³⁶

We know that Hegel’s phenomenology is actually an inverted Kantian rational critique mediated by Fichte’s self-conscious philosophy before transcending to the ideal critical result of the logical premise. Hegel is trying to explain here that the object is established in its objectified useful relationship with “I” (self-consciousness). Therefore, the existence of the object is not independent; it can only exist in the useful relationship with self-consciousness. This is the direct meaning of “the alienation of self-consciousness positing thinghood.” However, for Hegel, the essence of self-consciousness is the Ideal, “I” nothing but the tool of history’s cunning of reason. Self-consciousness must pass through the thinghood of the object, identify the ideal essence of the object, and finally return to the Absolute Idea. Therefore, in Hegel’s opinion the Absolute Idea is the subject: “Real man and real nature become mere predicates — symbols of this hidden, unreal man and of this unreal nature. Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute reversal.”¹³⁷

It is evident that Marx does not plan to go into a detailed analysis of the theory of ideal essence that came after Hegel’s self-consciousness. He only starts with the self-consciousness of the Young Hegelians, reversing the dialectic subject-predicate relationship between what Hegel calls self-consciousness and object, then using humanism to reduce self-consciousness to man, and finally returning to the reality of bourgeois society. This is Marx’s theoretical context at this time, after experiencing the mediation of many factors. Thus we see that Marx is **materialistically confirming the objectivity of objective existence**; man himself is a natural object, this is the foundation of man’s ability to objectively create objects. Marx’s ideas on this point are extremely important:

Whenever real, corporeal **man**, man with his feet firmly on the solid ground, man exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature, **posits** his

¹³⁵Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 407 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 166).

¹³⁶Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 423 (Chinese transl.: *Jingshen xianxiangxue*, vol. 2, p. 260).

¹³⁷Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” p. 414 (Chinese transl.: “1844 nian shougao,” p. 176).

real, objective **essential powers** as alien objects by his externalisation, it is not the **act of positing** which is the subject in this process: it is the subjectivity of **objective** essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be something **objective**.¹³⁸

Man posits objects not because of (the subjectivity) of the subject, but rather because the subject itself is first and foremost a natural being. Only because of this is man able to posit objective activity as objects. Next comes one of Marx's famous expressions:

Here we see how consistent naturalism or humanism is distinct from both idealism and materialism, and constitutes at the same time the unifying truth of both. We see also how only naturalism is capable of comprehending the action of world history.¹³⁹

"Idealism" here refers to the dynamic activity of Hegel's Ideal, "materialism" refers to the empirical principles of English and French materialism, and what Marx affirms here is the objective activity of Feuerbach's objectivity, which is man's objective activity (labor). Please not that moving this objective activity one step forward yields **practice**, though it is not yet here. Though the two appear to be very similar, the distance between them is actually great. This is because the objective activity of man that Marx discusses here is still a non-historical logical qualification.

Marx first affirms the sensuous passivity of man: "As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand endowed with **natural powers, vital powers** — he is an **active** natural being."¹⁴⁰ Marx thus materialistically reverses Hegel's subject-object relationship. Hegel argues that the object exists in its "useful" relationship with "I," while Marx believes that the objective existence of "T" originates from the objective existence of the natural object: "A being which has no object outside itself is not an objective being."¹⁴¹ Marx believes that the "only existing material" that is not an object and does not have external objective material is imaginary material.

Next, Marx points out that man is not only a natural being, but that "he is a **human** natural being. That is to say, he is a being for himself. Therefore he is a **species-being**, and has to confirm and manifest himself as such both in his being and in his knowing."¹⁴² This is the difference between man as objective existence and man as general natural existence. Man possesses his own act of origin, and this is human history. Human history is "a conscious self-transcending act of origin. History is the true natural history of man."¹⁴³

This is Marx's "Feuerbachian" reversal of what Hegel was able to unveil. In this line of logic, Hegel's dialectic framework becomes a fiction that is impossible to

¹³⁸*ibid.*, pp. 407–408 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 167).

¹³⁹*ibid.*, p. 408 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 167).

¹⁴⁰*ibid.*, p. 408 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 167).

¹⁴¹*ibid.*, pp. 408–409 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 168).

¹⁴²*ibid.*, p. 409 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 169).

¹⁴³*ibid.*, p. 409 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 169).

understand. However in reality, if Hegel's self-consciousness is not simply reversed into natural man, but rather reversed into material practical activity under certain historical conditions, then the practical subject of social history — the material "positing" and "vanishing" related to man's practice — is completely understandable. *Of course, Marx did not begin to consider this question until after the spring of 1845.*

The last paragraph is Marx's study of the Hegel's transcendence of estrangement (objectification). This forms the bulk of the content of points 3–6 (Marx does not delve deeper into a discussion of points 7–8). This discussion is also extremely important, because it reveals some of the fundamental characteristics of Marx's views on the transcendence of estrangement. If Marx had been able to focus his discussion a little more, that is, if he had realized that estrangement is not the estrangement of the Idea, that the estrangement of the Idea is nothing but a reflection of the estrangement of reality and therefore that the transcendence of estrangement cannot be limited to the understanding of the Idea but must be objective transcendence in reality, then he would have come upon actual social revolution!

Concretely speaking, for Hegel the object is the alienation and estrangement of the consciousness (subject). In terms of the essence, the object is necessarily revealed as an empty façade and phenomenon — a "cataract that clouds the eyes." The transcendence of estrangement is therefore the transcendence of objectification and the return to the conscious subject. "Within the sphere of abstraction, Hegel conceives labor as man's act of **self-genesis** — conceives man's relation to himself as an alien being and the manifestation of himself as an alien being to be the emergence of **species-consciousness** and **species-life**."¹⁴⁴ Hegel's idealism here naturally comes under the harsh criticism of Marx. Marx maintains that Hegel's mistake lies in the fact that he uses ideal things to imitate the actual, existing objective world; therefore the self-estranging existence of the objectification of the ideal subject is actually "**with itself**," and the supersession of estrangement is expressed as once again finding the ideal essence within the object. Therefore Marx writes: "In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of the true essence, effected precisely through negation of the pseudo-essence. With him the negation of the negation is the confirmation of the pseudo-essence, or of the self-estranged essence in its denial."¹⁴⁵ According to Hegel, a man who recognizes that he lives an alienated life in the law, and in the government is a man who, in this alienated life, lives his own true, human life. Marx, on the other hand, believes that this will cause the transcendence of estrangement to become a false transcendence. "Here **is** the root of Hegel's **false** positivism, or of his merely **apparent** criticism."¹⁴⁶

Of course, Hegel's theory of alienation still embodied some positive elements. "**Supersession** as an objective movement of **retracting** the alienation **into self**."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 414 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 175).

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*, pp. 411–412 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 172).

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 411 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 171).

¹⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 413 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 174).

To put it in Marx's humanist words of the time, "the real appropriation of [man's] objective essence through the annihilation of the **estranged** character of the objective world, through the supersession of the objective world in its estranged mode of being." Therefore, just as Feuerbach says: "atheism, being the supersession of God, is the advent of theoretic humanism, and communism, as the supersession of private property, is the vindication of real human life as man's possession and thus the advent of practical humanism, or atheism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of religion, whilst communism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of private property."¹⁴⁸ Practical humanism truly supersedes communism in reality.

This is a direct confirmation of the logical method that Marx uses to criticize bourgeois political economy.

¹⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. 413 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 174).

Chapter 4

Empirical Texts on the Eve of the Marxist Philosophical Revolution

In Marx's past criticisms of bourgeois society, socialism has always been set in opposition to political economy. This is a notable characteristic of the French and German socialist movements in the 1840s. As young Marx's economics research grew deeper in the later part of the *1844 Manuscript*, we can already begin to see the growth of an objective logic rooted in economic reality. This logic was intertwined with humanist philosophical discourse, each making the other more impressive as they formed an extremely unique dual discourse context in young Marx's thinking. Therefore, the closer Marx drew to the reality of social revolution in practice, and the deeper he delved into economics in theory, the more expansive grew his objective point of view towards economics. Thus Marx began his second great philosophical shift: the establishment of Marxist scientific methodology. The practical aspect of this theory formed the group of empirical texts that Marx wrote on the eve of the realization of his Marxist philosophical revolution.

4.1 The Theoretical Alliance of Socialism and Materialism

The Holy Family (*Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer & Consorten*. 1844) is the first jointly and publicly published theoretical work by Marx and Engels. In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marxist Historical Dialectics* I identified *The Holy Family* as the most obvious example of young Marx's conflicting philosophical logic. As a matter of fact, relative to the *1844 Manuscript*, *The Holy Family* does not make any substantive breakthroughs in terms of theoretical logic, but rather exposes and brings to the surface the latent theoretical contradictions in Marx's past work. *Former Yugoslavian philosopher Predrag Vranicki claims that The Holy Family is evidence that "Marx had completely developed historical materialism."* I do not believe that such a view has much textual support.¹ Given the fact that past scholarly research on *The Holy*

¹The source is Predrag Vranicki, *Historija marksizma* (Zagreb, 1961). A German translation is available (Predrag Vranicki, *Geschichte des Marxismus* (Frankfurt/M., 1985), and the Chinese trans-

Family has centered on its philosophical materialist and socialist elements, here we will focus on investigating Marx's theoretical progression in the realm of economics and then shift to a reevaluation of the true implications of the theoretical alliance between socialism and philosophical materialism.

4.1.1 Another criticism of the political economic premise and methodology

At the beginning, Marx and Engels wrote *The Holy Family* as a criticism of the "criticism" of Bauer and others. Therefore, philosophical identification is the primary content of this book. The economics content that forms the basis of our discussion here existed only as the premise of Marx and Engels' investigation. Through a careful reading of this text, we can understand that Marx is summarizing the results of the first stage of his economics research. Though much of the writing does not make important theoretical progress, much of the economics thinking and many theoretical viewpoints are clearer and more mature than in the *1844 Manuscript*.

In the fourth section of the fourth chapter of *The Holy Family* we first see Marx's affirmative evaluation of Proudhon. *In the 1844 Manuscript, this is only one of the partly visible, partly hidden subsidiary awarenesses in Marx's discussion.* However, what we should remark is that Marx clearly points out that the theoretical framework of Proudhon's *What is Property* is still "criticism of **political economy** from the standpoint of political economy."² Marx's commentary here is very important, because the line of thinking that it reveals is the unconscious line of thinking that existed before *Paris Notes* and *Notes on Mill*, and that existed consciously and strategically in the first part of the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*. This line of thinking, in fact, also includes Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. As we have already discussed, by this time Marx had already determined that only standing outside "the standpoint of political economy" could he truly and comprehensively criticize political economy from a true, humanist, philosophical perspective. Much like the logical leap that Marx accomplished in 1–2 of the *1844 Manuscript*, Engels in *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* was still criticizing political economy from the standpoint of political economy, but he already viewed wages, trade, value/prices, and money as an advanced form of private property, while Proudhon only "uses these economic premises in arguing against the political economists."³ This is an important distinction. In the five following "critical comments" (there are also four "characterizing translations"), we can see Marx's further explanation.

In the "Critical Comment No. 1," Marx once again, just as in *Paris Notes* and the *1844 Manuscript*, points out that "all treatises on political economy take

lation quoted here is Predrag Vranicki [Puleidexige Feilanniciji 普雷德腊格·费兰尼茨基], *Makesi zhuyi shi*, 马克思主义史, trans. Li Jia'en 李嘉恩等, vol. 第1卷 (Beijing 北京: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社 [People's Press], 1986), vol. 1, p. 119.

²Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," p. 201 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 38).

³*ibid.*, p. 202 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 39).

private property for granted. This basic premise is for them an incontestable fact to which they devote no further investigation.”⁴

Proudhon, on the other hand, conducts a critical investigation of **private property**, the basis of political economy. His was the first decisive, serious, and scientific investigation. This was Proudhon’s great scientific advancement, an advancement that revolutionized political economy and for the first time made it possible for political economy to become a true science.⁵

This is undoubtedly praise that carries much weight. *Lenin would later take special note of this affirmation.* Of course, the implications of the word “scientific” here are the equivalent of “revolutionary.”

It is evident that Marx’s concrete views on political economy at this time had not yet experienced any important change, because he still focuses on the internal contradictions between the “humane and logical relations” on the theoretical surface of bourgeois political economy and its own premise of private property. *Because of this, German scholar Walter Tuchscheerer believes that Marx was still unable to correctly understand the labor theory of value in classical economics and the fundamental significance that this theory could have for socialism.*⁶ *This is a correct understanding.* Of course, Marx also attempts to capture the theoretical “contradictions” in political economy. For instance: “Value is determined at the beginning in an apparently rational way, by the cost of production of an object and by its social usefulness. Later it turns out that value is determined quite fortuitously and that it does not need to bear any relation to either the cost of production or social usefulness.”⁷ The first determination of value is given by Smith and Ricardo’s definition, while the second determination is the emergence of prices from competition. It is evident that Marx was still unable to correctly differentiate between value and value in use, as well as between value and price. He here tries to prove that “all the economic relations” of political economy are contradictory, and therefore that political economists only unconsciously criticize the individual forms of these contradictions all while preserving the “apparently human” appearance of these economic relations. *This is a similar expression to that of young Engels in Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie.* Marx believes at this time that political economists only “take these relations in their strictly economic sense,” which is “in their clearly pronounced **difference** from the human [sense].”⁸ The “humanity” of which Marx writes here is still the true human essence that he himself posits from the complete emancipation of mankind. It is still an **idealized value postulate in opposition to reality.** Therefore please take note, the point of origin of Marx’s criticism of bourgeois political economy here

⁴*ibid.*, p. 201 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 38).

⁵*ibid.*, p. 201 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 39).

⁶Walter Tuchscheerer, *Bevor “Das Kapital” entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, ed. Gerda Tuchscheerer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), p. 244 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 179).

⁷Marx and Engels, “**Holy Family**,” p. 202 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 39).

⁸*ibid.*, p. 203 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 40).

is the **value contradiction** between economic relations and theoretical logic (humanity). After 1845, on the contrary, Marx discovered the objective contradiction between the productive relations of “bourgeois society” and the development of productive forces themselves within the context of historical materialism. There is an important difference between these two.

Next, Marx once again fully affirms Proudhon’s accomplishments. Marx writes that in political economy, only “**Proudhon** has put an end to this unconsciousness once for all. He takes the **human semblance** of the economic relations seriously and sharply opposes it to their **inhuman reality**.”⁹ We will soon look at the origin of the opposition between theory and reality that Marx brought up earlier. At this time, Marx believes that unlike other economists, Proudhon does not criticize the individual forms of private property (such as Saint Simon’s criticism of bourgeois society while protecting the interests of the petty bourgeoisie): “He therefore consistently depicts as the falsifier of economic relations not this or that particular kind of private property, as other economists do, but private property as such and in its entirety. He has done all that criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy can do.”¹⁰

However, Marx naturally believes that Proudhon’s criticism of reality is not profound enough, because he has not **philosophically** revealed the essence of bourgeois economic relations, i. e., the essential reversal of the comprehensive estrangement of the human subject. Thus Marx points out:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as **its own power** and has in it the **semblance** of a human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence.¹¹

Here we see that the estrangement logic of humanism is still Marx’s dominant framework here. In addition, it is viewed as a theoretical high point rising above bourgeois political economy and even above Proudhon. *Professor Sun Bokui argues that in The Holy Family, Marx had already “broken free of the humanist alienation conception of history, turning instead to view material production and productive forces as the foundation and original force of the advancement of human society.”*¹² *This view is worth discussing. I believe that only in astutely comparing this with Marx’s later Poverty of Philosophy can we clearly understand his commentary on Proudhon’s thought.*

In “Critical Comment No. 2,” Marx opens a new analysis by observing the relation between labor time and the costs of production. He points out that besides labor time, bourgeois political economists “include in the cost of production the rent paid to the owner of the land, interest and the profit of the capitalist,”

⁹Marx and Engels, “*Holy Family*,” p. 203 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 40).

¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 203 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 40).

¹¹*ibid.*, p. 206 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 44).

¹²Sun and Yao, “*Makeshi zhuyi zhaxue*,” vol. 2, p. 267.

while Proudhon, because he rejects private property, also rejects rent, interest, and profit, thus leaving only labor time and expected expenses. “By making labour time, the immediate existence of human activity as activity, the measure of wages and the determinant of the value of the product, Proudhon makes the human side the decisive factor.” This is exactly in opposition to bourgeois political economy, which views the objective forces of capital and rent as the decisive factors. Marx believes that in accomplishing this, Proudhon “restores man’s rights” using the form of the internal contradictions of political economy.¹³ It is clear that Marx is still using humanist philosophy to understand economics, still using it to judge Proudhon’s socialism. Marx points out that the first few pages of Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* develops the idea that “**before** the invention of private property, that is to say, presupposing the **non-existence of private property, labor time** was the measure of **wages** and of the **value of the product of labor**, which was not yet distinguished from wages.” Marx continues: “the **labor time expended** on the production of an object is included in the **cost of production** of that object, that the **cost of production** of an object is what it **costs**, and therefore what it can be sold for.”¹⁴ This appears to be an affirmation of Smith’s labor theory of value. *Later, as Lenin was reading this section, he commented that “Marx here approaches the labor theory of value.”*¹⁵ *This is correct, although this “approach” comes from the perspective of the philosophical logic of humanist subjectivity towards the labor theory of value. Regardless, this “approach” is still interesting. This is the first precursor to Marx’s affirmation of the labor theory of value from the objective perspective of historical materialism.* However, at this time, Marx’s affirmation was still very conservative. This is because in his opinion, any criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy conceded all the essential qualifications on human activity, but only in their estranged, alienated forms. For example, he changes the significance of time to **human labor** into the significance of time to **wages**, and to hired labor.

However, if one does not criticize political economy from the standpoint of political economy, if one does not stand on the bourgeois point of view to criticize bourgeois society, how does one go about criticizing? Considering Marx’s context at the time, he could only begin with philosophy — this was a **materialist philosophy that had socialism as its orientation and that focused on humans**. Thus, his criticism of Hegel’s **inhuman** speculative idealism becomes an important theoretical logical medium.

4.1.2 Young Marx’s third criticism of Hegel

In *The Holy Family*, Marx returns several times to critical analysis of the secret of Hegel’s speculative philosophy. The first of these analyses comes in the second section of chapter five, where Marx reveals the characteristics of Hegel’s method —

¹³Marx and Engels, “[Holy Family](#),” p. 219 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 61).

¹⁴[ibid.](#), p. 220 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 61).

¹⁵Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “Conspectus of the Book *The Holy Family* by Marx and Engels,” 4th, vol. 38 (Moscow, 1976), p. 30 (Chinese transl.: “Makesi he Engesi *Shensheng jiazhu* yishu zhaiyao,” p. 13).

the characteristics of speculative construction in general — by criticizing Szeliga’s false speculative method.

First, from an epistemological standpoint, Marx redefines the true relationship between apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds in reality and the concept of “fruit.” He then turns to a materialistic refutation of the idealist essence of Hegel’s noumenon epistemology. As we have already seen, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel critically identifies the falsity of the sensuous reference point in daily life, because sensuous existence is formed of the idea by the self-consciousness. That is to say, though in everyday life we see the concrete differences between apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds, Hegel tells us that what is most important is the “common material” that concretely exists between these things — the fact that they are all fruits. Because the concept of “fruit” is the essence of all particular fruits after having eliminated all the non-essential, specific, and sensuous differences, in Hegel’s general logic, the essence is not perceptual, sensuous existence, but rather a rational, abstract idea. “[This abstract idea] is an entity existing outside me... it is indeed the **true** essence of the pear, the apple, etc.,” thus, Fruit is the “Substance” of the pear, the apple, the almond, etc.¹⁶ Thus the idea becomes the true noumenon foundation of sensuous existence. Hegel also argues that this abstraction of the essence is the genuine starting point, i. e., the return of divided sensuous concreteness to abstraction. Taking this explanation one step forward, because “**the Fruit** is not dead, undifferentiated, motionless, but a living, self-differentiating, moving essence,”¹⁷ therefore apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds are nothing but self-differentiations of “fruit.”

The differences which distinguish apples, pears and almonds from one another are the self-differentiations of “**the Fruit**” and make the particular fruits different members of the life-process of “**the Fruit**.” Thus “**the Fruit**” is no longer an empty undifferentiated unity; it is oneness as **allness**, as “**totality**” of fruits, which constitute an “**organically linked series of members**.”¹⁸

Therefore, apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds that exist in reality become the concrete “existence” produced and realized by abstract “fruit.” This logical development moves from **abstract to concrete**. Clearly this is a reversed logic of the idealism of Hegel’s philosophy that must be criticized.

Marx believes that differentiation is the general concept that allows us to move from concrete apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds in reality to abstract “fruit.” However, for Hegel, “what is essential to [‘Fruit’] is not their real existence, perceptible to the senses, but the essence that I have abstracted from them and then foisted on them.”¹⁹ Apples and other fruits that exist in reality are thus “mere forms of existence, *modi*, of ‘Fruit’... [‘Fruit’] have grown out of the ether of your brain and not out of the material earth, [they] are incarnations of ‘**the Fruit**,’

¹⁶Marx and Engels, “**Holy Family**,” p. 228 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” pp. 71–72).

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 229 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 73).

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 229 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 73).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 228 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 72).

of the **Absolute Subject**.”²⁰ Marx argues that Hegel “declares his **own** activity, by which **he passes** from the idea of an apple to the idea of a pear, to be the **self-activity** of the Absolute Subject, ‘the Fruit.’” In other words, in an idealist manner, Hegel “presents as a process of the imagined creation of the mind itself, of the Absolute Subject, the process by which the philosopher through sensory perception and imagination passes from one subject to another.”²¹ To use Hegel’s words, this is “comprehending **Substance as Subject**, as an **inner process**, as an **Absolute Person**.” In Marx’s opinion, “this comprehension constitutes the essential character of **Hegel’s method**.”²²

The majority of past research has adopted an unquestioningly affirmative attitude towards Marx’s criticism of Hegel here. Again, my views depart from the norm of past scholarship. First, although Marx’s criticism here is correct, the fact that his premise is general materialism means that he is unable to surpass Feuerbach’s level of critique. Second, because Marx is merely pursuing an object of criticism (Szeliga), he only explains the general relationship between the natural object correctly resolved by perceptual materialism and the idea; **it is actually impossible for him to compare this with the social life that he is attempting to criticize**. This is because when facing natural material objects that objectively exist, one can only be sure of the categories of things through recognizing and differentiating the differences between various objective objects, and especially through finding the unity between things. This essential categorization objectively exists in the commonality of things. From the perspective of traditional ontology, if there is no categorization of things or particular, differentiated objective existence, then man cannot be conscious of natural objects. From the perspective of epistemology, if there is no empirical, perceptual understanding of the concrete categories of things, then we cannot grasp, *a priori*, the rational idea (the reflection of the categories of things) behind experience. Hegel reversed the normal, real, and cognitive relationships, incorrectly noumenizing the progression of man’s understanding into the objective progression of the world, incorrectly foisting mankind’s subjective cognitive structure into the essence and laws (logic) of the world. On this point, the criticisms of both Marx and Feuerbach are correct. However, in Feuerbach’s “reactionary” philosophy, there are two theoretical points that have been ignored: the first explains the use of the dynamic activity of the subject in logical construction, and the second explains that the true realization of general abstract essence and laws can only be a certain particular existence. This proves the logical progression from the sensuous concrete to the abstract (essence), and from the abstract back to the concrete (differentiated, unified concrete essence). **How and to what degree is material comprehended?** This is an element that was veiled by the old, perceptual materialist theories, though it was extremely important to Marx’s later scientific worldview. While this theoretical veiling may not seem important where general materialism faces natural objects, as soon as we step into social history, the situation becomes more complex.

²⁰*ibid.*, p. 230 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 74).

²¹*ibid.*, p. 231 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” pp. 75–76).

²²*ibid.*, p. 231 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 75).

More important is Marx's criticism of Hegel's conception of history. In part D of the third section of chapter six in *The Holy Family*, Marx analyzes and explains the three elements of Hegel's philosophical system: first is Spinoza's substance, which is "metaphysically disguised **nature separated** from man" (this was expounded by Strauss); second is Fichte's self-consciousness, which is "metaphysically disguised **spirit separated** from nature" (this was expounded by Bauer); third is the unity of the two prior elements — "**real man** and the real **human species.**"²³ *The contention of Czech scholar Zelený that Marx viewed Hegel's philosophy as the unity of Spinoza and Fichte is oversimplified; this is because Marx did not understand the difference between young Hegel (during the Jena period) and Schelling.*²⁴ No matter which of these two links the Young Hegelians (including, of course, Marx himself before 1842) attempted to attack, they were never able to truly break out of the confines of Hegelian philosophy. Marx at this time believed that only Feuerbach the materialist "completed and criticized **Hegel from Hegel's point of view** by resolving the metaphysical **Absolute Spirit** into '**real man on the basis of nature,**'" thus truly completing the invalidation of Hegel's idealism.²⁵ I believe that Marx's analysis here carries very profound implications: it **descends** to social history the human subject and human rationality, which Hegel had elevated from actual history to absolute generality (metaphysics). Relative to Feuerbach, who was too concerned with natural phenomena, Marx focused on the philosophical conception of history that was concerned with society and man and that had been reversed by materialism. This was true even though in terms of his overall logical structure, he was still under the influence of a conception of history based on humanist alienation.

Thus in Marx's opinion, the premise of Hegel's philosophical conception of history was naturally idealist, because for Hegel, the subject of history was "the **abstract or absolute spirit.**" However, compared with the natural object discussed above but unlike the concrete existence of the essence of the abstract idea, Hegel attempted in *Phenomenology of Spirit* to prove that, "**self-consciousness** is the **only reality** and **all reality** ... all sensuousness, reality, individuality of men and of their world" are merely the "**limitations of general self-consciousness.**"²⁶ Therefore, "The history of mankind becomes the history of the **Abstract Spirit** of mankind, hence a **spirit far removed** from the real man."²⁷ Mankind is thus merely the tool of the Absolute Spirit in accomplishing its own purpose; social history is merely the process by which the Absolute Spirit realizes itself. Thus, "in Hegel's philosophy of history, as in his philosophy of nature, the son engenders the mother, the spirit nature, the Christian religion paganism, the result the beginning."²⁸ Marx's analysis here is extremely profound.

How is this conception of history stood on its head? Marx writes: "Hegel substitutes **self-consciousness** for **man**, the **most varied** manifestations of human

²³Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," p. 316 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 177).

²⁴Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, pp. 182–183.

²⁵Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," p. 316 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 177).

²⁶*ibid.*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 245).

²⁷*ibid.*, p. 257 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 108).

²⁸*ibid.*, p. 345 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 214).

reality appear only as **definite** forms, as **determinateness of self-consciousness.**"²⁹ Marx continues: "Hegel makes man the **man of self-consciousness** instead of making self-consciousness the **self-consciousness of man**, of real man, i. e., of man living also in a real, objective world and determined by that world. He stands the world **on its head** and can therefore **in his head** also dissolve all limitations."³⁰ The limitations of which Marx speaks here are, of course, primarily the various sensuous, material requirements that objectively exist in real social history. When Hegel dissolves these limitations in his head, however, "[they] nevertheless remain in existence... for **real man.**"³¹ Furthermore, for Hegel, "the **material, sensuously perceptible, objective** foundations of the various estranged forms of human self-consciousness" are ignored. Thus transcendence of estrangement is merely a spiritual matter internal to the consciousness. Marx goes on to point out:

[There is] a world which continues to exist when I merely abolish its existence in thought, its existence as a category or as a standpoint; i. e., when I modify my own subjective consciousness without altering the objective reality in a really objective way, that is to say, without altering my own **objective** reality and that of other men.³²

Marx's criticism of Hegel's idealist conception of history is worthy of our analysis here. First, the premise of this criticism is a Feuerbachian materialist reversal. Thus Marx attempts to explain that men in reality, as well as sensuousness and things in social life exist objectively and do not depend on consciousness — this is correct. Second, the limitations of Feuerbach's philosophy are clearly demonstrated here, specifically that **he defines social existence in terms of general sensuousness and material existence.** *This is the first critical subject of Marx's later Theses on Feuerbach.* Third, Marx begins to surpass Feuerbach, evidenced in his attempt to use material methods to change material reality. This supersession was not something that Feuerbach's materialist could handle. Eliminating the vague qualification of "material thing" and moving one level deeper, objectively changing reality could only be a **social political revolution based on a certain economic and material production revolution.** Without a doubt, this is a conclusion that is both extremely important and difficult to reach. I believe that this philosophical advance did not originate with Feuerbach, but rather from a source that Marx and Engels did not discuss in their philosophical conversations: **political economy.** However, Marx at this time did not necessarily realize this himself.

4.1.3 A reevaluation of the unity of socialism and philosophical materialism

There is, of course, content in *The Holy Family* that Marx consciously recognized. This that his opposition to and criticism of idealism was not like that of

²⁹*ibid.*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 244).

³⁰*ibid.*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 245).

³¹*ibid.*, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 245).

³²*ibid.*, p. 371 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 245).

Feuerbach, who only returned from estranged consciousness (religion and speculation) to equally estranged material reality. On a deeper level, Marx at this time was no longer simply interested in reforming Prussia's feudal system of land ownership by accomplishing the democratic revolutionary goals of British and French bourgeois society. Marx and Engels had already **consciously and specifically combined the philosophical revolution of materialism with the actual revolution of socialism**. Past research has, of course, already made this observation, though it fails to specify **what kind** of materialism was combined with socialism. It also fails to tell us how, scientifically, we should appraise this combination. Let us attempt to answer these questions.

Directly speaking, because of the guidance of the object of criticism, what appears as the philosophical starting point in Marx's theoretical vision is the relation between the French Revolution and French materialist philosophy (the Enlightenment Movement). In Marx's opinion, the theoretical development of French materialism ("critical history") is connected to the French bourgeois revolution ("ordinary, mass-type history"). Marx writes:

The French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and in particular **French materialism**, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and the existing religion and theology; it was just as much an **open, clearly expressed** struggle against the **metaphysics of the seventeenth century**, and against all **metaphysics**, in particular that of **Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz**.³³

Marx's use of the word "metaphysics" clearly does not refer to the "post-physics" philosophy in an Aristotelian sense, nor does it refer to the non-dialectic method in a Hegelian sense; rather, it refers to the rationalist philosophical tradition that Marx opposed at this time. Thus, this "metaphysics" can be extended to include philosophers from Descartes to Hegel ("speculative metaphysics"). Those in opposition to metaphysics were the French materialists in France, and Feuerbach in Germany. "Just as **Feuerbach** is the representative of **materialism** coinciding with **humanism** in the **theoretical** domain, French and English **socialism** and **communism** represent materialism coinciding with **humanism** in the **practical** domain."³⁴ Marx was attempting to concisely achieve a theoretical transition, from French materialist philosophy and bourgeois revolution to materialist philosophy connected to socialism and communism. This was his theoretical goal.

In this sense, it becomes important to determine which form of materialism and socialism were truly interacting at this point. Marx believed at the time that there were two schools of thought within French materialism at the time: one originates with Descartes, and the other with Locke. According to Marx, "Just as **Cartesian** materialism passes into **natural science proper**, the other trend of French materialism leads directly to **socialism** and **communism**."³⁵ This is a very interesting differentiation. Marx refers to Descartes' ("metaphysical") French materialism as

³³Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," p. 301 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 159).

³⁴*ibid.*, p. 301 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 160).

³⁵*ibid.*, p. 307 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazhu," p. 166).

“mechanical materialism,” believing that this school of thought led to natural science and that its representative figures are La Mettrie and Cabanis. *It is clear that Marx’s judgment — “mechanical materialism” — is not precise enough.* As for the other trend in French materialism, Marx does not give it a specific name, though he directly views it as being made up of the French inheritors of English empirical materialism. Marx recognized that English materialism happened at the same time as modern empirical science. For Bacon, the progenitor of these movements, “All science is based on **experience**, and consists in subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a **rational method** of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, and experiment are the main conditions of the rational method.” This form of materialism “holds back within itself in a naive way the germs of a many-sided development. Matter, surrounded by a sensuous, poetic glamour, seems to attract man’s whole entity by winning smiles.”³⁶ However, with Hobbes, materialism began to “become one-sided.” Although materialism had already been systematized, “Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic blossom, it passes into the abstract experience of the **geometrician**. **Physical** motion is sacrificed to **mechanical** or **mathematical** motion; **geometry** is proclaimed as the queen of sciences. Materialism takes to **misanthropy**.”³⁷ Here we can see that the criterion by which Marx evaluates philosophical history is still humanism, what he would later call “superstitious belief in Feuerbach.”³⁸

Locke is the direct foundation of the second form of French materialism (though we still don’t know what this materialism is!). Condillac was Lockes pupil. His significance is revealed as materialism in **social life**, which, to use Marx’s words, is that “the whole development of man depends on **education** and **external circumstance**.”³⁹ At the same time, another French materialist philosopher, Helvetius, “conceived [materialism] immediately in its application to social life.” *Please note that the **application** of materialism to social life was not the unique work of Marx. To be precise, the claim that Marx and Engels expanded speculative materialism to the realm of social history, thus founding the materialist conception of history is untenable. Marx’s **historical materialism** is not the same thing as the narrow **materialist conception** of history, which appeared as a branch of philosophy.* According to Marx, “the sensory qualities and self-love, enjoyment and correctly understood personal interest are the basis of all morality [for Helvetius]. The natural equality of human intelligences, the unity of progress of reason and progress of industry, the natural goodness of man, and the omnipotence of education, are the main features in his system.”⁴⁰ I have observed that this second form of French materialism is made up of two elements: first, unlike the materialism of natural science, it is a form of materialism that **focuses on social life**; second, it is a form of materialism that **begins with humans**, that has “flesh and blood.” Describing this form of French **humanist** materialism, Marx writes:

³⁶*ibid.*, pp. 304–305 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 163).

³⁷*ibid.*, p. 305 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 164).

³⁸Marx and Engels, 24 April 1867, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 1*, vol. III/3, p. 383 (Chinese transl.: zhi Engels, p. 293).

³⁹Marx and Engels, “**Holy Family**,” p. 306 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 165).

⁴⁰*ibid.*, p. 306 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” pp. 165–166).

From the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., [we see] how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism.⁴¹

This is Marx's true theoretical purpose: **to achieve the alliance of humanist materialism and socialism.**

Next, Marx uses five "if's to expound the concrete connection between this form of materialism and socialism and communism. First, if all man obtains all knowledge from the world of the senses and his experience in it, then man should use a **human criterion** to "arrange the empirical world," thus allowing "man to become aware of himself as man." Thus if bourgeois society is anti-human, then it must be overthrown. Second, if correctly understood interest is the basis of all morality, then individual interest **should** coincide with the interest of humanity. Thus private property is a crime. Third, if man is unfree in a materialistic sense, then what is important is "each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being," and not merely scope that is ruled by capital. Fourth, "if man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human." This means that any environment that **does not coincide with humans** must be changed! Fifth, if man is social by nature, then man can only develop his true nature in society. Thus, the power of society is the true measure of man's nature.⁴² In short, to base one's philosophy in materialism means basing it in humanity; bourgeois society in reality is misanthropic, and therefore socialism and communism are the true measures of humanity, the means to change this anti-human reality. More specifically, Marx's proof here is still a kind of **logical inference**. Of course, understanding materialism as a demand to change reality is Marx's original work; it did not originate with French materialism. *If we could eliminate the humanist logical guidance here, then this line of thinking could develop into a new model of practical materialism. We will reserve this discussion for later.*

Precisely because of this, Marx believed that the French socialist Fourier and the Babouvists both began from this form of French materialism. Bentham, on the other hand, founded his "system of **correctly understood interest**" on Helvetius' morality, while Owen proceeded from Bentham to found English communism.⁴³ In Marx's opinion at the time, "Like Owen, the more scientific French Communists, **Dézamy, Gay** and others, developed the teaching of **materialism** as the teaching of **real humanism** and the **logical** basis of **communism.**"⁴⁴

At this point we should pause to analyze Marx's theoretical proof more closely. Lapin was correct when he said that Marx's analysis of philosophical history here was still "incomplete and fragmentary."⁴⁵ I believe that Marx at this point was still unable to scientifically **differentiate between different kinds of materialism.** His

⁴¹Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," p. 307 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," p. 166).

⁴²*ibid.*, p. 308 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," p. 167).

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 308 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," p. 167).

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 308 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," pp. 167–168).

⁴⁵See Narskii, *Shijiu shiji Makesi zhuyi zhexue*, p. 177.

use of humanist logic as the criterion to differentiate between materialist schools of thought is flawed. In my opinion, in Marx's theoretical actions at this time, there were actually two forms of materialism that existed on different levels and in different consciousnesses. The first form is the **social** materialism in political economy that we have already discussed in depth earlier; of course it does not appear in this section of philosophical discussion. Even while discussing Hobbes and Locke, Marx did not realize the relation between English materialism and political economy, though he did mention the physiocrats when discussing Diderot. *In Marx's earlier economics discussion we can actually see the latent emergence of this materialist tendency. Later we will see a new materialist tendency that Marx expresses in his non-philosophical discussion.* The second form of materialism is **natural** materialism, which can be further divided into Bacon's empirical materialism and Descartes' rational materialism. I have realized that Marx's analysis here is exactly reversed. This is because humanist materialism was not formed on the basis of empirical materialism. Neither French materialists with humanist tendencies nor Feuerbach's humanism were founded on empiricism; on the contrary, they based their thinking on logical deduction to arrive at the human rationalism of innate human rights. In real social existence, empiricism can only face the sensuous reality of bourgeois society, though there had already emerged an important theoretical alliance: between the materialism of English empiricism and the socialism of English economics in classical bourgeois economics. *However, this theoretical line of thinking only became manifest in Marx's vision after Brussels Notes and Manchester Notes.*

Of course, we need to add here that from the perspective of underlying theoretical essence, these two forms of materialism were both idealist conceptions of history. *However, this underlying theoretical essence is only revealed after Marx's establishment of scientific historical materialism after 1845.*

4.1.4 The gradually strengthening new materialist tendencies in Marx's thinking

We already understand that in Marx's philosophical discourse, he actually consciously advocates combining the materialism of French "humanism" with real social life, as well as the humanist materialism of Feuerbach with socialist revolution. I have discovered that in these efforts, Marx has advanced materialist philosophy; this advance does not come from philosophy, but rather gains dynamism from economics. Tuchscheerer's views on this point are worth reviewing: "The more Marx approaches historical materialism, the deeper grows his study of political economy."⁴⁶ However, reversing this idea is also valid: **the deeper Marx delved in his study of political economy, the closer he came to historical materialism.**

In "Critical Commentary No. 2," which discusses political economy, Marx comments: "Private property drives itself in its economic movement towards its own

⁴⁶Tuchscheerer, *Bevor "Das Kapital" entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, p. 255 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 192).

dissolution, but only through a development which does not depend on it, which is unconscious and which takes place against the will of private property by the very nature of things.”⁴⁷ This is the **objective logic** of economic reality. More importantly, Marx clearly points out that the emancipation of the proletariat cannot be merely expressed as theoretical criticism and ethical opposition to bourgeois social reality: “[the proletariat] cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing **all** the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation.”⁴⁸ In “Critical Commentary No. 5,” Marx goes on to point out: “Property, capital, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain but very practical, very objective products of their self-estrangement and that therefore they must be abolished in a practical, objective way.”⁴⁹ Unlike Marx’s earlier logical deduction in his analysis of the opposition between theory and practice, as well as the self-estrangement of man’s species essence in political economy, we see here that what Marx emphasizes is the **necessity** of the abolishment of private property in the **real development of the objective economic movement**. The realization of this necessity can only be achieved through **objectively reforming society’s living conditions**. This important line of thinking could not be contained by the old materialism; I believe that it is a new materialist line of thinking that began to grow and become clear in Marx’s thinking. Its theoretical basis was economics. While in the *1844 Manuscript* there was only an objective analytical line of thinking based in reality that existed in conjunction with humanist critical logic, what we see here is a new materialist logic that focused on **reforming real social material**, even if it had not yet departed from the overall logical framework of humanism.

Soon after, Marx writes an extremely important thought: “Not in vain does [the proletariat] go through the stern but steeling school of **labor**.” Here Marx highlights “labor,” not referring to the concept of “estranged labor.” In the previous paragraph, Marx had already begun using “hired labor.” *Later, we will see that in the text of On List, Marx both accentuates and puts quotation marks around labor*. This is the precursor to the abolishment of humanist philosophical logic, and represents a significant shift in discourse.

In “Critical Commentary No. 3,” Marx praises Proudhon’s work as “the scientific manifesto of the French proletariat,” because he “wishes to abolish the practically estranged relation of man to his **objective essence** and the **economic** expression of human self-estrangement.” However, “since his criticism of political economy is still captive to the premises of political economy, the re-appropriation of the objective world itself is still conceived in the economic form of **possession**.”⁵⁰ To use Marx’s critical words in the third interpolation of the third notebook in the *1844 Manuscript* which were directed at German socialism, this is “making everybody a capitalist.” Marx at this time had not yet realized the flawed essence of Proudhon’s petty bourgeoisie standpoint, as well as his whole methodology and

⁴⁷Marx and Engels, “*Holy Family*,” p. 206 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 44).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. 207 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 45).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 224 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 66).

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 213 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazhu,” p. 52).

worldview. *This would not come until after he established historical materialism and the historical dialectic and thus completed his scientific criticism of Proudhon in The Poverty of Philosophy from a political standpoint and a scientific methodology. Marx's surmounting of Proudhon's mistakes also came after he established Marxist political economy (in Grundrisse).* Nevertheless, Marx did write the following exciting idea: Proudhon's "**equal possession**" was a political economic idea (in other words, it was not an essential criticism), and therefore was still the estranged expression of the following fact:

The object as being for man, as the objective being of man, is at the same time the existence of man for other men, his human relation to other men, the social behavior of man to man. Proudhon abolishes economic estrangement within economic estrangement.⁵¹

Lenin referred to this statement as an expression of Marx's move towards his own system, towards "the thinking of productive social relations."⁵² We have already seen that in Notes on Mill, young Marx brings up true social relations; however, in the third notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx specifically defines a genuine social existence. Since these were all manuscripts to which Lenin did not have access, does their emergence change Lenin's views on this point? The answer is no. To find out why this is the case, let us conduct a deeper analysis of this point. First, the object of which Marx speaks here is not natural material, but rather the result of human labor production; this is the meaning of "being for man" (a modification of Kant's "thing-in-itself" and Hegel's "second nature"). Second, this being for man is realized in objective form; specifically, it is in the form of products (money) external to man, which are the estranged existence of man. Third, the production of products (money) is not for its own needs, but rather for exchange; thus it is "**existence for other men.**" Fourth, most importantly, Marx realized that the essence of this objective existence for other men was **exchange**: "[man's] human relation to other men [is] the **social behavior of man to man.**" I believe that the social relations of which Marx speaks here are no longer part of the **genuine** species-essence in *Notes on Mill* and the *1844 Manuscript*, but rather the objective economic relations between humans in reality. Although Marx here still refutes these "estranged," apparently objective social relations, they are the basis for the scientific category of **production relations**. Therefore, Lenin's analysis of this point is still correct.

In the specific criticism and analysis in *The Holy Family* of "criticism," we often see the shadow of this new materialism. In Chapter six, Marx writes: "The '**idea**' always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the '**interest**'."⁵³ The "interest" that determines the "idea" here is certainly no longer general abstract material or sensuous material substance, but rather the conditions of human social life. Using the 1789 French Revolution as his example, Marx explains how the

⁵¹*ibid.*, p. 213 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 52).

⁵²Lenin, "Conspectus of the Book *The Holy Family* by Marx and Engels," p. 30 (Chinese transl.: "Makesi he Engesi Shensheng jiazu yishu zhaiyao," p. 13).

⁵³Marx and Engels, "*Holy Family*," p. 253 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazu," p. 103).

interest of the bourgeoisie becomes confused with the interests of all **mankind**, then achieves overwhelming victory. “[This] **interest** was so powerful that it was victorious over the pen of Marat, the guillotine of the Terror and the sword of Napoleon as well as the crucifix and the blue blood of the Bourbons.” It was not until later that the proletariat realized that this “idea” of all mankind was actually nothing but the interest of the bourgeoisie, because “[the proletariat’s] real conditions for emancipation were essentially different from the conditions within which the bourgeoisie could emancipate itself and society.”⁵⁴ In essence, these conditions were first economic interest, then political interest. Therefore, the proletariat class needed to have its own “idea” weapons. Marx points out that for the proletariat to rise, “it is not enough to do so in **thought** and to leave hanging over one’s **real sensuously perceptible** head the **real sensuously perceptible** yoke that cannot be subtilized away with ideas.”⁵⁵ What is important is not opposition to ideas and attempts to change them in general, but rather to change the real social conditions of production. It is evident that the theoretical relation here is no longer that natural material determines consciousness, but rather that the **social living conditions of man control ideas**. The essence of these relations are actually already part of the social materialist notion that social existence determines consciousness.

To Bauer’s one-sided belief that Hegel connects the “individual selfish atoms” of society with universal state order, Marx retorts that individuals in civil society are not atoms in a vacuum, but rather human individuals in real relationships. Writing about civil society, Marx writes:

Every activity and property of his being, every one of his vital urges, becomes a **need**, a **necessity**, which his **self-seeking** transforms into seeking for other things and human beings outside him. But since the need of one individual has no self-evident meaning for another egoistic individual capable of satisfying that need, and therefore no direct connection with its satisfaction, each individual has to create this connection; it thus becomes the intermediary between the need of another and the objects of this need.⁵⁶

This discussion of needs is reminiscent of Marx’s viewpoints in the 1844 Manuscript. Marx goes on to point out that “**civil**, not **political** life is their **real** tie.” By “civil life,” Marx evidently means economic life. Therefore, “it is **natural necessity**, the **essential human properties** however estranged they may seem to be, and **interest** that hold the members of civil society together.”⁵⁷ In fact, Marx is already explaining the economic (interest) relations between people. Therefore, Marx again points out that it is not politics and the state the determine civil society, but rather that “the state is held together by civil life.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, it is on this theoretical foundation that we can see a completely new concept of society develop in Marx’s

⁵⁴Marx and Engels, “**Holy Family**,” p. 253 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 105).

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. 254 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 105).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 296 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 154).

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. 296 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 154).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 296 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 154).

thinking at this point. Facing “modern bourgeois society” in reality, Marx confirms a “society of industry, of universal competition, of private interest freely pursuing its aims, of anarchy, of self-estranged natural and spiritual individuality.”⁵⁹ Please note that this is no longer the abstract species-existence of the essence as in the *1844 Manuscript*, nor is it a genuine, unselfish social qualification, but rather **real society that objectively exists**. This theoretical point represents an important advance in Marx’s philosophical logic; it is based on this that Lenin claims Marx incisively and clearly points out and emphasizes his worldview and fundamental principles.

More importantly, Marx’s philosophy beings to break from the confines of old materialism — he directly discusses **objective practice**. Marx suggests that “Ideas **cannot carry out anything** at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who can exert practical force.”⁶⁰ Writing on socialist criticism, Marx continues:

[Socialism] is not an abstract, preternatural personality outside mankind; it is the **real human activity** of individuals who are active members of society and who suffer, feel, think and act as human beings. That is why their criticism is at the same time practical, their communism a socialism in which they give practical, concrete measures, and in which they not only think but even more act, it is the living, real criticism of existing society.⁶¹

It is clear that Marx is already defining an objective, practical action as opposed to subjective thought — real social revolution.

In discussing the historical development of the Jewish essence, Marx clearly explained that this development could only take place in “**industrial practice**.” Its existence can only be explained on the actual basis of civil society. At the same time, completely abolishing this essence of Jewry means “abolishing the inhumanity of the present-day practice of life, the most extreme expression of which is the **money system**.”⁶² In criticizing the false conception of history based in ideal principles espoused by Bauer and others, Marx asks:

Does Critical Criticism believe that it has reached even the **beginning** of a knowledge of historical reality so long as it excludes **from** the historical movement the theoretical and practical relation of man to nature, i. e., natural science and industry? Or does it think that it actually knows any period without knowing, for example, the industry of that period, the immediate mode of Production of life itself?⁶³

Marx has already clearly pointed out that the **origin of history is material production**.⁶⁴ The qualification of industry with practice, analyzing history with

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 298 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 156).

⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. 294 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 152).

⁶¹*ibid.*, p. 331 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 195).

⁶²*ibid.*, p. 283 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 141).

⁶³*ibid.*, p. 327 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 191).

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 327 (Chinese transl.: “Shensheng jiazu,” p. 191).

material production, understanding historical periods with particular modes of production — it is obvious that these already constitute a completely new philosophical discourse. “Industry,” “material production,” and “modes of production” are no longer concepts from traditional philosophical categories, but without exception belong in the category of economics. These important thoughts are fundamentally different from the humanist materialism that Marx displays in the same book. This is a logical opposition and conflict that exists in the same book. This indicates that Marx is rapidly approaching the scientific philosophical revolution that would overthrow the old theoretical paradigms.

4.2 Non-strategy: The Subintentional Overthrow of Humanist Logic

The newly discovered *Draft of an Article on Friedrich List's book: Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie* (abbreviated below as *On List*) is an extremely important theoretical text. I believe that in Marx's direct, conscious political criticism of List's economics, there developed an unconscious, though important, structure of philosophical logic. This is the true collapse of Marx's humanist estrangement conception of history, a logical framework that began with the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, took form in *Notes on Mill* and the *1844 Manuscript*, and continued to occupy a dominant position in *The Holy Family*. Of course, from the perspective of Marx's textual context at the time, this structure was not dominant, intentional theoretical logical strategy, but was the unintentional result that came under the influence of objective economic facts. Therefore, *On List* fills the gap between *The Holy Family* and *Theses on Feuerbach*; in other words, it fills a large theoretical gap in the logical progression of Marx's second great philosophical shift.

4.2.1 Early excerpts and study for *Brussels Notes A*

On January 25, 1845, Marx was evicted by Paris authorities. On February 1, Marx moved from Paris to Brussels in Belgium. On the same day, at the same time that Marx was leaving Paris, he signed a publication contract. In the contract, Marx was to submit a two volume manuscript criticizing political economy, with each manuscript containing over twenty pages, to the publisher Carl Friedrich Julius Leske in Darmstadt, Germany. As such, after reaching Brussels, Marx submerged himself in political economic studies, beginning the second phase of economics research that would last from 1845 to 1849. This plunge into economics theory would accompany Marx's second great philosophical shift, the establishment of a scientific worldview and scientific socialism.

In Brussels, Marx first wrote a group excerpts in February, including, altogether, three notebooks. *For convenience, we will refer to this group of excerpts as Brussels Notes A; they are also referred to as early excerpt notes.* From May to July, Marx wrote the second group of excerpts, this time in four notebooks.

*Brussels Notes B, or late excerpt notes.*⁶⁵ As a matter of fact, the *Brussels Notes* of which we speak here only precisely refers to the economics notes that Marx recorded before July, 1845 in Brussels. Between September, 1845 and 1849, Marx also took additional economics notes while living in Brussels.⁶⁶ *Here it is evident that Professor Tang Zaixin's claim that there are only two notebooks in Brussels Notes is incorrect.*⁶⁷ Because there are no organizing numbers used in this notebook, research on it has been more difficult. In volume 6 of *MEGA 1* we find a brief description of the content of these notes.⁶⁸ Under the title "Notebooks of Excerpts Taken by Marx at Brussels — Manchester — Brussels," it divides these 12 notebooks into "Brussels Notes" (first five notebooks, including, mistakenly, two notebooks of the *Paris Notes*, making seven notebooks total), *Manchester Notes* (three notebooks — these were directly labeled by Marx), and four notebooks of post-September, 1845 Brussels notes. In *MEGA 2*, these four notebooks, plus two newly discovered notebooks were included in the nine notebooks of "Manchester Notes."⁶⁹ In part four of *MEGA 2*, these are some of Marx's few early economics notes still in the process of editing. Let us begin with a study of the content of *Brussels Notes A*. *We will address Brussels Notes B in our discussion of Manchester Notes.*

Because this book of notes has been published only recently,⁷⁰ I began my initial research with the table of contents of *Brussels Notes* currently kept at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The textual layout of *Brussels Notes A* is as follows:

First Notebook: Octavo, 64 pages total, only 7 empty pages. The inside cover includes a page-long outline of the notebook. The first half of this notebook is a continuation of the *Buret Notes*, which came at the end of *Paris Notes*. This content includes 13 pages (This means that Paris Notes actually include seven and $\frac{1}{2}$ notebooks). Next, Marx includes excerpts from the French translation of Nassau William Senior's *Principes Fondamentaux d'Économie Politique* (1835). This content includes 15 pages, after which comes 28 pages of excerpts from the second volume of Sismondi's *Études sur l'Économie Politique* (1837).

Second Notebook: Octavo, 44 pages total, 24 empty pages. The inside cover again includes an outline of the content of this notebook. The first four pages include four pages of excerpts from Jean Baptiste Say's *The Primary Causes of the Wealth and Poverty of Nations and Individuals*. The next 13 pages are composed of excerpts from the first volume of Sismondi's *Études sur l'Économie Politique* (1837). Next is 1 page of excerpts from C. G. de Chamborant's *On Poverty: The Ancient and Modern Situation*.⁷¹ Last is another 1 page of excerpts from Alban

⁶⁵MEGA 2 vol. IV/3, Akademie Verlag (Berlin), 1998. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁶⁶*Exzerpte und Notizen September 1846 bis Dezember 1847*, vol. IV/6 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, 1983).

⁶⁷Refer to Tang, *Makesi jingjixue shougao yanjiu*, pp. 3–4.

⁶⁸Karl Marx, "Exzerptheft von Marx: Brüssel — Manchester — Brüssel 1845–1847," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 1*, I/6:597–618.

⁶⁹See MEGA 2 vol. IV/4, Dietz Verlag (Berlin), 1988. The fifth volume is still under preparation.

⁷⁰MEGA 2 vol. IV/3, Akademie Verlag (Berlin), 1998.

⁷¹Original title: *Du paupérisme: ce qu'il était dans l'antiquité, ce qu'il est de nos jours*.

de Villeneuve-Bargemont's *Christian Political Economy, or an Examination into the Causes of Pauperism in France and Europe, and of the Means of Preventing and Alleviating it*.⁷²

Third Notebook: folded sheets, 36 pages total, with two blank pages. First are 7 pages of excerpts from Pecchio's *History of Italy's Political Economy*. Next are 3 pages of excerpts from John Ramsay McCulloch's *A Discourse on the Rise, Progress, Peculiar Objects and Importance of Political Economy*. Next are 6 pages of excerpts from Garnier's *Comparative Study of the Various Systems of Political Economy*.⁷³ Next comes one page of excerpts from Blanqui's *The Development of European Political Economy from Ancient to Modern Times*. Finally come 4 pages of excerpts from the books of Necker, Brissot and John Watts.

I have determined the order of these three notebooks. I believe that as Marx again began to study political economy in February while living in Brussels, he first continued the same train of thought from *Paris Notes* and *Buret Notes* (the bulk of this content is made up of an exposition of the poverty of the French and English working class in bourgeois society). He first took excerpts from Senior, though he returned to the study of the poverty of the people in his excerpts from the second volume of Sismondi's *Études sur l'Économie Politique*. Therefore, the majority of the excerpts in the second notebook are from political economic works analyzing the question of poverty (Say, Sismondi, C. G. de Chamborant, de Villeneuve-Bargemont). However, after taking the excerpts from these last two works, Marx developed two extremely important theoretical turning points. First, he discovered that **poverty itself was innately different in each particular period of social history**. From ancient to modern times, the content and nature of poverty was extremely different. The poverty with which Christian political economy dealt was medieval poverty, while the poverty that afflicted modern man was the poverty that existed in bourgeois society. This means that **each particular age had particular social determinations**. Second and more importantly, Marx realized that different attitudes towards poverty, i. e., approaching the problem from different theoretical standpoints, would lead to completely different conclusions towards social problems. For instance, Say approached the issue from the standpoint of political economy, Sismondi from the standpoint of small producers, and Buret from the standpoint of the proletariat; the differences in their approaches caused their theoretical attitudes to be fundamentally different. This phenomenon caused Marx to develop a new orientation in his research: **to completely understand the history and different schools of political economic thought**. This formed the content of the third notebook.

I believe that Marx's research on economics had a great influence in driving his philosophical thought at this time. This driving influence can first be seen in his text *On List*, written in March.

⁷²Original title: *Économie politique chrétienne*, Paris 1834. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

⁷³Original title: *Abrégé élémentaire des principes de l'économie politique*.

4.2.2 The “German characteristics” in List and economic development

Commenting on young Marx’s shift in philosophical thinking, the French philosopher Althusser once wrote in the 1960s: “Works written in the darkness just before dawn are always those furthest from the sun that is about to rise.” In our context, the “sun” refers to the 1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*, the “darkness just before dawn” refers to the 1844 *Manuscript*, which Western Marxist Humanists and Eastern-European Neo-Marxist Humanists seem unwilling to touch. Except for the influence of his structuralist methodology, Althusser’s research can be considered the most precise, most hermeneutically rich study in the textual research of Marx’s writing at the time. *This level of depth in research shown by Althusser was not equaled until the late 1960s, by the Soviet scholar Georgi Bagaturija and the German scholar Tuchscheerer; it was not surpassed until the 1970s by the German scholar Alfred Schmidt and the Japanese scholar Hiromatsu Wataru.* However, with the discovery of *Draft of an Article on Friedrich List’s book: Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie* among Marx’s files kept by the grandson of Marx’s oldest daughter Jenny Longuet in 1971, new light was shed on the manuscript written in the darkness just before the rising of the figurative sun. This discredits the “scientific” logic of Althusser’s theoretical interpretation. Strangely enough, the appearance of this text did not raise significant scholarly interest in China or elsewhere. In some of the works on Marxist philosophical history in the Soviet Union and China, many authoritative scholars only superficially identify this economic text as a preparation for the development of Marx’s concept of “productive force.” *I have already pointed out this misconception.*⁷⁴

Because of the great theoretical differences between the German economist Friedrich List and the early political economists that we discussed in the first chapter, before beginning a formal discussion of Marx’s *On List*, we must first analyze the basic theoretical logic of List and his economics thinking, both of which lie at the center of the critical context of *On List*.

Friedrich List⁷⁵ was a modern German economist; he is considered one of the representative figures of the Historic School of German economics. The Germany with which List was confronted in his day, relative to the more advanced English and French societies, was an economically backward country that still relied on a feudal system of serfdom. The rule of the country was still controlled by the *Junker* landowning class, and between the 38 principalities — sometimes even between different counties within the principalities — there were high tariff barriers and local taxes. This seriously hindered the flow of goods and the development of a market. In short, these conditions were extremely unfavorable for the development of Germany’s new bourgeois society. At this time, List entered the historical scene as the theoretical representative of Germany’s industrial capitalists and began to push

⁷⁴See the second subsection, first section, second chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁷⁵**Friedrich List** (1789–1846) was a German economist. List was born in 1789 to a prosperous family of tanners at Reutlingen, Germany. In 1817, he became a professor of economics and politics at Tübingen University. His major works include: *Outline of American Political Economy* (1827), *Das Natürliche System der Politischen Ökonomie* (1837), and *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie* (1841).

for two different kinds of reform: first, to abolish the tariffs between the various German principalities, thus providing the necessary conditions for the development of bourgeois society's domestic commodity economy. In order to accomplish this goal, in Frankfurt in 1819 he advocated creating the German chamber of industrial commerce. After being selected as the representative of the chamber in 1820, he proposed sweeping reforms in the realms of law, administration, and taxation; because of this, he was persecuted by the German *Junker* nobility, finally being forced to flee to the United States from 1825–1832. The second kind of reform that List advocated was List's opposition to the false cosmopolitical free trade promoted by English and French economists. His opposition came because when faced with the advanced bourgeois society of England and France, Germany was naturally at a competitive disadvantage. Thus List advocated a protectionist policy of high national tariffs and the establishment of a tariff union encompassing all of Germany. This is what led List to become the theoretical ancestor of the theory of **trade protectionism**.

While in the United States, List actively participated in the debate between the American free trade and protectionist schools of thought. *Outline of American Political Economy*⁷⁶ (composed of 12 letters written by List to Charles J. Ingersoll) and *Appendum to Outline of American Political Economy* were two pamphlets written as List's contribution to this debate. After emigrating to France in 1837, List wrote *The Natural System of Political Economy. This book was written in response to a call for essays by the French Political and Moral Scientific Institute; after it did not win the competition it was not published until 1927, over half a century after List's death*. In 1841 List published his major work, volume one of *The National System of Political Economy: International Trade, Trade Policy, and the German Tariff Union* (this was Marx's critical object at this time). Immediately after its publishing, List's work caused a great stir in Germany, because it appeared to represent the fundamental interest of Germany's young bourgeois class while opposing the feudal economic relations that existed in Germany at the time while as well as the invasion of the old brand of foreign bourgeois social forces. At the time, it was thought that this book indicated the developmental path of Germany's bourgeois society. Therefore, it was natural that this book was considered the economic "manifesto" of Germany's bourgeoisie.

Unlike the appraisals given by past economic historians in China, I believe that List's work contains many obviously valuable ideas worthy of our approval. Maintaining the standpoint of the undeveloped national bourgeoisie, he used a set of theoretical viewpoints based in a form of "national economics," which protected the interests of German property owners, in order to oppose the "world economics" of classical economics. List may be one of the first economists to support the basic premise of classical economics while also proposing the **national character of economic development**. Unlike the so-called cosmopoliticalism of classical economists such as Smith and Ricardo, List viewed political economy as a science that studied the **particular economic developmental paths of individual nations**. He saw the

⁷⁶Friedrich List, *Outline of American Political Economy*, in deutscher Übersetzung [Umriss einer amerikanischen politischen Ökonomie] ([Philadelphia]: [Samuel Parker], [1827]), 171–253.

most important part of political economic research as the analysis of the different developmental stages of different countries and regions. *This was also an important principle of the historicists in German economics, represented by Wilhelm Roscher. In analyzing the concrete path of the development of political economy, Roscher and other historicists suggested the historical perspective of “moving from rationality to irrationality.”*⁷⁷ I believe that this is an early appearance of the “exceptionalist” theory in the analysis of social historical development. List’s viewpoint here cannot be easily refuted. We now turn to a brief analysis of List’s theoretical proof.

List’s views are most easily found in his *The Natural System of Political Economy* and *The National System of Political Economy*. In his theoretical analysis, List sees the theoretical basis of classical economics as a “theory of value” that emphasizes wealth itself. Therefore, he proposes a national “theory of productive force” that focuses on the force that creates wealth. *List said himself that the French economist Charles Dupin in his book Forces productives et forces commerciales de la France was the first to have recognized the importance of forces of production.*⁷⁸ List metaphorically the teacher of the “theory of value” was the “consumer,” while the teacher of the “theory of producing” was the “producer,” which emphasized the result of wealth and the power of production.⁷⁹ Relatively speaking, the former’s “emphasis on material products greatly surpassed its emphasis on the creative force that makes possible the production of material products.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, List believes that “[Producing] power is of more importance than wealth,” because a nation’s producing power is a dynamic force that “enables the nation to open up new productive sources... because the forces of production are the tree on which wealth grows, and because the tree which bears the fruit is of greater value than the fruit itself.”⁸¹ List even goes on to point out that “the condition of nations is principally dependent on the sum of their productive powers.”⁸² I believe that List’s views on this subject are extremely important and valuable to social historical theory. This is because the **viewpoint of producing power** actually represents the first time that theory has escaped from the **material** understanding of the basis of society, confirming the qualification of the **utility** of the basis of society. **The movement from resultant wealth to phylogenetic producing power** is an enormous advancement in the conception of history. *It is evident that Marx’s concepts of material productive force in historical materialism was influenced by this viewpoint of List.* At the same time, List also observed the effects and counter-effects between political power, productive force, and wealth,

⁷⁷For a detailed discussion of Roscher’s historical perspective and its logical problems see Max Weber’s *Roscher und Knies und die logischen Probleme der historischen Nationalökonomie* in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1985). (Editor’s note for the English edition.)

⁷⁸Charles Dupin, *Forces productives et commerciales de la France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Bachelier, 1827).

⁷⁹Friedrich List, *Das Natürliche System der Politischen Ökonomie*, ed. Günter Fabiunke (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, [1837] 1961), pp. 28, 32 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue de ziran tixi*, p. 32).

⁸⁰*ibid.*, pp. 246–247 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue de ziran tixi*, p. 183).

⁸¹List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 130 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue de guomin tixi*, pp. 46–47).

⁸²*ibid.*, pp. 192–193 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjizue de guomin tixi*, p. 119).

realizing that there is a mutually influential relationship between material force and mental force.⁸³ Of course, the productive force of which List speaks here is the sum of material and cultural force, an extremely vague conclusion. Why is this the case? Let us turn to his own analysis.

In List's opinion, industrial productive force was the most important. "Industry is the mother of science, literature, art, enlightenment, freedom, beneficial systems, national power, and independence."⁸⁴ He continues: "The independence and power of a nation depends on the independence of its industry and the development of its forces of production."⁸⁵ This analysis is correct; however, unlike agricultural production, the development of industry at its most basic level is dependent on the advance of science. Here List was in direct opposition to Smith's labor theory of value, because List believed that the **physical labor** of "man's hands and feet" was not the sole source of all wealth; more important than this labor was the power source that motivates this labor — science and technology, and above all intellectual capacity.⁸⁶ Therefore, List criticizes Smith in that he "explains productive force from a completely materialist perspective."⁸⁷ List proposes that productive forces depend on the intelligence and social conditions of individuals; therefore, the development of English society's producing power comes "in large measure because of its victory in science and technology."⁸⁸ *Objectively speaking, he is nearing the viewpoint that science and technology are productive forces.*⁸⁹ At the same time, List was opposed to the idea promulgated by a few economists that the production of material wealth was **individual** production, because "the producing power of all individuals is to a great extent determined by the social and political circumstances of the nation."⁹⁰ Here he remarks that the interplay between social and individual forces with social conditions are, in reality, the social positioning of producing power. List, more so than Smith and other classical economists, overemphasizes the positive aspect of the division of labor. He points out that the development of production is "not merely a 'division' of labor, but a division of different commercial operations between several individuals, and at the same time a '**confederation**' or union of various energies, intelligences, and powers on behalf of a **common production**."⁹¹ This "confederation" is, itself, producing

⁸³List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 132–133 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, pp. 49–50).

⁸⁴List, *Das Natürliche System der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 77 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 66).

⁸⁵List to Charles J. Ingersoll, Esq., Reading, 18 July 1827, in *Problematisches zu Friedrich List. Mit Anhang: Lists Briefe aus Amerika*, in deutscher Übersetzung (Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld, 1908), p. 200 (Chinese transl.: Friedrich List [Fulidexi Lisite 弗里德里希·李斯特], *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, 政治经济学的自然体系, trans. Yang Chunxue 杨春学 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1997), p. 222).

⁸⁶List, *Das Natürliche System der Politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 249–250 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, pp. 185–187).

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 257 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 193).

⁸⁸List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 132 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, p. 49).

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 238 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, p. 174).

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 154 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, p. 75).

⁹¹*ibid.*, p. 204 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, pp. 132–133).

power. *We can see that this is the theoretical birthplace for similar ideas by Marx and Hess.*

Because of this, basing his analysis on the **level of development of producing power**, List criticizes the falsity of the idea of cosmopolitical trade begun by Quesnay and continued through Smith and Say. Instead, List emphasizes that the level of development of producing power is different for every country, and therefore there could not truly be “laissez-faire” free trade and commercial exchange. Different levels of producing power necessarily lead to “enormous differences between countries” — some are agricultural, some are industrial, some are rich in natural resources, others resource-poor. Therefore, “can we use a policy that demands unanimity for all the different countries?”⁹² For example, if backward Germany and advanced England were to engage in economic exchange, England (the capitalist) would be the sole beneficiary. List points out: “The so-called English free trade is the right of the English to freely sell its own manufactures and the products of its colonies throughout the entire world.” The actual result is that the English “are able to control the trade and industry of weaker nations, binding them into slavery.”⁹³ If free trade is separated from the concrete conditions of particular countries, it will only be false. Therefore, List believes that economics must focus on the **particular nature** of specific countries and regions; its essence can only be the study of specific countries. “[True political economy] teaches how a **given nation** in the present state of the world and its own special national relations can maintain and improve its economical conditions.”⁹⁴ Based on this foundation, List argues that “each country must develop its producing power based on its own national conditions.”⁹⁵ He continues: “In the process of developing producing power, each country must walk its own road according to its particular national conditions.”⁹⁶ *It can be said that this is the earliest viewpoint of **development based on national characteristics**.* Classical economics, on the other hand, advocated free trade cosmopoliticalism; this system can only be realized after a majority of countries approach similar levels of industrial and cultural development.

Finally, let us briefly mention List’s ideas on national intervention in economics, a practical application of the theories we have been discussing. Because different countries are at different levels of economic development, it is impossible for these countries to engage in equal free competition. Therefore, countries that are temporarily economically backward must avoid unequal economic exchange with powerful countries by using national administrative intervention. More specifically, this is trade protectionist policies, such as Germany’s “tariff union” of the time (List calls this a manifestation of “national spirit”). *List breaks a country’s economic development into five stages: the primitive, uncivilized period, the an-*

⁹²List, *Das Natürliche System der Politischen Ökonomie*, pp.42–43 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 40).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 16 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 22).

⁹⁴List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 185 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, p. 109).

⁹⁵List to Charles J. Ingersoll, Esq., Reading, 19 July 1827, in Köhler, *Problematisches zu Friedrich List. Mit Anhang: Lists Briefe aus Amerika*, p. 209 (Chinese transl.: List, *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 229).

⁹⁶List to Ingersoll (V), p. 214 (Chinese transl.: List, *Zhengzhi jingjixue de ziran tixi*, p. 233).

imal husbandry period, the agricultural period, the agricultural-industrial period, and the agricultural-industrial-commercial period. For a given country to attain a certain level of economic development before engaging in free trade, demonstrates, according to List, the country's natural desire for independence and power.⁹⁷ This is the theoretical foundation of the well-known theory of trade protectionism.

I must point out that List's ideas here on economics had an inspiring effect on theories of scientific history. However, at this time, these viewpoints opened a new theoretical panorama for Marx and Engels, both of whom stood advocated the position of the proletariat.

4.2.3 The textual structure of *On List* and Marx's economic criticism

In the fall of 1844, three years after the publishing of *The National System of Political Economy* and soon after the completion of their critique of the idealism of the Bauer brothers in *The Holy Family*, Marx and Engels happened to decide to criticize the German economist Friedrich List, whose analysis did not stray as far from reality.

Marx was first exposed to List's work through Engels. *On page 20 of Marx's 1844–1847 Notes, he has written “+8, List (Engels).” This indicates that Engels purchased List's book in Paris for 8 Francs.* On November 19, 1844, in a letter from Engels to Marx, he mentions that he intends to write “a pamphlet opposing, in particular, **List**.” From the content of this letter, it was Engels' intention to expose the truth that the German bourgeoisie was “as evil as the English bourgeoisie, only that in extortion it is not as brave, not as comprehensive, not as wily.”⁹⁸ On January 20, 1845, Engels wrote in another letter: “I wish I had less on my hands so that I could do some things which would be more cogent and effective in regard both to the present moment and to the German bourgeoisie.”⁹⁹ As a matter of fact, in Engels' speech at Elberfeld on February 15, he already criticized List's views on protective tariffs from the perspective of the actual condition and future of Germany's economic development.¹⁰⁰ On March 17, Engels once again told Marx that he heard from Puttman that Marx had also coincidentally begun a critique of List. However, Engels wrote that he planned to “discuss List **practically**, to develop the **practical** consequences of his system,” while Marx would “deal with his **premises** rather than with his conclusions.”¹⁰¹ The article that Engels mentions here would still not be finished by October 1846.¹⁰²

⁹⁷List, *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 223–225 (Chinese transl.: *Zhengzhi jingjixue de guomin tixi*, pp. 154–157).

⁹⁸Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Paris, Barmen, 19 November 1844, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/1, p. 251 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 11).

⁹⁹Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Paris, Barmen, 20 January 1845, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/1, pp. 260–261 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 18).

¹⁰⁰Friedrich Engels, “Zwei Reden in Elberfeld,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 1*, vol. I/4, pp. 383–387 (Chinese transl.: “Zai Aibeifeite de yanshuo,” pp. 619–623).

¹⁰¹Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Barmen, 17 March 1845, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/1, p. 272 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er, p. 30).

¹⁰²Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Paris, 18 October 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 51 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er, p. 67).

According to the theoretical classification conducted by Engels, Marx's important article, which concentrates on criticizing List's "theoretical premises," is primarily an economic text. This is the first non-note taking text written by Marx in the second stage of his economics research. It is also the second penultimate text leading up to the philosophical shift that took place in *Theses on Feuerbach*. This manuscript was not copied. From the condition of the manuscript, it appears to be an unfinished work. There are 24 existing printed pages of the existing manuscript, of which the first printed page, as well as pages 10–21 and page 23 are missing. However, from the remaining pages we are offered a clear look into the basic theoretical base and primary viewpoints of Marx at this time. This article is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is relatively complete: it is a general commentary on List's economics. *As the first page is missing, the editor/translator of the Russian version put the title "1, General Characterization of List" at the top of page 2.* There are four sections in the first chapter, of which the beginning of sections 1 and 2 are missing. The title of the second chapter is the original title written by Marx: "The Theory of Productive Forces and the Theory of Exchange Values." Given the existing manuscript, this chapter appears to be incomplete. The first section contains a detailed critique of List's theory of productive forces, and although Marx does not write section titles, all five sub-sections in the first section of chapter two appear to be complete. The next section is entitled "Force, Productive Force, Causes." Unfortunately, pages 10–21 of this section are missing, including the second half of chapter two and most of chapter three. Page 23 is also missing, with the result being that only a fragment of chapter three remains. The title of chapter four is "Herr List and Ferrier." Although the content of its three sections appears to be complete, it still reads as though it is simply an unfinished writing outline.

After understanding of this important subsidiary theoretical background, we can begin our analysis of Marx's *On List*. According to the interpretive orientation that I present here, chapters one, three, and four deal basically with economics, while chapter two is a little different. The conclusions of my interpretation of chapter two are exciting. According to my understanding, the most important content of this economics text is not economic, but rather the **unconscious philosophical discourse-shift** that Marx manifests in his economics critique.

Of course, there is another point that we have to explain. Overall, as an economics text, the quality of economics research in this text had not yet surpassed *The Holy Family*. This is because Marx's basic attitude towards classical economics at this time had not yet fundamentally changed. We can see from the text that Marx still refutes classical economics, though there are the beginnings of some subtle changes. Marx writes: "the English and French bourgeoisie, as represented by its first — at least at the beginning of its domination — scientific spokesmen of political economy, elevated wealth into a god and ruthlessly sacrificed everything else to it." Marx calls this theory "frank, classic cynicism."¹⁰³ This is because

¹⁰³Karl Marx, "Friedrich List: Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie. Bd. 1," vol. 3 (Berlin: Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, 1972), p. 426 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 240).

this school of thought “cynically betrayed the **secret** of wealth... [presupposing] the present-day bourgeois society of competition and free trade.”¹⁰⁴ Marx believes that present-day economics begins in the social system of competition. Its principle is free labor, i. e., indirect, self-huckstering slavery. It’s earliest principles were the division of labor and machines, both of which only attain the highest level of development in factories. Therefore, “Thus political economy today starts out from the factories as its creative principle.”¹⁰⁵ *Later we will specifically discover that Marx was incorrect in making the productive relations of bourgeois society equal to industry (factories). This mistake is similar to his inability to differentiate between productive relations and productive forces.* However, we discover that Marx here can already historically see that “Ricardo’s theory of land rent is nothing but the economic expression of a life-and-death struggle of the industrial bourgeois against the landowners.”¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, “increasing production is not proportional to the income of the whole country, or especially to the income of each class,” a condition that led to an economic critique of Sismondi.¹⁰⁷ From a deeper perspective of economic theoretical research, Marx had already realized that “exchange value is entirely independent of the specific nature of the ‘material goods.’ It is independent of both the quality and the quantity of material goods.” More importantly, Marx had already clearly pointed out that “the conversion of material goods into exchange values is a result of the existing social system, of the society of developed private property. The **abolition of exchange value** is the abolition of **private property** and of **private acquisition**.”¹⁰⁸ These theoretical points are much more advanced than the viewpoints in the *1844 Manuscript* and *The Holy Family*. It is interesting that although here Marx already refers to List’s economics views as “prey to the economic prejudices of the old political economy,” he does not attempt to define what **new political economy** is.¹⁰⁹

In the first chapter of this work, Marx first gives a general characterization of List’s economics views, primarily focusing on a historical explanation of the differences between the bourgeois societies of England/France and Germany. *Marx had already differentiated between the bourgeois societies of England/France and Germany. He believed that the bourgeoisie in England and France were already “outdated and rotten systems” that needed to be abolished. In Germany, on the other hand, the bourgeoisie was referred to as the rising sun of a bright future.*¹¹⁰ Therefore, List believed that Germany’s bourgeoisie had to change a name in order to demonstrate that it was different from the old bourgeois society of England and France. Marx and Engels were always against doing this. List’s economics was basically the real representation of the interest and ideology of Germany’s bourgeoisie, a “systematized” thing. Therefore, in Marx’s article, he heavily criticized

¹⁰⁴Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 426 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 241).

¹⁰⁵*ibid.*, p. 439 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 260).

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 430 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 247).

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, p. 430 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 246).

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 435 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 254).

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 435 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 253).

¹¹⁰Karl Marx, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/2, p. 174 (Chinese transl.: “Heige’er fazhexue pipan daoyan,” p. 457).

the reactionary essence of List's claim to represent national economic development, while in fact advocating the development of bourgeois society and "maintaining the status quo."¹¹¹ Marx points out that List only speaks "what is **sadder**" for the German bourgeois, because German capitalists want "to establish the domination of industry precisely at the unsuitable moment when the slavery of the majority resulting from this domination has become a generally known fact," (due to the intentional or unintentional revelation of this fact by English and French socialists) and establish bourgeois society in Germany.¹¹² Therefore, List cannot help but "pursue wealth while denying wealth," creating a new political "economy, in order to prove to himself and the world that he is right to also want to get rich."¹¹³ Therefore, List necessarily wants to oppose the English economists who "cynically betrayed the **secret** of wealth." List is against competition and free trade, against the national economy that was originally founded on "exchange value" and so-called cosmopolitics, precisely because he was afraid that the old English and French bourgeois would, through superior strength, steal his livelihood. He advocated government intervention in civil society to institute protectionist tariffs and thus get rich, creating a political economy established on the neutral "forces of production," all in order to prevent the English from exploiting his countrymen whilst creating an "even worse" exploitation of his countrymen at the same time.¹¹⁴ Marx concisely points out that List did not realize that bourgeois "economists merely give this social system a corresponding theoretical representation," and so were unwilling to concede on the domestic front those economic laws that he conceded on the international front — this is, of course, laughable idealism.

Marx's critique of List was both powerful and correct. However, Marx did not realize that if he could step away from the standpoint of economics and politics, he would see that List's theory emphasized the **particularity of social development under certain historical conditions** — this would later become the foundational idea of historical materialism. This is, of course, a theoretical advancement in terms of philosophy. List's use of this concept to serve the interests of the German bourgeoisie is what necessarily came under the criticism of Marx and Engels. If Marx had been able to reverse this theoretical point and dig deeper into the depths of history, the situation would have been completely different. *It is impossible for us to know if, as Marx established and deepened historical materialism between 1845 and 1847, he consciously became aware of this concept.*

I have discovered that at the end of the second printed page, there is a fragment of text that shows a different theoretical development than the overall critical method of *The Holy Family*. Marx writes that List's problem is that he does not study "real history," he does not understand that "the development of a science such as political economy is connected with the real movement of society."¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Marx remarks that the "real point of departure" of bourgeois political economy is "civil society... of which the different phases of development can be

¹¹¹Marx, "Notes on List," p. 425 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 240).

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 425 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 239).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 426 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 241).

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 433 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 250).

¹¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 426 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 242).

accurately traced in political economy.”¹¹⁶ Given List’s own bourgeois position, it is not surprising that he was unable to place the target of his criticism on real bourgeois society. What is most important here is that Marx uses the **historical, real, and concrete** phrase “different phases of development.” This is evidently a unique characteristic from the perspective of historical law. I believe that this characteristic is the direct result of Marx’s economics research in *Brussels Notes A*. Without **comparative** research in economics, it would have been impossible for Marx to have both discovered the **concrete relations between political economics and real bourgeois society** as well as the necessity of studying the **different, specific stages of economic development**. This is, of course, an important theoretical advancement. Considering the direct context of Marx’s thinking at this time, he is primarily pointing out that List must pay attention to the different stages of bourgeois society (“civil society”); though List exposes the corruption and decadence of English and French bourgeois society, he still attempts to prove the necessity for the emergence of this society, a line of reasoning which, for Marx, is absurd. I believe that here Marx unconsciously raises a transcendent issue, i. e., while it is important to return to reality from the ideal, the concrete analysis of social historical history is even more critical. However, I believe that this not a **conscious critical line of thinking** for Marx at this time, because if we push this viewpoint a little further, we can see the concrete divergence between bourgeois society and pre-bourgeois society; this objective comparison would later permit Marx to cease his simple refutation of bourgeois society, but rather concede the historically logical nature of bourgeois society. *This is what Marx was able to accomplish after writing The Poverty of Philosophy, and is especially evident in the historical, real, concrete, scientific analysis that he conducts of bourgeois society in The Communist Manifesto and Capital.* Thus Marx would be able to attain new philosophical depths and step towards true scientific analysis, truly surpassing himself at the time, as well as Hess and Engels, all of whom were still mired in humanist logic (the ideology of “civil society”). Unfortunately Marx was not able to take this step at this time.

4.2.4 A philosophical logical structure in political economic criticism

In the second chapter, Marx’s intention was to compare the two bourgeois economic theories that we discussed previously. His emphasis was to expose the hypocritical essence of List’s theory of productive force. However, here we again see a strange divergence in Marx’s logical method. Although Marx was explaining that the human subject (the worker) under conditions of bourgeois society is enslaved (human activity is no not the free manifestation of human life) by the external object (capital), and thus is demanding the overthrow of private property, he **mysteriously does not use** the logical tool of **estranged labor** developed in the *1844 Manuscript* (and in *The Holy Family*). Objectively speaking, Marx points out that “the conversion of material goods into exchange values is a result of the existing social system, of the society of developed private property. The **abolition of**

¹¹⁶Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 432 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 249).

exchange value is the abolition of **private property** and of **private acquisition.**"¹¹⁷ Subjectively speaking, he simply claims that "private property is **objectified** labor," and in revealing the condition of slavery to capital under which workers suffer ("labor" is the living basis of private property" — this is the estranged labor of which he wrote earlier), Marx carefully uses the **double-underlined word "labor."** *In the original manuscript, this word is double-underlined.*¹¹⁸ Why does Marx choose to not use the concept of estranged labor with which people are familiar?

It is my opinion that there are two external, direct reasons: first is the publication of Max Stirner's critique of Feuerbach's abstract humanist alienation conception of history in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. *In December of the previous year Marx diligently read this book; we will discuss this background in greater detail at the beginning of the next chapter.* The second reason is a letter that Hess wrote to Marx on January 20, informing him of Feuerbach's new views, and in reality presenting a critique of Feuerbach's humanist estrangement theory. At the same time, Max had internal reasons for choosing to not use the concept of estranged labor. Marx's own thinking had come under the influence of economic facts and methods of proof; furthermore, Marx began to realize the **incompatibility of the real move towards proletariat reality and humanist logic.** This pushed Marx to attempt to substantially and fundamentally differentiate himself Feuerbach. *It was not only Feuerbach who focused too much on nature; I focus on the difference in the realm of politics.* The shift is first manifested here in Marx's refusal to use such terms as "species," "estranged labor," and "the subject." However, Marx did not know that simply refusing to use these words **did not mean he had fundamentally moved away from the framework of humanist logic.** *Marx was later able to consciously deconstruct the humanist framework while still being able to scientifically use these words. He was able to solve this issue in two almost consecutive thought experiments that took place in April. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, please refer to the analysis in the next section of this chapter.* Of course, the real orientation of Marx's theories at this time (the need for proletariat revolution) was still very clear. He continued to believe that the "free labor" of modern bourgeois society was, in reality, a "indirect, self-huckstering" slave system. Marx writes:

It is established thereby [through wages] that the worker is the slave of capital, that he is a "**commodity**," an exchange value... his activity is not a free manifestation of his human life, it is, rather, a huckstering sale of his forces, an alienation (sale) to capital of his one-sidedly developed abilities, in a word, that it is "**labor.**"¹¹⁹

In the *1844 Manuscript* and even in *The Holy Family*, Marx would have written "in a word, that is estranged labor." Here, however, he refuses to use that concept. We have already seen that Marx took special care to double-underline the word "labor" in the original manuscript. "labor" is the living basis of private property;"

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 435 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 254).

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 435 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 254).

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, pp. 435–436 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 254).

Only later Marx discovered that neither worker nor labor are commodities and that the salary which the capitalist pays to the worker is only the price of labor-power.

private property is “objectified **labor**,” and this “‘labor’ by its very nature is unfree, unhuman, unsocial activity, determined by private property and creating private property.”¹²⁰ Please note that Marx’s last phrase here is still a reference to his old humanist logical framework. If labor in reality **is** unfree, unhuman, and unsocial, then there must necessarily be the humanist value postulate that free, human, and social labor that **should** exist but does not. Nevertheless, we see that Marx insists on peeling off the linguistic shell of words such as “estranged” and “species-essence.” This is an extremely complex textual context.

I have discovered that Marx makes a very confusing declaration at this point: “It is one of the greatest misapprehensions to speak of free, human, social labor, of labor without private property.”¹²¹ At first glance it appears as though Marx is in opposition to humanist logic; however, considering the context of the declaration, he is actually criticizing List’s departure from the concrete private system of bourgeois society to discuss an abstract theory of productive force. *We will see later on that Marx’s critique of this point will yield even more profound implications.* It is my opinion that although Marx’s linguistic evasions did not overthrow the logic of humanism, it is interesting that a new method began to **unconsciously** rise to the surface as he neared analysis of economic reality.

In Marx’s writings at this time, the purpose of production in bourgeois society was not man or development for man, but rather “exchange value” and “money,” which seem to be an “external aim.” Marx believed that the whole social system of bourgeois society was a base, misanthropic system where “people [are] sacrificed for things.”¹²² *This is the line of humanist logic that began in Paris Notes.* In the economy of bourgeois society, objective “industry becomes the force that controls us,” while “man is degraded to a ‘**force**’ capable of creating wealth.” Thus the capitalist does not see the proletariat as a “man” but rather as a “thing.” Furthermore, it is precisely because bourgeois social conditions have transformed man into a “thing,” that labor is merely a **productive force capable of producing wealth**. Therefore Marx criticizes List’s theory of productive forces that includes the selfishness of the bourgeois class. Here I would like to point out another important question; the productive forces of which Marx writes here are not like those in traditional research. It seems as though he is attempting to develop the concept of productive forces as it exists in the materialist conception of history, while in fact he is only confirming List’s viewpoint in the **sense of a refutation**.

I have remarked that Marx has not yet differentiated between the materialist **dual context** in early bourgeois political economy. First was social materialism, which recognized that the general premise of social existence was material production. Second was “materialism” that was **enslaved to material** and that viewed the methods of production of bourgeois society as eternal; this latter was what Marx would later refer to as fetishism. Marx completely refutes the “spiritless materialism,”¹²³ the “industrial materialism of political economy,” the “materialism of

¹²⁰Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” pp. 254–255).

¹²¹*ibid.*, p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 254).

¹²²*ibid.*, p. 440 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 261).

¹²³*ibid.*, p. 425 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 240).

machinery,” the “repulsive materialism,”¹²⁴ and the “sordid materialism”¹²⁵ of the latter context. This is a theory that “[makes] the majority of people in the nations into a ‘commodity,’ into an ‘exchange value,’ and of subjecting this majority to the wholly material conditions of exchange value.”¹²⁶ It is in precisely this sense that Marx declares his desire to “destroy the mystical radiance which transfigures ‘productive force.’” For political economists, men are the same as water-power, horse-power, and steam-power. Marx angrily asks, “Is it a high appreciation of man for him to figure as a ‘force’ alongside horses, steam and water?”¹²⁷ It is here that I discover that although Marx attempts to refute the misanthropic social system of bourgeois society (the bad “is”), he does not use the important logical component that he employed not long before — “**should.**” He no longer **assumes a priori what man ought to be.** Looking at the context, this does not imply a conscious realization on Marx’s part, but rather demonstrates the sub-intentional self-weakening of humanist logic in the midst of analysis of economic reality. Furthermore, continues to refute the reversed relationship between the human subject and his creation, though he does not speak here of “transcending estrangement.” Marx points out that abolishing private property can only be understood as the abolition of “**labor.**” He continues: “This is an abolition which, of course, has become possible only as a result of labour itself, that is to say, has become possible as a result of the material activity of society and which should on no account be conceived as the replacement of one category by another.”¹²⁸ It is evident that Marx is unconsciously approaching a **new comprehensive conception of history**, i. e., the objective logic that began with social reality and that existed in embryonic form in the dual logical structure of the *1844 Manuscript*.

We can see that in by the first chapter, Marx had already realized the reality of industry, which had fully developed on the present foundations of society.¹²⁹ Where Marx focused primarily on the humanist “should” in his original logical structure, here he begins to emphasize the **destruction of the bad “is” by the historically necessary “is,” and the “should” (in a borrowing sense)** can be realized through real means. Therefore, Marx changes the direction of his discourse, proposing another postulate: is it possible to see industry from a different perspective than “than that of sordid huckstering interest?” In terms of human survival, industry can still be see as a “great workshop,” because through it “man for the first time takes possession of his own forces and the forces of nature, objectifies himself, and creates for himself the conditions for a human existence.”¹³⁰ Please note that Marx at this point had not yet differentiated between productive forces and relations of production; thus we see “industry” in reality becoming another name for bourgeois society. Industry = bourgeois society. Thus Marx often remarks, “the slavery of the majority resulting from this domination [domination of industry] has become

¹²⁴*ibid.*, p. 433 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 251).

¹²⁵*ibid.*, p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 255).

¹²⁶*ibid.*, p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 255).

¹²⁷*ibid.*, p. 440 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 261).

¹²⁸*ibid.*, p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 255).

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p. 432 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 249).

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 437 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 257).

a generally known fact.”¹³¹ Industry is “calico, knitting yarn, the self-acting mule, in a mass of factory slaves, in the materialism of machinery, in the full money-bags of Messrs. the factory-owners.”¹³² He refers to bourgeois society as “the factory system,” specifically writing that “industrialism becomes the regulator of society” (Sismondi’s words). “The organization of society, therefore, is summed up in the factories. They are the organizers of society, and the system of competition which they bring into being is the **finest confederation of society.**”¹³³ However, in reality, “the real organization of society is a soulless materialism, an individual spiritualism, individualism.” This is because “The factory is transformed into a goddess, the goddess of manufacturing power... the factory-owner is the priest of this power.”¹³⁴ It is in this same sense that Marx criticizes Saint-Simon’s socialism. He believes that “The Saint-Simon school glorified in dithyrambs the productive power of industry. The forces which industry calls into being it lumped together with industry itself, that is to say, with the present-day conditions of existence that industry gives to these forces.”¹³⁵ Thus, their glorification of productive forces becomes glorification of bourgeois society. Marx writes: “The **Saint-Simon** school has given us an instructive example of what it leads to if the **productive force** that industry creates unconsciously and against its will is put to the credit of present-day industry and the two are confused: **industry** and the **forces** which industry brings into being unconsciously and without its will, but which will only become human forces, man’s power, when industry is abolished.”¹³⁶

Marx was obviously unable to differentiate between industry and the bourgeois social system; this implies that he was also unable to consciously abstract relations of production from a given level of development of productive forces. Thus he was not only unable to see the logical and illogical aspects of the productive forces that List described, but was also unable to correctly appraise the objective perspective of the Saint-Simon school of socialism. Marx cites this line of List’s commentary on productive forces: “The force capable of creating wealth is infinitely more important than wealth itself.”¹³⁷ Marx continues, believing that List abstracts productive forces into “an entity infinitely superior to exchange value,” while the exchange value of material is a limited phenomenon. As a matter of fact, it was correct of List to view productive forces as a general abstraction of the qualification of social history; it is, of course, incorrect to say that productive forces are a mix of material and spiritual forces of production. Productive forces are doubtless the basis for producing a given form of social wealth, but the antithesis between productive forces and exchange value (the objectification of given social relations) is illusory. From this we can see that Marx’s understanding here of productive forces was not scientific. If Marx had been able to, on the one hand, recognize that “industry” (productive forces) was actually the relation between man and nature,

¹³¹Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 425 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 239).

¹³²*ibid.*, p. 425 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 240).

¹³³*ibid.*, p. 433 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 251).

¹³⁴*ibid.*, p. 434 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 252).

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p. 438 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 259).

¹³⁶*ibid.*, p. 438 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 258).

¹³⁷*ibid.*, p. 440 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 261).

and, on the other hand, differentiate between the private systems (productive relations) of different developmental stages of bourgeois society, then society and man could have been scientifically explained. Nevertheless, Marx was now very close to this idea, that the cause of productive “labor” was the necessity arising from the historical development of material production. This is to say, Marx would soon move beyond merely looking at the **result** — the illogical phenomenon of “labor” in bourgeois society — and begin to discover the internal **causes** in the bourgeois modes of production that led to this result. We will soon see the emergence of Marxist philosophy’s new worldview and scientific socialism.

Taking this logic one step further, Marx comes to the following conclusion:

When industry is regarded in this way, one **abstracts** from the circumstances in which it operates today, and in which it exists **as industry**; one’s standpoint is not from within the industrial epoch, but **above** it; industry is regarded not by what it is for **man** today, but by what present-day man is for **human history**, what he is historically; it is not its present-day existence (not **industry** as such) that is recognised, but rather the power which industry has without knowing or willing it and which **destroys** it and creates the basis for a **human** existence.¹³⁸

At the same time, Marx directly affirms the “world-historic significance” revealed by this “industry.” Regardless, in Marx’s theoretical progression at this time we can clearly see that a new **theoretical line of thinking starting from real industry** is already beginning to occupy the dominate position in his theorizing. He points out:

The hour has come for [industry] to be done away with, or for the abolition of the material and social conditions in which mankind has had to develop its abilities as a slave. For as soon as industry is no longer regarded as a huckstering interest, but as the development of man, man, instead of huckstering interest, is made the principle and’ what in industry could develop only in contradiction with industry itself is given the basis which is in harmony with that which is to be developed.¹³⁹

We know that in order to provide support for proletariat revolution, Marx advocated bursting the fetters of industry placed by the modern bourgeois society. However, here he correctly defines this act of bursting as “abstracting from the conditions, the money fetters, in which the forces of industry operate today and to examine these forces in themselves. This was the first call to the people to emancipate their industry from huckstering and to understand present-day industry as a transitional epoch.”¹⁴⁰ Marx’s observation — “understand present-day industry as a transitional epoch” — is extremely important. By this time Marx was already very clear that what he wanted to abolish was not industry (the objectively necessary “is”), but rather the **bourgeois social form of industry**. Industry

¹³⁸*ibid.*, p. 437 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 257).

¹³⁹*ibid.*, p. 438 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 258).

¹⁴⁰*ibid.*, pp. 438–439 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 259).

(the development of material productive forces) itself is the “transitional epoch” in the movement towards refutation of bourgeois society. Though Marx’s theory of revolution still used the slogan of **humanism**, the actual logic **that progressed towards revolution** was no longer simply the humanist theory of labor estrangement (“should”), but was rather more often objectively developing industry (“is”). I have already pointed out that Marx’s thinking at this point had already begun to manifest **an unconscious transition from an humanist subjective dialectic to an objective historical dialectic**. This is the **non-tactical deconstructurization** of the humanist estrangement conception of history.

Thus communism (the proletariat revolution) is no longer a demand of theoretical logic, but rather a necessary trend in real history. Marx writes:

The forces of nature and the social forces which industry brings into being (conjures up), stand in the same relation to it as the proletariat. Today they are still the slaves of the bourgeois, and in them he sees nothing but the instruments (the bearers) of his dirty (selfish) lust for profit; tomorrow they will break their chains and reveal themselves as the bearers of human development which will blow him sky-high together with his industry, which assumes the dirty outer shell — which he regards as its essence — only until the human kernel has gained sufficient strength to burst this shell and appear in its own shape. Tomorrow they will burst the chains by which the bourgeois separates them from man and so distorts (transforms) them from a real social bond into fetters of society.¹⁴¹

This is the real road to a confirmation of communism based on the real progression of the development of social history. Objective laws of society stemming from a scientific understanding of history are about to be revealed.

Please note that if we reduce the context of our discussion to Marx’s overall philosophical logic at this time, we will discover that the intertwining contradictions in Marx’s dual logic continue to persist. Although there has already been a change in the positioning of the two logical lines of thinking in Marx’s theoretical structure, the main problem that he faces has not yet been resolved. The real historical development of “industry” has already begun to become the primary element in Marx’s theoretical logic, leaving nothing but an empty, fleshless framework for the estrangement logic of **humans** and the **human essence**. As soon as this logical structure is consciously broken down, this unconscious “breaking-down” will transition into conscious “overthrowing” and a new realm of philosophical thinking will be born. Not long after, in April, Marx first wrote an untitled text in his notebook called “Reading Notes in a Notebook.” Here he realizes the direction in which he will progress; on the second half of the same page, Marx begins writing the famous *Theses on Feuerbach*. The ship of a true Gestalt philosophical shift is about to set sail. What has come to be called the scientific progression of Marxism has truly become.

¹⁴¹Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 438 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” pp. 258–259).

4.3 The Exceptional Thought Experiment in Marx's Move Towards Philosophical Revolution

In the previous section we filled in an important gap in the theoretical text between *The Holy Family* and *Theses on Feuerbach* by interpreting *On List*. In my research, I have made new discoveries through the micro-analysis of the special philosophical context out of which Marx wrote *Theses on Feuerbach*. Three exceptional thought experiments intending to deconstruct humanist logic make up this context; they reveal the building pressure and eventual gushing forth of Marx's new philosophical worldview.

4.3.1 An interpretation of Marx's *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology*

According to my understanding, the mark of the true birth of Marxism — the appearance of *Theses on Feuerbach* — had an extremely unique background of theoretical logic. What we can be sure of is that by the end of 1844, Marx began the **exceptional period** that culminated with his second philosophical shift (the deconstruction of the humanist theory of labor alienation, establishment of a scientific worldview, and founding of scientific socialism on the basis of historical materialism). *I borrow the words "exceptional period" here from the paradigm theory of American scientist-philosopher Thomas Kuhn. It indicates the revolutionary transition from an old theoretical "paradigm" (for Marx at this time, this was the logical structure of humanist labor estrangement) to a new theoretical "paradigm" (the scientific perspective of Marxism). All uses of the word "exceptional" in this text carry this same meaning.* Considering Marx's micro-context at this time, with the exception of the unconscious shift that took place in Marx's study of economics in *On List*, I believe that we can group the three important thought-experiments that Marx wrote after *The Holy Family* (November 1844) together as a unified logical cluster. These are in the same notebooks — the *1844–1847 Notes* — and include *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology* (on page 21 of the notebooks, written in January 1845), *From the Notebook* (on page 51 of the notebooks, written in April 1845), and *Theses on Feuerbach* (on pages 51–55 of the notebooks, written just after). *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology was originally dated January 1845, but when later Soviet scholars (Georgi Bagaturija) decided that the views it expressed were treated in [redacted], written two months prior, the date was changed to November 1844. This decision deserves to be discussed.* I refer to these three texts as thought experiments because Marx did not intend to publish them; they were not conscious theoretical structures using plainly expressed language, but rather a textual record and development of Marx's actual cognitive activity. I refer to these three texts as **three exceptional thought experiments at the turning point of Marx's new philosophical worldview**, an appellation that naturally implies **three thinking outlines that have a certain sequential relationship, a certain vector quantity, and a certain logical connection**. I must point out that this level of philosophical context has been a logical blind spot in our past research. Here let us first discuss the first and second of these texts.

The first exceptional thought experiment was written by Marx in January 1845 — *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology*.¹⁴² This is the third time that Marx briefly mentions the structure of Hegel's phenomenology (the first two times were in the *1844 Manuscript* and *The Holy Family*). In my opinion, this text is extremely important because it is the first thought experiment in Marx's true movement from Feuerbach to restructured Hegelian historical dialectic.

As we have already discussed, in the third notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*, on the basis of affirming Feuerbach's materialist critique of Hegel's idealism, he correctly established the premise of general materialism and thus accomplished the re-reversal of the subject-predicate. At the same time, Marx uses Feuerbach's humanist estrangement conception of history (humanist phenomenology) to re-interpret Hegel (spirit phenomenology); of course this comes in the middle of Marx's quest to establish the estranged species-essence of labor that would form the basis for proletariat revolution. Although Marx had already grasped the theory of alienation on a deeper logical level, this was nothing but another mutated manifestation of the humanist historical logic of the Hegelian dialectic's **law of negating the negation**; Marx was not conscious of this at this time.¹⁴³ Following Feuerbach and Hess, Marx replaces Hegel's self-consciousness and ideal god with "man." *For Hegel, in the beginning, the idea structures the world. After the idea logic falls and becomes nature, newly born man is nothing but a tool in a higher level of social historical progression that the idea god uses to realize itself in labor objectification and alienation. Man is revealed as the highest shell of the idea and the dual transcendence of estrangement and objectification is accomplished in the Absolute Idea.* Thus Marx criticizes Hegel, writing: "Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute reversal — a **mystical subject-object** or a **subjectivity reaching beyond the object**."¹⁴⁴ According to Marx's views, "this is not yet the **real** history of man as a given subject."¹⁴⁵ Hence Hegel commits "two great sins:" first, he changes what should have been the estrangement of man's essence into the estrangement of objective spirit; second, where man's transcendence of estrangement should have "demanded that the return of the objective world to man," for Hegel it is returned to the idea. However, the elements of Hegel's logic that approached labor humanism received Marx's approbation. For instance, "Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process... he thus grasps the essence of **labor** and comprehends objective man — true, because real man — as the outcome of man's **own labor**."¹⁴⁶ Despite this, Hegel stands with the political economists: "He grasps **labor** as the **essence** of man — as man's essence which stands the test: he sees only the positive, not the negative side of labor."¹⁴⁷ This is

¹⁴²This text appeared first in volume I/5 of MEGA 1. Refer to Karl Marx, "Hegel'sche Construction der Phänomenologie," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/3, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: "Notes on Hegel Phenomenology (Chinese)," p. 237).

¹⁴³See the first chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁴⁴Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844," p. 414 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 176).

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. 401 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 159).

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, pp. 404–405 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 163).

¹⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 405 (Chinese transl.: "1844 nian shougao," p. 163).

Marx's first critique of Hegel's dialectic (phenomenology) that Marx accomplished in 1843, after turning to the standpoint of general materialism (Marx's first philosophical shift). *In the earlier Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Marx only criticized his idealist premise.* Later, in the first part of Lenin's *Philosophical Notes*, the logic he uses to criticize Hegel's idealism is very similar to Marx's line of thinking at this time. *According to my research, from the complete research process reflected in Philosophical Notes, Lenin's critique and restructuring of Hegel experienced an important leap in understanding; there is a great difference between his early and later views on Hegel.*¹⁴⁸

We have already seen that in Marx and Engels' critique of the Bauer Brothers in *The Holy Family*, they once again took up critique of Hegel. There we find two clearer refutational contexts: the first is in the second section of the fifth chapter of the book, where Marx exposes the "secret speculative structure" that came from Hegel behind Bauer's theoretical logic. Here he describes the mistake in abstracting general characteristics (essential "fruit") from related, specific objects (apples, pears) and then pronouncing this idea as the "true essence" of the objects. As we move from this idea to the idea of our "own activity," this is profoundly proved to be the **self-activity** of the absolute subject, the essence. Thus essence is proved to not be dead and still, but rather alive, self-differentiated, and dynamic.¹⁴⁹ Here Marx still opposes Hegel by affirming Feuerbach. The second refutational context is found in part D of the third section of the fifth chapter, in Marx's analysis of the three elements of Hegel's system: Spinoza's substance, Feuerbach's self-consciousness, and the restructured unity of these two: "the **real mankind** of real **man**." The first two elements become confusing in Hegel's philosophy — only Feuerbach understood this clearly, and thus through reintegrating "man," he "finishes and criticizes **Hegel's** philosophy."¹⁵⁰

Now that we have revealed the two subsidiary backgrounds in Marx's thinking at this time, we will begin direct analysis of Marx's *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology*. This text only contains four concise points. This is the third time in less than one year that Marx analyzes the essence of Hegel's phenomenology. This shows that by this time Marx already realizes that Hegel's philosophy is perhaps not as simple as Feuerbach thought. More importantly, the structure revealed by the progression of Marx's thinking at this time greatly surpasses Hegel's phenomenology, what Marx declared to be his object.

The first point only has a few words: "Self-consciousness instead of man. Subject — object." This obviously refers to the arbitrary reversal from the "this" of "meaning" to "establishment of self-consciousness" in the cognitive progression of human individual (species) in Hegel's phenomenology. It also refers to the process of self-degradation that leads to the objectification of this reversal into self-consciousness. Thus man's true understanding becomes a "phenomenon" and the relation between subject and object is idealistically reversed. Considering the two previous critical lines of thought, this does not appear to be new.

¹⁴⁸See my article "Lun Liening shenhua weiwu bianzhengfa guocheng zhong de renshi feiyue." In addition, see my book *Back to Lenin*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁴⁹Marx and Engels, "Holy Family," pp. 228–231 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," pp. 71–75).

¹⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 316 (Chinese transl.: "Shensheng jiazou," pp. 176–177).

The second point is: “The **differences** of things are unimportant, because substance is conceived as self-distinction or because self-distinction, the distinguishing, the mental activity is regarded as the essential. Within the framework of speculation Hegel therefore makes distinctions that really grasp the vital point.” At first glance it seems as though this thought is the same as the first critical context in the second section of the fifth chapter of *The Holy Family*. *It was precisely based on such an understanding that the Soviet scholar Georgi Bagaturija included this text in the same outline as the critique of Hegel’s philosophy in The Holy Family and artificially changed the date of its writing to November 1844, the same time as The Holy Family*. Through careful analysis I have discovered that Marx’s philosophical logic here is different from that in *The Holy Family*, because here he **affirms** Hegel! The most important part of the context here is “self activity.” As we have already pointed out, the first context in *The Holy Family* also discusses the attitude of Hegel’s discourse; however, the interpretive focus there is criticism of Hegel’s incorrect reversal of “**his own**” activity into the self-activity of the Absolute Subject. Please note that in *The Holy Family*, Marx underlined “his own,” while the only underline in this text is under “**differences** [of things].” I understand this to mean that Marx had here newly discovered that the structure of Hegel’s phenomenology included an important cognitive diagram; although objective differences exist, what **appears in our cognitive view as “differences” are actually related to the activity of the subject, a more “essential” difference**. This was a point that the sensuous Feuerbach was unable to grasp. On this point, Marx’s original “labor” that was already separated from philosophy surpassed Feuerbach. At this time, Marx very likely understood this point in an economics sense, because what truly causes objective differences is not the free labor of idealized species-essence, but rather “industry” in reality. It is doubtful that in Marx realized this point in his critique of Hegel in the *1844 Manuscript* and *The Holy Family*.

The third point is: “Abolition of **estrangement** is identified with abolition of **objectivity** (an aspect evolved by Feuerbach in particular).” For Hegel, after he arbitrarily objectifies human cognitive structure into absolute substance, true objective existence (material and man) becomes an instrumental object estranged from the subject. Thus transcendence of estrangement is transcendence of objectivity and therefore a true return to the spiritual subject. Put more precisely, the proposition that the transcendence of estrangement is the same as the transcendence of objectivity is a principle of Hegel’s. But why does Marx say that Feuerbach evolved this aspect in particular? In response to Hegel’s rational idealism, Feuerbach defines substance as nature and man. God is the externalization of the estrangement of man’s essence and thus overthrowing god is the transcendence of estrangement, but is also the true return to objective (perceptual) human subject existence. The Absolute Idea is the estrangement and alienation of man’s overall spirit, and thus refuting the Absolute Idea is the same as returning to perceptual nature and objectified, real man. Feuerbach’s natural materialism and humanism is focused on re-establishing **perceptual objectivity**, and is opposed to Hegel’s re-refutation perceptual objectivity. This is a narrow refutation context of Marx’s statement that Feuerbach “evolved this aspect in particular.” On the other hand, if this point on which Marx is thinking is transferred to the economics study

that he has already begun, then there could be a second level of meaning in this text; that is, an affirmation in a new sense of Hegel, not Feuerbach. While the theoretical basis of Feuerbach's philosophy is perceptual natural objectivity, with the new level of depth in Marx's economics research, he profoundly understands the the form (the "estrangement" of workers and the commoditization of natural objects) of the real existence of nature and man in the material progression of social history ("industry"). Therefore, the transcendence of estrangement and alienation cannot return man and nature to the abstract perceptual objectivity described by Feuerbach, but rather returns to the existence-for-man that eliminates objective reification in a higher sense. In sum, unlike the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx here already realizes that objectivity must be transcended. However it is also possible that in writing the third point, Marx did not clearly reflect on this point. Nevertheless, relative to the first three points, the context manifested in the next point is extremely different.

I believe that the fourth point is the most important: "Your **abolition** of the imagined object, of the object as object of consciousness, is identified with the **real objective** abolition, with sensuous **action, practice** and **real activity** as distinct from thinking. (Has still to be developed)." We must analyze and think carefully and clearly about this point; what was the true context of this theoretical point? Towards what is the context aimed? *Zelený points out that Marx here is differentiating between practical activity and Bauer's mental activity.*¹⁵¹ It is my opinion that the fourth point is Marx's critical interpretation of himself and Hess. We can see that this point no longer aims to interpret Hegel. The final point in Hegel's phenomenology (the starting point of *Logic*) is certainly not practical and sensuous activity. What of Feuerbach? The first half of this phrase appears to comment on Feuerbach, as god could be "the imagined object." However, the second half of the phrase uses "as" twice — these cannot identify Feuerbach. At this time, who could have overthrown Hegel, and then proceeded from Feuerbach's "human" substance to "sensuous **action, practice, and real activity**?" The answer is that the "you" to whom the point is addressed is Hess. Where Proudhon is directly identified in *The Holy Family* where he was previously only identified in the background logic of the *1844 Manuscript*, here I realize that Marx has already begun to consciously criticize Hess. In fact, **his critique of Hess is also a supersession of himself!**

To review, from true textual sources we see that under the influence of August Cieszkowski, Hess had already proposed moving away from Hegel's speculative method towards practice in 1840. As we have already discussed in the first chapter, in Hess' eyes, the Young Hegelians were "today's philosophy of practice."¹⁵² Under the influence of Feuerbach and after 1842, Hess qualifies the species-essence of man as "free activity independent from all external force." He even suggests that the practical essence of man is composed of such "real life activities" as relations of exchange, intercourse, cooperation, and man's material intercourse.¹⁵³ A new and

¹⁵¹Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, p. 58.

¹⁵²Moses Hess, "Die europäische Triarchie," in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, p. 170.

¹⁵³Karl Marx, "Die Zentralisationsfrage in bezug auf sich selbst und in bezug auf das Beiblatt der *Rheinischen Zeitung* zu Nr. 137, Dienstag, 17. Mai 1842," in *Texte aus der Rheinischen Zeitung von*

important situation was that in the second half of 1844, Hess preceded Marx in his criticism of Feuerbach. He believed that Feuerbach's understanding of the essence of man was mired on an intellectual level, unable to reach the practical conclusion of humanism — socialism. He called his own philosophy “practical humanism,” as opposed to Feuerbach's “theoretical humanism.” *It is interesting to note that a half-century later, a few Chinese scholars actually identified practical humanism as a “new form” of Marxism.* On January 17, 1845, Hess wrote to Marx to introduce his critique of Feuerbach written for *Die letzten Philosophen*. He claimed that his critique of Feuerbach's philosophy “announced the end of the process of religion and philosophy.”¹⁵⁴ I believe that it was after receiving this letter from Hess that Marx wrote *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology*, this text that was specifically targeted at Hegel. Hess' philosophical shift had a great influence on Marx's ultimate deconstruction of Feuerbach's humanist logic. Furthermore, Stirner's devastating critique of Feuerbach's humanism in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, published in October of 1844, was also a great influence on Marx at this time. Of course, the most important impetus for Marx was his own research on economics and the history of political revolution.

It is evident that Hess was the primary figure in criticizing Feuerbach's humanism that departed from social reality and in proposing sensuous, practical, and real activity to establish socialism. We know from the *1844 Manuscript* and *The Holy Family* that Marx and Engels were basically in accordance with Hess in his establishment of “practical humanism.” However, I do not believe that Marx was thoughtlessly affirming Hess at this point. The thinking of Marx's fourth point centers on two uses of the word “as.” From the context we can get a sense that Marx is questioning himself. Is transcendence of the imagined object (Hegel's idea estrangement, Feuerbach's estrangement of the essence of man, as well as the labor estrangement of Hess and Marx himself) really transcendence of the object? Is it really practical reality? Marx's conclusion with the words “has still to be developed” implies that Marx has already begun to doubt the logical formula outlined above. More importantly, if **reality is an abstract, ahistorical logical result**, can this be true science? This is obviously Marx's unfinished thought experiment.

4.3.2 The perplexing *From the Notebook*

In the previous section we learned that the manuscript of Marx's *On List* was discovered in 1971. In this new text, we can directly see the important changes in Marx's thinking. I refer to this as the second thought experiment in the new philosophical worldview of Marx at this time. It is the manuscript *From the Notebook* written in April 1845 after the completion of *On List*.¹⁵⁵ It was written on the same notebook as *Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology*, specifically on the second half of page 51. Following close after it is the famous *Theses on*

1842, 43 (Trier: Karl-Marx Haus, [1842] 1984), 46–47.

¹⁵⁴Moses Hess, “Die letzten Philosophen,” in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837–1850*, 379–392.

¹⁵⁵Karl Marx, “[Aus dem Notizbuch aus den Jahren 1844–1847, p. 53],” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/3, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: “Notes (Chinese),” p. 273).

Feuerbach. The editors and translators of the Marxist works in China completely ignored this important detail.

In this extremely brief text there are simply four seemingly unconnected yet closely arranged points:

The divine egoist as opposed to egoistical man.

The delusion regarding the ancient state prevailing during the revolution.

“Concept” and “substance.”

The revolution—history of the origin of the modern state.

We cannot deny that interpreting *From the Notebook* can be very difficult; it is most often ignored (by Chinese scholars), or simply identified as a repeat of the progression of Marx’s thinking (Georgi Bagaturija and Inge Taubert).¹⁵⁶ Through careful study and comparative analysis of the context of the text, I have discovered that *From the Notebook* is also very important, because it is a record of Marx’s thinking in his exceptional thought experiments. It contains a grouping of philosophical qualifications that he discovered in economics and historical research: **history, reality, and concreteness.**

We can directly perceive that the first, second, and fourth points of this text are **historical, real, and concrete** interpretation of the idea. First is “the divine egoist and egoism.” A few past scholars (such as Taubert) have simply combined this point with similar writings in *The Holy Family*. In fact, given that Marx had already read Stirner’s *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, the egoism to which he refers here is the value orientation of the third phase (grown man) — this is also Stirner’s own theoretical banner. Marx is attempting to explain that the egoism which Stirner identifies is not really abstract or ahistorical in reality, that in the middle ages there was a particular “divine egoism,” but that it was completely different from the egoism that Stirner identifies in present-day bourgeois society. Similarly, the origin of the modern state is the same as the misunderstanding of ancient countries, i. e., they all began with bourgeois real “revolutionary” practice and thus a given “revolutionary” and critical practical activity must shape a particular theoretical discourse. *This point is directly related to the conclusions of the first and third sections of Theses on Feuerbach.* As a matter of fact, on pages 22 and 23 of this same notebook (written approximately in February), Marx had already written in *Draft Plan for a Work on the Modern State*: “The self-conceit of the political sphere — to mistake itself for the ardent state. The attitude of the revolutionaries towards civil society.”¹⁵⁷ Marx is criticizing the fact that the essence of what the bourgeois calls the modern state is determined by the economic

¹⁵⁶**Inge Taubert** (1928–2009) was a German historian of philosophy and an editor. She received her doctorate in 1961 and became a professor at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism at the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, GDR, in 1981. She specialized in the history of theoretical development of young Marx (notably *The German Ideology* of which she was working on an edition) and was an editor for volumes I/2 and I/5, MEGA 2.

¹⁵⁷Karl Marx, “[Die Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und die Kommunistische Revolution],” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 1*, vol. I/5, p. 532 (Chinese transl.: “Guanyu xiandai guojia [···].” p. 238).

life of bourgeois society — civil society. The bourgeoisie, however, is unable to see the real and concrete qualifications of this historical reality emerging from the liberation of bourgeois emancipation. They either mistake it for ancient states, or deceive themselves into believing that modern states embody eternal “freedom,” “equality,” and “sovereignty of the people.” Marx wants to surpass the so-called bourgeois “revolution” and create a proletariat “fight for the **abolition** (Aufhebung) of the state and of bourgeois society.”¹⁵⁸ This is the last point in Marx’s “draft plan.”

Perhaps the strangest point in *From the Notebook* is the third. In his explanation of three concrete facts, why would he think of “concept” and “substance”? I believe that “concept” refers to Hegel (as well as Bauer, Strauss, and the other idealists), while “substance” might refer to Feuerbach’s “man” (including, perhaps, the prior ideas of “labor” and “action” in the philosophy of Engels, Hess, and Marx himself), i. e., the philosophers who had already turned to general materialism but were still mired in a substantive understanding of material essence. After this idea, it was only natural to proceed to bringing the “concept” back to objective reality and to abolishing the substantive understanding of “man” and “nature;” it was not difficult to move from here to *Theses on Feuerbach*, which began on the second half of the same page. This interpretation seemed to make sense to me in the beginning. However, after pondering and mulling over the matter some more, I have come to believe that this was not Marx’s true context at this time. This is because practice **may also be abstract**. As we have already seen, Marx was very clear that Hess’ viewpoint was abstract action and activity. Connecting this to Hess’ understanding of man’s material production and intercourse, then Hess’ theory becomes social practice. Marx’s context here was not a simple supersession of Hegel, nor was it a simple supersession of Feuerbach, but rather a supersession of Hess and of himself. The context of this point (points one through four) is the **blank** contextual identification that I made earlier of the historical, real, and concrete nature of mankind’s living circumstances. *In my textual analysis at this point, I use what Althusser refers to as “symptomatic reading.” “Reading into the blank space” is a contextual analytical principle of the structuralists.*¹⁵⁹ The foundation formed by this context was not philosophical; it could only have been objective economics and political reality.

At the same time, there is another text in Marx’s subsidiary background that is worthy of our attention. This is a letter that Engels had sent to Marx not long before (November 19, 1844). In our existing documents, this is the first time that Marx and Engels mention Max Stirner’s *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. In this letter, Engels believes “that Stirner was correct to use the individual (egotistical ‘I’) to replace Feuerbach’s **man** (mankind). Engels also believed that this was an ‘important’ substitution, and that **after inverting it**, we should continue to build on it. How is it to be inverted? we must take our departure from empiricism

¹⁵⁸Marx, “Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Modernen Staats,” p. 532 (Chinese transl.: “Guanyu xiandai guojia [...],” p. 238). The *Trier’sche Zeitung* had an article stating: “Dr. Marx will leave for Paris tomorrow in order to settle in the Netherlands where he will finish his work on the *History of the National Assembly*. It appears that Marx seemed to be working on such a book.”

¹⁵⁹Zhang, *Wentishi, zhenghou yuedu yu yishi xingtai*, chapter 2.

and materialism if our concepts, and notably our ‘man,’ are to be something real; we must deduce the general from the particular.”¹⁶⁰ I believe that Marx basically agreed with Engels on this point, though with some reservations. The essential critique that Stirner makes of Feuerbach’s humanism was, of course, a great shock to Marx; it was one of the reasons for his fundamental departure from humanism. At the same time, Stirner’s egotistical “I” would later become Marx and Engels’ “real man” critical point of departure. In *Professor Hou Cai’s The Young Hegelians and the Development of Early Marxist Thought he notices this point. Please refer to the chapter in this book on Marx and Stirner for a further treatment of this topic.*¹⁶¹ In the next chapter we will address this point specifically, though this is still not enough. In my opinion, Marx was probably more interested in the second half of this letter. In the letter, Engels tells Marx that Stirner’s mistake is in “tumbling out of idealistic into materialistic abstraction.” Hess, on the other hand, “presumably because of his earlier idealistic leaning... so dreadfully traduces empiricism.” Furthermore, “whenever he begins to talk about theoretical matters he always proceeds by categories and therefore cannot write in a popular fashion because he is much too abstract.”¹⁶² Therefore, Engels writes “But it’s quite another matter when... one turns to real, live things, to historical developments and consequences.”¹⁶³ I believe that Engels’ words here were just what Marx was looking for. This is most likely the reason why Marx would later say that Engels discovered a new worldview in a different “independent” way. I further hypothesize that it was after receiving this letter from Engels and especially after reading Stirner’s *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* that Marx replied to Engels expressing his own views. This is where we find the January 20, 1845 letter from Engels to Marx expressing Engels’ approbation of Marx’s views.¹⁶⁴ In Marx’s studies of the French Revolution and national problems (*The History of the National Convention*) as well as in the process of writing *On List*, Marx developed a few new ideas, which he wrote down in *From the Notebook* and again later in *Theses on Feuerbach*. This was his third and most important revolutionary thought experiment.

4.4 The Gestalt Shift in *Theses on Feuerbach*

As we have already discussed, soon after writing *From the Notebook* in April of 1845, Marx wrote the famous *Theses on Feuerbach*. Although *Theses on Feuerbach* was begun on the second half of the same page in the same notebook as *From the Notebook*, according to ink and writing analysis, it was actually written some time later. I view Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach* as the third and most successful exceptional, revolutionary thought experiment in the establishment of historical materialism. As a matter of fact, *Theses* first reveals Marx’s true, conscious, and tactical overthrow of the old logic of the humanist estrangement conception of

¹⁶⁰Engels to Marx in Paris, p. 252 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 13).

¹⁶¹See Hou, *Qingnian Heige'er pai yu Makesi zaoqi sixiang de fazhan*.

¹⁶²Engels to Marx in Paris, p. 255 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 13).

¹⁶³*ibid.*, p. 255 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 14).

¹⁶⁴Engels to Karl Marx in Paris (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali).

history. It also demonstrates the revolutionary leap in scientific understanding that took place as Marx delved deeper in the study of economics. *Theses on Feuerbach* also led to Marx's second great philosophical shift — it was the appearance of the new outlook of Marxist philosophy. Althusser's writings on this subject make some logical points, but I do not accept that what Marx experienced here was a simple “rupture,” but rather an exceptional epistemological leap. Marx did not and could not completely abandon the prior characteristics of his thinking or the important theoretical and real problems on which he focused. These were simply re-written and re-structured according to his new theoretical framework.

4.4.1 The implications of practice in the new outlook of Marxism

It is commonly known that in April 1845, Marx wrote the famous *Theses on Feuerbach* (*Thesen über Feuerbach*) on pages 51 through 55 of his own notebook.¹⁶⁵ In November of the same year, Marx and Engels began with these theses in structuring their new philosophical worldview (*German Ideology*). In the mid-1980s, when Engels published the theses he wrote that they were the first text of the birth of the new worldview of a genius. Just before Engels passed away in 1893, he again identified *Theses on Feuerbach* as **the** birthplace of the new worldview of historical materialism.¹⁶⁶ As the first text of Marx's new philosophical worldview, the basic theoretical placement of *Theses on Feuerbach* is clear, because this position was directly identified by the founder of Marxism himself. However, in the 1930s, specifically after the publishing of Marx's first early work (including *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and the *1844 Manuscript*), there was a subtle shift in the placement of *Theses on Feuerbach*, beginning with certain theoretical intentions of the Marxist-humanists. The beginning of Marxist philosophy was pushed back to the 1843 *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*; thus many of Marx's early texts before April 1845 were seen as Marxist (such as the labor theory of alienation in the *1844 Manuscript*). This meant that *Theses on Feuerbach* was no longer the true “origin,” but rather became the mark of “completion.” It is important to note that many scholars with humanist leanings take the first thesis in *Theses on Feuerbach* (“beginning with the subject”) and **move backwards** to the *1844 Manuscript* rather than moving forward to *The German Ideology*, the *Poverty of Philosophy* and *Capital*. Just as I have already pointed out, though Marx wrote that “Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape,” here the ape body (Marx's early unscientific texts) is directly identified as the human body (Marxism). I must mention that this has become a serious problem of principle. This implies that reevaluating the position of *Theses on Feuerbach* has become an important theoretical problem.

¹⁶⁵On the original manuscript, Marx simply writes “ad Feuerbach.” When Engels published the text, he changed the title to *Marx über Feuerbach*. On the cover of Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1888), there is a note reading “Karl Marx über Feuerbach vom Jahre 1845.” The title *Theses on Feuerbach* was later added by the Marxist Leninist Research Institute according to the introduction of Engels' work.

¹⁶⁶Engels an Wladimir Jakowlewitsch Schmuilow in Dresden, 7 February 1893, in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 39, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: zhi Shimuyiluofu, Delesidun, p. 24).

According to Engels, *Theses on Feuerbach* contains these that represent the birth of a genius' new worldview. I believe that the key word in Engels' theoretical identification is "birth," because it defines *Theses on Feuerbach* as the true "origin" of Marx's whole scientific worldview — not the "completion." The German Ideology was the true, concrete accomplishment of this new philosophical method — the theoretical structure of the general theory of historical materialism. Here Althusser writes that "the new philosophical standpoint declared by *Theses on Feuerbach* was merely a declaration; it did not reveal everything."¹⁶⁷ This is basically correct. However, I do not believe that it was a declaration, because the theses were not intended to be publicly "declared;" they were merely a record of Marx's own revolutionary thought experiments. Thus I do neither believe that we should simply lower or simply elevate the position of *Theses on Feuerbach*. At the same time, considering the particular context of Marx's texts at this time, it is worthwhile to discuss the obsession of traditional scholars with the first thesis in *Theses on Feuerbach*.

Because there have been too many explanations for the content of the first thesis, its meaning has seemingly become universally acknowledge: it is about practice and subjectivity. However, I have my doubts about this explanation, because the first thesis of *Theses on Feuerbach*, which has been understood abstractly and separated from the context of the text, was not the central point of Marx's new philosophical outlook. As we have already seen, the first to use sensuous activity to simultaneously break the limits of Hegel and Feuerbach was not Marx, but rather Hess. If we only use the subjective practice in the first thesis to define this new outlook in Marx's philosophy, then **Marxism truly becomes Hessism ("practical humanism")**. Furthermore, the practice of this abstracted understanding can be completely replaced by the concept of abstract labor in the *1844 Manuscript*, just as the "Praxis" school in the former Yugoslavia and certain Chinese "practical humanists" have done. Alfred Schmidt correctly points out that after the deaths of Marx and Engels, it was Antonio Labriola who first "borrowed" practical philosophy from Cieszkowski, thus influencing Gramsci.¹⁶⁸ Thereafter, it was passed from the Western Marxists to the Eastern European "Neo-Marxist" before being passed to Japan and finally "imported" into China in the 1970s. **Abstract, ahistorical** practical philosophy and practical materialism are certainly not Marxism! The question is not that simple.

In *The German Ideology* that Marx and Engels wrote several months later, they criticize Karl Grun for copying "Hess' obvious mistakes." What mistakes? His belief that "it is only necessary to put Feuerbach into practice, to apply him to social life, in order to produce the complete critique of existing society."¹⁶⁹ It was only then that Marx and Engels directly pointed out that Hess' work carried

¹⁶⁷Louis Althusser [Luyi A'erduasai 路易·阿尔都塞], *Baowei Makesi*, 保卫马克思, trans. Gu Liang 顾良 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1983), p. 267.

¹⁶⁸Refer to Alfred Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur. Fragen einer marxistischen Historik* (München: Hanser, 1971), pp. 94–95, footnote 3 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi he jiegou*, 83, footnote 2).

¹⁶⁹Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 477 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 580).

extremely vague and mysterious elements. *It is interesting to note that Hess was working with Marx and Engels on writing The Germany Ideology (the fifth chapter of volume two) at this time.* There is an additional textual evidence that supports my view. On January 20, 1845, Engels wrote to Marx expressing the following view:

As regards Stirner, I entirely agree with you. When I wrote to you, I was still too much under the immediate impression made upon me by the book [*M. Stirner, Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*]. Since I laid it aside and had time to think it over, I feel the same as you. Hess, who is still here and whom I spoke to in Bonn a fortnight ago, has, after several changes of mind, come to the same conclusion as yourself.¹⁷⁰

What was the problem that Engels had discovered? Why had Hess experienced several changes of mind? According to my understanding, the answer to these questions can be found in the answers discovered by Marx in his “second thought experiment.” Stirner’s critique of Feuerbach’s “species” essence is correct. However, his fundamental error was not only in his discussion of egotistical individuals; of course, the basis of the new worldview of Marx and Engels was not, as Engels wrote to Marx on November 19, 1844, merely “starting from empiricism and materialism,” “deducing generalities from particularities,” but rather in breaking out of what Marx and Engels called “ahistorical abstraction,” thus objectively entering the real, concrete circumstances of society. We can see that the three difficult questions in Marx’s thinking were not ultimately solved by attaining a general practical rule, but were rather resolved **through practice, through approaching the real, concrete social circumstances of history.** *Obviously the analysis of this context in my text The Three Great Questions in Marx’s Philosophical Shift and their Underlying Resolution is still unfinished.*¹⁷¹ I must add here that in chapter fourteen of Zelený’s influential book *The Logic of Marx*, he used a very interesting title in reference to the philosophical relationship between Marx and Hess: “Making Feuerbach Practical is not Enough.” From this we see that his understanding is much deeper than some of our “practical humanists.”¹⁷²

Another more important aspect is that our past discussion of *Theses on Feuerbach* was almost entirely carried out on a philosophical level, as though Marx’s philosophical revolution was first purely philosophical. This revolution has often

¹⁷⁰Engels to Karl Marx in Paris, p. 259 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali, p. 16).

¹⁷¹See the second subsection, first section, second chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁷²Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, p. 182.

The translator of this book paraphrased this section as “Marx and Hess,” committing the small error of turning essence into phenomenon. Refer to the edition translated and edited by the Research Section of the Central School of the Chinese Communist Party). The fundamental significance of the new vision of Marxist philosophy was its opposition to any form of abstract, metaphysical ontology. In the mid-1960s, Heidegger criticized Sartre for not being qualified to converse with Marx, reasoning that Sartre’s philosophical logic still highlighted a kind of abstract humanism while Heidegger’s philosophical “revolution” had benefited from Marx’s transformation of the unchanging “one” into a concrete existence in the form of a verb (“ing”). From this, Hiromatsu Wataru came to understand Marx’s relational ontology, but of course this is an aside.

been narrowly explained as the restructuring and grafting together of two kinds of philosophical discourse. In this view, dialectical materialism is made up of the abolition of Hegel's idealist dialectic **plus** Feuerbach's materialism from which mechanical elements have been eliminated. This has not only become the viewpoint of our traditional research, but has also become a widely accepted common understanding. *According to Sidney Hook, the significance of the first thesis in Theses on Feuerbach was that it "provided a materialistic basis for the genuine discoveries the idealists made in their analysis of consciousness."*¹⁷³ *To use Norman Levines words, Marx mixed together the emphasis placed on action by German idealism with the emphasis placed on social environment by Locke and Bentham, thus creating Marx's own style.*¹⁷⁴ As a matter of fact, from the discussion we already had above, this judgment is basically inaccurate. Marx's second great philosophical shift — the establishment of a historical materialist scientific methodology — was not only the result of **one-dimensional development**, but was rather the product of a complex theoretical construction. In this overall research viewpoint, what is most important is Marx's own **economics development**. If we place Marx's philosophical breakthrough from this new viewpoint, then the guiding theoretical basis becomes the early economics research context of *Brussels Notes A*. This research centers on the history of the theories of political economy. The most important text here is *On List*, an early product of *Brussels Notes A*, which we have already analyzed.

It is my opinion that Marx's practical qualification in *Theses on Feuerbach* was not a simple identification of the concept of practice elaborated from Kant, Fichte, and Hegel to Cieszkowski, nor was it identification of Hess' action theory. Rather, it was an affirmation of **social material activity** in Marx's own economics research; more specifically, it was the practical transition from **particular** "industry" (the *ad hoc* material modes of production in bourgeois society that create the historical progression of the modern world as described in *On List*) to the **general** totality of "social material activity." Through the elevation of philosophical logic, the "industry" of which Marx wrote, that creative activity of the human subjectivity which "takes possession of his own forces and the forces of nature, objectifies himself and creates for himself the conditions for a human existence," after destroying the direct unity of man and nature that had existed in agricultural production, embarked on a process of re-unification between man and nature mediated by industry (machines) before finally elevating to the status of a general **total** philosophical qualification: this is social material practice. I believe that **modern practice based on concrete, historical, and real social material development** was the true logical point of origin for Marx's new worldview. The practical qualification of Marx's new materialism was not formed through simple, abstract philosophical deduction, but was rather the result of the accumulation of social economic history. This is an important aspect of research that has long been ig-

¹⁷³See Sydney Hook [Xini Huke 悉尼·胡克], *Dui Ka'er Makesi de lijie*, 对卡尔·马克思的理解, trans. Xu Chongwen 徐崇温 (Chongqing 重庆: Chongqing chubanshe 重庆出版社 [Chongqing Press], 1989), p. 266.

¹⁷⁴Levine, *Dialogue within the Dialectic* (Chinese transl.: *Bianzhengfa neibu duihua*, p. 84).

nored, and is also one of the fundamental reasons why Western Marxist humanists and practical humanists have misread Marx.

From this we see that the most important aspect of *Theses on Feuerbach* was Marx's qualification of practice itself using historical, real, and concrete social circumstances. If we ignore Marx's qualification of practice, then Alfred Stern is correct in viewing practice as utilitarianism.¹⁷⁵ In fact, another important self-qualification of the practice of social history is its problem of objective restrictions. Marx expresses this problem as man affected by the environment and opposition to abstract "activity" (also the third thesis). We can see that Marx does not only provide us with subjectivity and activity, but rather historical, real, and concrete subjectivity and activity of human society. *Thus Schmidt was most certainly correct to point out that "the concreteness of social practice" was the true object and point of origin of Marx's new philosophical worldview;*¹⁷⁶ *Schmidt gives profound analysis when he goes on to point out that the significance of the revolution in Marx's philosophy was in its abolition of all abstract ontology.* To summarize, Marx not only refutes the ontology of the idea, but also Feuerbach's ontology of abstract material and man, finally refuting Hess and his own prior ontology of abstract practice and labor. Marx here **refutes all logical ontologies**. This is why I have pointed out that in this sense, Marxist philosophy is **anti-systemic**.¹⁷⁷

There is a great deal of content in the first thesis that deserves our concentrated attention. In addition to the objective, sensuous practical activity that opposed all old materialism as well as all idealism that began with the "subjective aspect," we must also pay attention to the words "revolutionary" and "practical-activity" in the last sentence. As we have already seen, in the context of the first thought experiment, Marx was not the first to discover move from contemplation of Feuerbach to objective sensuous activity; this was Hess. The primary content of the first thesis focused on affirming Hess' line of thinking. Of course, it is correct to believe that practical activity is the transitional logical starting point, the entrance and foundation of Marx's new philosophical worldview.¹⁷⁸ However, practice is certainly not the "ahistorical abstract" of which Hess spoke, and those Marx emphasizes that what Feuerbach was unable to understand was actually the

¹⁷⁵In Stern's words: "Le pragmatisme n'est point une invention des philosophes américains Charles Peirce et William James, mais il fut établi un demi-siècle avant eux par Marx. Dans ses *Thèses sur Feuerbach* Marx énonça le principe du pragmatisme [...]" See Alfred Stern, "Marxisme et relativisme historique," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* XII (1958): p. 315.

¹⁷⁶Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, p. 33 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de ziran gainian*, p. 31).

¹⁷⁷Refer to the analysis of the first chapter of *Grundrisse* in my article Yibing Zhang [张一兵], "Makesi zhuyi zhexue xin shijie de chushi diping," 马克思主义哲学新视界的初始地平, *Nanjing daxue xuebao* 南京大学学报 1 (1995).

¹⁷⁸Professor Wu Xiaoming also realized this, but **incorrectly** employed the phrase "practical materialism" in *The German Ideology* with insufficient accuracy. This is because for Marx and Engels, practice as an abstract logical rule in Hess' thought was transitory. It is only an entry to the new perspective of Marxist philosophy, not a logical noumenon in the sense of the old philosophy. Marx's concept of practice here is intended to point out the utility of Marxist philosophy, namely the "practical materialism" (= "communist materialism") in the sense of the concrete social historical changes he observed. In this sense, practice cannot be thought of as transitory. Refer to Xiaoming Wu [吴晓明], *Lishi weiwu zhuyi de zhuti gainian*, 历史唯物主义的主体概念 [The Subjective Concept in Historical Materialism] (Shanghai: 上海人民出版社 [Shanghai People's Press], 1993), p. 146.

revolutionary and critical nature of social practice. The “revolution” here can be understood as “reform;” however, from the context of the second thought experiment that Marx wrote on the same page, “revolutionary” does not merely identify an unchanging basis of sensuous activity, but rather **practical situating** under certain conditions of social history.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, Marx had already seen from his economics research that in refuting real bourgeois society, what was important was not a theoretical value attack in which “a category replaces another category,” but is rather only possible through the material activity of society.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, if we identify Marxist philosophy as practical materialism, it can only be a historical, real, concrete practical materialism, a revolutionary, critical practical materialism.

4.4.2 The essential shift in Marx’s cognitive framework

The traditional interpretation of *Theses on Feuerbach* is that the content of the second thesis is epistemological. I believe that the content is not so simple. Even if it is epistemological, I do not believe that it is simply a practical standard to measure truth as is traditionally understood. Similar to the second point in Marx’s first thought experiment that we discussed earlier, this is a reaffirmation of Hegel’s phenomenological epistemological dialectic on the basis of practice. Marx discovered at this time that the objective truth of thinking could not be solved through a simple reversal of the subject-predicate relationship as Feuerbach had done, because this implied a problem of the **practical structure of history**. According to the logic of the first thesis in *Theses on Feuerbach*, the “**himself**” cognitive activity was actually based on the sensuous activity of practice. Thus Hegel’s mistake was first in changing man’s material practice into his cognitive activity, then turning this cognitive activity and structure into a logical essence. The present world of practice thus becomes the other world of concepts. Thus Kant is duped. But even as Feuerbach reverses Hegel, he rejects practice, thinking is established as a sensuous, perceptual phase (abstract man and nature), and the other world of the concept as well as objective reality are both overthrown. Thus Kant is bypassed. Marx writes that the this-sidedness and reality of thinking is a practical question, while Feuerbach’s phase (the object and perceptual object) is the **this-sidedness** created by practice; historical, real, concrete social practice is a bridge leading to the other side.

More importantly, the basis of Marx’s new epistemology must be analyzed from the perspective of his economics research at this time. If we merely view practice as man’s general sensuous activity, and set this as the basis of our epistemology, then this is still an explanation completed within philosophical logic. This will cause us to identify **individual behavior** as practice, further leading us to view the existing general social material activity and political battles as practice, and finally using this to confirm the truth or falseness of our understanding. In fact, none of this lay at the deepest level of Marx’s scientific definition of practice. This is because in the early research that he conducted for *Brussels Notes A*,

¹⁷⁹Refer to my article “Historical Materialism and Situating.”

¹⁸⁰Marx, “Notes on List,” p. 436 (Chinese transl.: “Ping Lisite,” p. 255).

i. e., in his comparison of ancient economic development and modern bourgeois economic development, he was already beginning to look at the **modern industrial production** that truly changes the world in the progression of social economics. The essence of material production in the natural economy of agricultural society depended on natural products that had been refined and chosen in the course of natural movement; here the human subject was still a passive thing, subject to natural processes. On the other hand, in the commodity economy of modern bourgeois society, the world of economics had already become the directly created result of man's industrial production. The practical activity and its practical structure of the practical activity of industry had become an important component of the objective structure of the world around us; for the first time, natural material objects became an object completely controlled by the human subject, wealth truly broke free from its natural primitiveness, and became, in the structure of social practice, "social wealth." We no longer simply and perceptually face natural objects as in the natural economy, but rather actively face the product of industrial practice and the exchange market. **For the first time, the material form has become the world scene of human practice; through active industrial (science and technology) practice, man more deeply surpasses sensuous perception and grasps the ever richer essence and laws of the material world around him.** This is the true social-historical connotation of Marx's standard of practice; it is precisely here that Kant's phenomenological epistemology and Hegel's idealist epistemology are completely refuted. The most important reasonable content in their epistemology was thus replaced with scientific criticism. Thus we see that for Marx, the standard of practice had a profound historical intention.

Besides the general epistemological meaning of the second thesis in Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, it also includes the important proposition of a fundamental change of direction in terms of the total orientation of Marx's philosophical logic. On the basis of practice, the gulf between the this-sided world and the that-sided world is truly transcended and the that-sided ("should") value postulate based in idealized subjective labor (species essence) is, for the first time, completely overthrown. Beginning with practice, i. e., beginning with the "this-sided" "is," means no longer approaching from the that-sided subjective value postulate, but rather leads to the revolutionary dialectic of true practice itself. This is an extremely important and insightful point. If we do not understand or grasp this from the context of economics, then we will pass right by without ever truly arriving at this level of theory.

Compared with Marx's understanding of this point, Hess is obviously somewhat inferior; he is no longer able to attain the new horizon of Marx's philosophy.

Returning to our study of the text, the context of the third, fifth, and eighth theses in *Theses on Feuerbach* become obvious. Considering the completely new views based in economics research that we have just studied, Marx naturally criticizes the French materialists who he affirms in *The Holy Family*. This is the beginning of Marx's essential supersession of materialism. It was in studying the development of industry that he profoundly realized that "the environment is changed by man." In terms of essential philosophical positioning, the proposition that man changes his environment did not apply to the limited reconstruction

that the human subject carried out of external objects in the period of agricultural production; although it claimed that “man’s will trumps the will of heaven,” the reconstruction carried out in this stage could not have been total change. The ability of man to truly and totally change his environment and thus make the world become the practical product of mankind could only be attained in social practice after the emergence of large-scale industry. “The coincidence of the changing of circumstances [environment] and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as **revolutionary practice**.”¹⁸¹ Social practice does not generally refer to the general, active relationship between man and object, but is rather a true identification of the **guiding role** in the entire objective world of the establishment of the human subject by modern industry. This historical placement was very important to our understanding of Marx’s discussion of the practical relation between man and his circumstances.

Thus Marx is able to directly make the following critique: “Feuerbach, not satisfied with **abstract thinking**, wants **contemplation**; but he does not conceive sensuousness as **practical**, human-sensuous activity.”¹⁸² In natural materialism, perceptual sensuousness becomes the logical weapon used to oppose idealist speculation. Taking a step back, if perceptual sensuousness still had a certain level of persuasiveness as man faces natural objects (fundamentally speaking, this is still incorrect, because natural objects appear in man’s subjective vision through the practical history of society), then when facing social history and human life, natural materialism would finally be defeated. It would either become a simple idealist conception of history or devolve into a perceptual identification of the material things in social life. This is because they cannot understand that “all social life is essentially **practical**.”¹⁸³ I believe that it was not until this period in Marx’s life that he was able to understand the social materialism that existed in political economy. More importantly, **for the first time, he truly and in a philosophical sense elevated the latent reasonable elements implied by social materialism**. This is no longer a simple question of epistemology, but is already the premise of the logic of historical materialist philosophy.

4.4.3 The earliest structure of a historical, real, concrete scientific method

In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*, I conducted an analysis of the third, fourth, and fifth theses in *Theses on Feuerbach*. My original explanation can find its own place within my new theoretical construction, but the vital problem is that I originally did not accord enough attention to theses six and seven. According to my understanding at this time, these two theses provide us with the most important content of Marx’s philosophical worldview: **a historical, real, and concrete analytical method**. At this level we find that Marx’s philosophy is essentially a **scientific functional method**, what Mao Zedong later

¹⁸¹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 84).

¹⁸²*ibid.*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 85).

¹⁸³*ibid.*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 85).

called a “living standpoint, viewpoint, and method.” All it tells us is how to **objectively and historically observe man and objects, as well as the active, historical relationships between men.**

What exactly is Marx trying to make clear in these two theses? It is my view that although Marx identifies Feuerbach here, he is actually trying to surpass the logical framework of Hess and himself: humanism’s ahistorical, abstract method. He wanted to surpass it even though this method was already seeking support for a proletariat revolution and even though it had already moved beyond Feuerbach to labor (as well as industry and practice in *The Holy Family* and *On List*). However, since Hess was ahead of Marx and Engels in conducting similar research, it was not proper for Marx to directly criticize him at this time. *As we have already mentioned, in The Germany Ideology, we see the strange situation of Hess as both an author and object of criticism.* However, Marx had already realized that Hess’ practical humanism fundamentally did not surpass Feuerbach. The most important reason for this was that Hess’ practical philosophy (one could even add the suffix of materialism) and “true” socialism were still based on abstract “man.” This abstract man who did not belong to any age or social practice, was still the ideology of German “civil society.”¹⁸⁴ How is this any more deep than the ideal essence of “man” and “labor” that Marx had already developed before and just after the *1844 Manuscript*? The surface level of dominant theoretical logic at that time was a movement from Feuerbach to practice and production, but the deeper *a priori* method of humanist logic caused the projection of philosophy onto economic reality to fall to a latent and idealist conception of history. Thus the underlying context of the sixth and seventh theses gradually becomes clear.

As I have already explained, on the surface what we find is the third element of Marx’s criticism of Feuerbach’s philosophy: “man”(the first element was abstract nature, resolved in the first thesis; the second was abstract perception, resolved in the second and fifth theses). Though the larger logical line of thinking in this interpretation is not wrong, considering the context that I just made clear, the problem becomes much more complex. The first sentence of this thesis reads, “Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence.” In the past, Marx directly affirmed this view, but now the logical placement of it is evidently very different. Marx here has difficulty with Feuerbach’s idea of man’s subjective species-essence as the base of return (of course this also refers to man’s labor species-essence in the *1844 Manuscript*). “But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual.”¹⁸⁵ It is my view that Marx is consciously overthrowing and deconstructing all *a priori*, ahistorical, unreal, non-concrete subjective species-essence. **Here, the logical ontology of the metaphysics of traditional philosophy is, for the first time, declared illegitimate.** Regardless of the new concepts with

¹⁸⁴In Alasdair MacIntyre’s “A Road Not Taken,” the author points out that the shift in Marx’s thought which took place in his *Theses on Feuerbach* was primarily a “transcendence of the standpoint of civil society.” This argument does make some sense. In this text, MacIntyre attempts to reinterpret Marx through the lens of the major setbacks suffered in the actual experience of socialism. Many of his points are worth our deeper examination. A Chinese translation of this text was published in 1995 in the 6th issue of *Overseas Social Science*.

¹⁸⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 85).

which this philosophy attempts to cloak itself (including the concepts of labor, production, and practice, because Hess had used these all before Marx), as long as it is still creating an abstract subjective essence that rejects the progression of history, it can only be unscientific. I believe that Marx's critique here is a fundamental refutation of classical humanism. Internal, dumb species-essence is the basic logical support for bourgeois enlightenment thinking since the Renaissance. Heaven-granted human rights and rationality is the "generality which **naturally** unites the many individuals"; this is the real essence of bourgeois society ("civil society"). This is Feuerbach's problem: he unconsciously reflected the social relations of real bourgeois society (abstract "love"), but uses this to confirm a kind of eternal essence of human subjectivity. However, Feuerbach did not know that although he claimed to uphold communism (such as in his shift in political standpoint in 1845), he could not change the latent bourgeois ideological nature that lurked behind his philosophy. Hess did not surpass this at all. This was because he could not truly criticize the real essence of bourgeois society, and thus his basis was, whether consciously or not, atomized individual contemplation and ethical anger (tenth thesis) within bourgeois society.¹⁸⁶ As such, how can we speak of using revolutionary means to "**change**" this world? (eleventh thesis).

It is not difficult for us to see that beginning from a given "social historical progression" is not a qualification that traditional philosophical thinking can accept. So I must point out that this is a philosophical realization that took place in the course of Marx's economic studies. Through the early research conducted in *Brussels Notes A*, the greatest accomplishment for Marx was to see the developmental history of Western economics in its entirety, as well as the political economic theories that corresponded to each specific stage of economic development. This is because in Brussels Notes A Marx took excerpts of the main lines of thinking from McCulloch's *The Progress, Origins, and Objects of Political Economy*, Pecchio's *The History of Italian Political Economy*, Garnier's *Comparative Study of the Various Systems of Political Economy*, and Blanqui's *The Development of European Political Economy from Ancient to Modern Times*, etc. Because of this, in *On List*, Marx was able to understand that bourgeois political economy could only be a reflection of the economic realities of bourgeois society: "it only provides this social system with a corresponding theoretical expression."¹⁸⁷ It was only here that he was able to realize that the real starting point of bourgeois political economy could only be real civil society, and that the different developmental stages of this society could be accurately discussed within economics.¹⁸⁸ It was only here that he was able to understand "present-day industry" as a transitional period. In fact, Marx here suddenly realizes that the "man" which was so oft discussed by the economics and philosophy of the day was, in reality, nothing but the concrete man who existed in the economic relations of civil society. Here, individuals are constructed from the history of given real economic relations; **different economic relations necessarily lead to different social relations, different social relations**

¹⁸⁶Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Thesen über Feuerbach*, vol. IV/3 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), pp. 20–21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, pp. 5–6).

¹⁸⁷Marx, "Notes on List," p. 434 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 252).

¹⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 432 (Chinese transl.: "Ping Lisite," p. 249).

form the qualification of the existence of specific individuals. Reflecting on this point from a philosophical perspective, at this time Marx first discovered from philosophical logic that beginning from a true understanding of this real social historical life, the human subject could only be a real individual under **certain** conditions of social history; that the human essence could only be the sum of all social relations under **certain** conditions of social history; that practice can only be historical practice under **certain** conditions of social history, and that ideas can only be historical social ideas under **certain** conditions of social history.

I believe that when Marx decisively proclaimed that the essence of man in reality was “the sum of all social relations,” he was actually proclaiming the start of a new philosophical era. It is here that appears, is defined, and slowly moves toward us the primitive horizon of the new worldview of Marx’s philosophy. This is the **historical, concrete, true definition of the human subject, human social practice, and its idea.** At the same time, it is here that he truly reconstructs Hegel’s historical dialectic. Hegel’s idea logic, which is actually specifically self-happening, now becomes individuals and activity that belong to a certain social form. It becomes a concrete product of society, a temporary sum of the social relationships between man and both nature and other men under certain conditions of reality. It is this **historical** materialist method that is centered on the practice of certain (“bestimmten”) human society that is the true secret of Marx’s new philosophical worldview. Only by truly understanding this point can we truly grasp the significance of Marx’s philosophical revolution, can we truly understand the significance of Marx’s use of “certain” to structure history, can we understand why Marx would use eight “certain”s in his letter to Annenkov, can we understand why Marx in *Poverty of Philosophy* would criticize Proudhon by repeatedly using the words “historical” and “temporary,” can we understand why Marx in *The Communist Manifesto* would criticize the abstract substance of Hess’ “true socialism.”

I believe that Lenin was correct in his later belief that Marxist philosophy was not historical **materialism**, but rather **historical** materialism. Later, when Heidegger said that Marx truly ended all metaphysical ontology, he was also understanding Marx at a level that existed outside this boundary.¹⁸⁹ However, have those in our field who continue to advocate ahistorical practical philosophy and practical humanism truly understood Marx’s scientific texts? It is often said that every time man tries to think, God starts to laugh. Looking down on these “practical philosophers” and “practical humanists,” I can only imagine that Marx is laughing bitterly to himself, exclaiming: “150 years later and they still don’t understand!”

¹⁸⁹See Martin Heidegger, *Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens*, vol. 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1969), pp. 67–90 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de zhongjie yu sixiang de renwu,” vol. 2, p. 1244).

Chapter 5

The Theoretical Frame of Reference of Marx's New Philosophical Perspective

Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* was an important sign that his philosophical discourse was experiencing a fundamental gestalt shift. As we have already seen, the basis for this change in philosophical perspective was the second phase of Marx's economic research, which was becoming more and more profound. Marx realized that a new scientific approach and proletariat revolution were only possible by beginning with the reform of real economic relations; this was the theoretical creation of a completely new economic science, a completely new socialist science. In order to accomplish this great scientific revolution, Marx knew that there must first be systematic reconstruction of philosophical methodology. This was the primary task that he and Engels set for themselves in writing *The German Ideology*. The unique research goal of this chapter is to, for the first time, closely analyze the important theoretical logical background of *The German Ideology*. This includes the results of Marx's economics research, the theoretical logic of Ricardian socialist economics, and the underlying meaning of Stirner's philosophical critique. Only through understanding these elements will we be able to historically understand the early horizon of Marx's philosophical revolution.

5.1 New Developments in the Second Phase of Marx's Economics Research

As I have previously discussed, on February 3, 1845, Marx began again to study political economy while living in Brussels. After completing *Brussels Notes A* in February, he wrote *On List* and *Theses on Feuerbach*, thus realizing his revolutionary philosophical breakthrough, consciously moving towards the complete construction of the new science of Marxism. Between May and July of 1845, Marx continued his study of political economy in Brussels, writing *Brussels Notes B*. From July to August, Marx and Engels visited the great industrial kingdom of England for the first time. In this time, Marx took another set of economics excerpts, which are now known as *Manchester Notes* (nine notebooks). Let us first briefly analyze the text and general content of these two groups of notes.

5.1.1 Textual research of *Brussels Notes B* and *Manchester Notes*

First let us turn our attention to *Brussels Notes B*, the results of the second phase of Marx's research of political economy while living in Brussels. Because there is no clearly defined sequence to the notes, it makes analysis quite laborious. From my research experience, the most effective method of organization is according to the importance of the content.

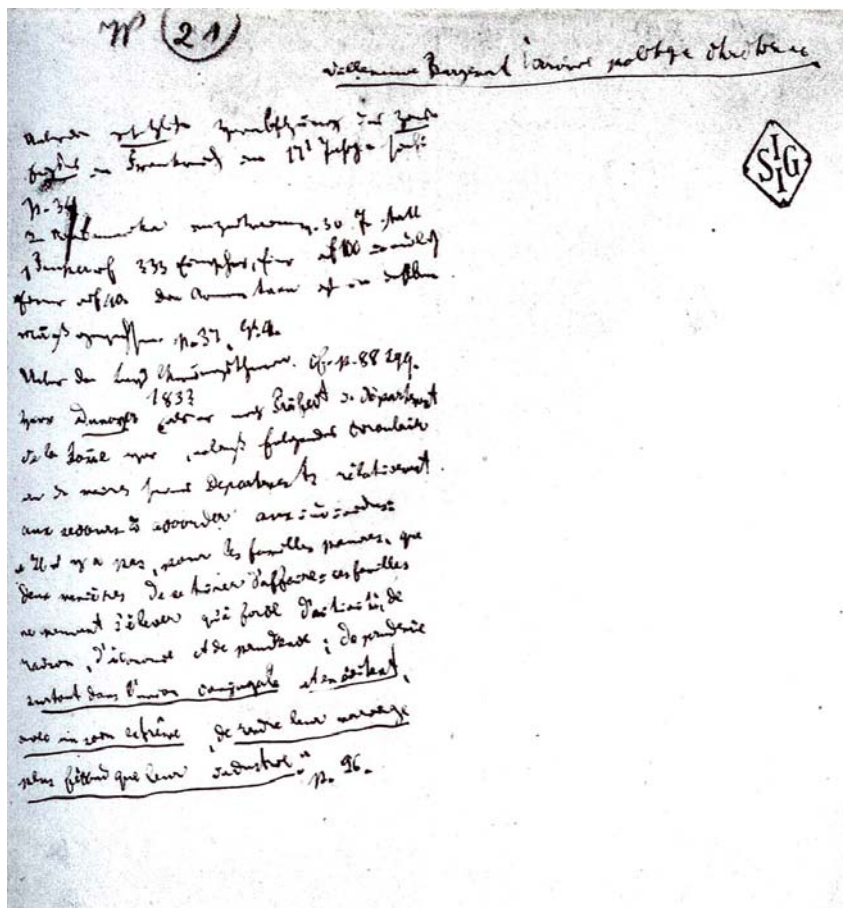
I consider the first notebook in *Brussels Notes B* to be the most important. I refer to this notebook as "Research on Material Production and Productive Forces." This notebook is organized in columns, composed of 32 pages. Marx wrote on 29 pages, and these can be divided into four sections. The first section contains only one page of excerpts from volume one ("Considérations sur les machines") of Auguste de Gasparin, The second part includes eight pages of excerpts from Charles Babbage's *On the Economy of Machines and Manufactures*. The third part contains five pages of excerpts from Andrew Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures*. Finally, the fourth part contains 14 pages of excerpts from Pellegrino Rossi's *Cours d'économie politique*.

The second notebook is composed of 54 pages, of which 53 pages were used by Marx. First are eight pages of excerpts from F. L. A. Ferrier's *Du gouvernement considéré dans ses rapports avec le commerce*. Next are 9 pages of excerpts from Alexandre de Laborde's *De l'esprit d'association dans tous les intérêts de la communauté*; 2 pages of excerpts from Ramon de la Sagra's *De l'industrie cotonnière et des ouvriers en Catalogne*; $\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Théodore Fix's *De l'esprit progressif et de l'esprit de conservation en économie politique*; $\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Alexandre Moreau de Jonnés' *Aperçus statistiques sur la vie civile et l'économie domestique des Romains au commencement du quatrième siècle de notre ère*; 31 pages of excerpts from Heinrich Storch's *Cours d'économie politique*; $\frac{1}{4}$ pages of excerpts from Louis Francois Bernard Trioen: *Essais sur les abus de l'agiotage*.

The third notebook contains excerpts from James Lauderdale's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*, which had previously been mistakenly included with *Paris Notes*. The sheets of this notebook are folded; Marx wrote on 16 pages, and the last page includes mathematical calculations.

The fourth notebook had also previously been mistakenly included with *Paris Notes*. It is based on a collection annotated and published by Eugène Daire, *Économistes financiers du XVIII siècle* (Paris 1843). The pages are organized in two columns, Marx used 26 pages. It has the following contents: first, $4\frac{1}{2}$ pages of notes on Boisguillebert's *Le détail de la France*; second, 10 pages of notes on Boisguillebert's *Dissertation sur la nature des richesses, de l'argent et des tributs*; third, 4 pages of notes on Boisguillebert's *Traité de la nature, culture, commerce et intérêt des grains*; and the last is just 1 page on Jean Law's *Considérations sur le numéraire et le commerce*.

The second group of notes are nine notebooks of excerpts taken by Marx while living in England, referred to as *Manchester Notes*. In *MEGA 1*, only three notebooks were confirmed to have been directly annotated by Marx (volume 6 of *MEGA 1*). In *MEGA 2*, it was determined that there were nine notebooks, of

Figure 5.1: Facsimile of a page from *Brussels Notes*

which the first five notebooks have been included in volume four of part four,¹ and the last four notebooks are planned to be published in volume five, though this volume is still in the process of editing.² For this reason our textual introduction here will focus on the first five notebooks, tracing only a general outline of the last four.

Notebook one, 48 pages total, of which Marx wrote on 37 pages. It includes 6 pages of excerpts from William Petty's *An Essay concerning the multiplication of mankind*; 13 pages of excerpts from Charles Davenant's *Two Discourses on the Public Revenues and Trade of England*; 1½ pages of excerpts from James Anderson of Hermiston's *Investigation of the Scarcity of Grain in Britain*; 2½ pages

¹MEGA 2 vol. IV/4, Dietz Verlag (Berlin), 1988.

²The work in progress is being led by editor-in-chief, Prof. Bagaturija of the Russian Archive for Contemporary History.

of excerpts from George Browning's *The Domestic and Financial Condition of Great Britain*; 3 pages of excerpts from Edward Misselden's *Free Trade, or the Means to make Trade flourish*; and furthermore 4 pages of calculations.

Notebook two, 44 pages total, of which Marx wrote on all 44 pages. It includes $13\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Thomas Cooper's *Lectures on the Elements of Political Economy*; $8\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Thomas Sadler's *The Law of Population*; 8 pages of excerpts from Thomas Tooke's *A history of prices, and of the state of the circulation, from 1793 to 1837; preceded by a brief sketch of the state of corn trade in the last two centuries*; 11 pages of excerpts from Gilbert's *The History and Principles of Banking*; 2 pages of excerpts from Thomas Rowe Edmonds' *Practical Moral and Political Economy*; furthermore $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages of calculations.

Notebook three primarily includes excerpts from McCulloch's *Principles of Political Economy*.

Notebook four, octavio, 36 pages total, of which Marx used 27 pages. It includes the following: 17 pages of excerpts from William Cobbett's *Paper against Gold*; $1\frac{1}{2}$ page of excerpts from an article in the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* about Senior's *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy*; and 9 pages of excerpts from William Thompson's *Principles of Distribution*.

Notebook five, 50 pages total, of which Marx wrote on 46 pages. It includes the following excerpts: 6 pages of excerpts from William Atkinson's *Principles of Political Economy*; $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Thomas Carlyle's *Chartism*; $10\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from John Ramsay McCulloch's *Principles of Political Economy*; 9 pages of excerpts from John Wade's *History of the middle and working classes*; $11\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from John Stuart Mill's *Essays on some unsettled questions of political economy*; etc.

In the last four notebooks, the most important content includes $22\frac{1}{2}$ pages of excerpts from Robert Owen's *The Book of the New Moral World*; 28 pages of excerpts from Owen's *Essays on the Formation of Human Character*; and 24 pages of excerpts from John Bray's *Labor's Wrong and Labor's Remedy*. Additionally, Marx here takes excerpts from Quesnay and William Greg's as well as John Hope's *Agriculture and the Corn Law*.

5.1.2 The specific context of Marx's second phase of economics study

Let us first look at *Brussels Notes B*. I believe that Marx's most theoretically significant content in this portion of excerpts concerns material production and productive forces. As a matter of fact, building off of List's "industrial force," by this point Marx had already established the concept of real social practice; this was an important scientific abstraction. Taking his economic research one step further, he first turns his attention to the **most fundamental aspect of practical activity: material production**. This is another shift from abstract to concrete. Material production is the foundation of social development; this is the premise of all of classical economic research. In a fairly short section of excerpts in the first notebook we can see that the content that Marx cites concerns almost completely production, especially mechanical production, the primary aspect of the produc-

tion of modern bourgeois society. Here we will take the eight pages of excerpts (out of 39 total) on Babbage to demonstrate this point.

Charles Babbage³ was a well-known 19th century English mathematician and inventor. In the 1820s he dedicated himself to the invention of the computer (called a difference engine). From late 1827 to late 1828, Babbage toured continental Europe, visiting factories in Holland, Italy, Germany, and France and conducting research for his famous book, *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*. This book gives an readily understandable description of the process of production, explaining the principles and results of modern mechanical production. It especially focused on the objective consequences and economic benefits of the replacement of manpower and human skill by tools and machines. This book can be thought of as **an analysis of the ways in which modern productive forces, in their narrow technological sense, propel social progress**. The book is divided into two sections: the first is titled “Analysis of Mechanical Parts,” and the second “On The Domestic and Political Economy of Manufactures.” The first section of the book primarily deals with the technological analysis of the development from tools to machines; this is a direct identification of **material productive forces**. Through analyzing the results of the use of machines in production, the second section of Babbage’s book points out that the cost of products lowers as productive forces improve.⁴ In chapter 19, he immediately deepens Smith’s theory of the division of labor, proposing the so-called “Babbage Principle.” Where Smith believed that the simplification of the division of labor led to the invention of machines, Babbage believed the opposite. He argued that machines first appeared because of the simplification of labor, objectifying labor techniques in the form of tools. The simplification of tools makes them reintegrate into a dynamic system. This is a **micro-study of the basic structure and modes of bourgeois society’s process of production**.

The other important content of this notebooks deals with Ure’s *The Philosophy of Manufactures*, published in 1836. This book was heavily influenced by Babbage’s work. It also contains a concrete analysis of the industrial revolution, including a certain level of economic theoretical reflection. Marx took five pages of excerpts. We can see that the Ure’s main line of theoretical thinking is still production and division of labor. On the issue of the division of labor Ure differs from Babbage, directly opposing Smith’s attitude towards Smith’s concept of the division of labor. In our later discussion, it will not be difficult for us to see that **production and division of labor form the basis of the two lines of thought in *The German Ideology***. Production and **modes** of production became important qualifications in Marx’s historical materialism. Marx, who stood with the proletariat, was able derive from the division of labor a scientific, **substantiated critical** line of thinking.

³Charles Babbage (1792–1871) was an English mathematician and inventor. He graduated from the University of Cambridge in 1814, then served as a professor at Cambridge from 1828–1839. His primary works include Charles Babbage, *On the Economy of Machines and Manufactures* (1832). In addition, he authored several mathematical manuscripts.

⁴*ibid.*, chapter 13, §§ 163–165, pp. 119–121.

In writing the *Manchester Notes*, Marx primarily took excerpts of French works, because his French reading abilities were stronger. I believe that this research is an integral part of his comprehensive understanding of bourgeois political economy, adding, in particular, to *Paris Notes* and *Brussels Notes*. These notes can obviously not be called profound or scientific economics research; neither can they be directly assumed as the object of research for Marx's *Critique of Political and National Economy*.⁵ This is because Marx's scientific study of political economy did not begin until the 1850s. Nevertheless, I believe that the research Marx conducts here had a profound influence and important significance for his philosophical shift.

From the textual content that we have just discussed, the content of Marx's nine notebooks is very rich. Based on the primary topic of the texts, they can be divided into three groups.

The first group of texts concern the early stage of English bourgeois political economy, i. e., the pre-Smith English economists. These economists include Edward Misselden, William Petty, Charles Davenant and Robert Codrington.⁶ Besides Petty, almost all of these are mercantilist works; and even Petty's book has some mercantilist connotations. These works reflect the real level of development of bourgeois political economy, showing the failure of the natural economy, the rise of the manufacture and artisanal economy, the formation of a domestic market, and the expansion of foreign trade. This research greatly expanded the **comprehensiveness** and **historical** nature of Marx's understanding of bourgeois society.

The English mercantilists primarily focused on social wealth and its source. They emphasized the study of money, especially precious metals, which were considered to be "universal wealth."⁷ In his research of these texts, Marx gradually understood that changes in the theoretical perspective of economics actually directly originated from changes in socio-economic reality. Industry was not very developed at the time, domestic markets were small, and foreign trade was the primary means by which wealth was accumulated; these conditions determined the viewpoints of early mercantilists. In Misselden's *Free Trade or the Means to Make Trade Flourish*, he clearly elucidates the views of early mercantilists, which was that money was the only true wealth on earth, that it had the power to rule over all mankind. As the material production and industry of bourgeois society began to develop and monetary surplus policies were replaced by trade surplus policies, the mercantilist bias towards money was finally overcome. Marx was able to directly observe this theoretical shift in the works of Davenant and Petty.⁸ Furthermore,

⁵Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Einleitung," in *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/4, pp. 11*–48*.

⁶On this single page of excerpts, Marx did not give detailed information on the author. While this book is commonly attributed to Robert Clavell, the genuine author seems to be Robert Codrington, as he signed the dedication. Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus: His Majesties propriety, and dominion on the British seas," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/4, p. 45. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

⁷Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus Petty: Several Essays in political arithmetic," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/4, p. 20.

⁸Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus Charles Davenant: Discourses on the publick revenues, and on the trade of England," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/4, p. 51.

Marx was able to understand the study of statistics that Petty had established, though he was also able to immediately see the problems with bourgeois statistics: their essence was ideological “protectionism.”⁹

The second group of notes focus on post-Ricardian English economics texts. The majority of these works attempt to explain Smith and Ricardo, some in favor and some opposed. Marx began with excerpts from *Lectures on the Elements of Political Economy* by the British-American Thomas Cooper, and finished with John Stuart Mill’s *Essays on some unsettled questions of political economy*. Marx also included excerpts from such writers as Thomas Tooke, James Gilbart, William Cobbett, Thomas Sadler,¹⁰ Nassau William Senior, William Atkinson, and John Ramsay McCulloch. The excerpts in this section can be divided into three categories: first, the general theoretical principles of economics, including the object, methods, and definition of important categories in economics as well as their interactions; second, the flow of money, flow of credit, and problem of crisis; third, the problem of population. Through this research Marx realized that a correct understanding of bourgeois political economy cannot be divorced from the objective development of bourgeois material production. He discovered that the reason Smith and Ricardo were able to arrive at objective, unbiased conclusions towards economic reality was that material forces of production in early bourgeois modes of production were able to break through backwards agricultural production.

Marx’s research here begins with Ricardo’s detractors, including the works of Cooper, Atkinson and Senior. These economists criticize Ricardo’s labor theory of value from different angles, because drawing this theory to its logical conclusion inevitably leads to the exploitation of workers by landowners and capitalists. For the purpose of protecting their class interest, these defenders of the bourgeoisie criticized Ricardo in that he connected the labor theory of value with the price of commodities. They suggested a variety of conclusions about value determinism, such as value is determined by relations of mutual demand (Cooper, Atkinson), or value is determined by utility (Senior). The fact that Marx here does not attempt to refute Ricardo’s labor theory of value indicates that he has already changed his attitude since the *1844 Manuscript*.

This chronological separation in Marx’s economics research allowed him to develop fundamentally new views. More importantly, Marx discovered that he had to conduct **historical, concrete, and real** research of the modes of production of bourgeois society. When studying social historical life, one must pay attention to the concrete circumstances of its happening, existence, and development. In other words, **it is only analysis of social historical circumstances under certain conditions of history that can be scientific.**

The third group of excerpts are of English utopian socialists, especially emphasizing the Owenites. These included William Thompson, John Francis Bray and Thomas Rowe Edmonds. Here, Thompson’s socialist theoretical proof based on political economy becomes the focus of Marx’s study. Marx discovered that

⁹Marx, “Exzerpte aus Petty: Several Essays in political arithmetick,” p. 13.

¹⁰Michael Thomas Sadler (1780–1835), was a radical British Tory Member of Parliament and leader of the factory reform movement. Besides the report bearing his name, *Sadler Report* (1832), his most important work was: *The Law of Population*. (Editor’s note for the English edition.)

Thompson begins by affirming Ricardo's labor theory of value: "**Exchange value** is not necessary to the idea of wealth [...] **labor** is the sole father of wealth."¹¹ In Thompson's analysis, he comes to this important logical deduction: if labor is the only source of social wealth, why is it that not every productive worker is able to obtain his full equivalent? Thompson writes that "in any place and among any people, labor is a valued good. In any place, the price of labor is sufficient to prolong survival and purchase food. Labor is the only omnipotent commodity [...] labor increases the desire for goods. Labor is the only component of material wealth."¹² Therefore, "materials, buildings, machines, and wages cannot add anything to their value. Added things come only from labor itself... under ordinary circumstances, at least half the labor of workers in production is stolen."¹³ Evidently, "as long as the organization supported by this power of things continues to exist, only one group of people **will control this type of productive force,**" and it will be impossible to eliminate this inequality in society.¹⁴ Marx discovered that **Ricardian economics (labor theory of value) could use "particular means" to directly lead to the socialist conclusion of direct refutation of the system of bourgeois society.** This form of socialism would no longer consist of a **value judgment,** but would rather be based on the **reality of large-scale industry.**

I believe that the **overall theoretical logic** of the Ricardian socialist economists exerted an important catalytic influence on the philosophical construction of Marx's historical materialism at this time.

5.2 The Alliance of Classical Economics and Socialism

Now we can finally discuss the important theoretical issue of the English Ricardian socialist economists. Although the theories of this school of thought appeared in the 1820s and 1830s, it was not until *Manchester Notes* in 1845 that they would have a real influence on Marx's philosophical thinking. This influence was important, not only for Marx's philosophical research, but also for his political economic and socialist research. Although Marx only takes excerpts from two members of this school of thought in *Manchester Notes* (Thompson and Bray), we will still treat them as a single theoretical body in our discussion; this body includes Thompson, Hodgskin, Bray, and Gray.

¹¹Karl Marx, "Exzerpte aus William Thompson: An inquiry into the principles of the distribution of wealth," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. IV/4, p. 237.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 238.

¹³*ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 240.

5.2.1 Material production, especially labor, creates all social wealth and knowledge

William Thompson¹⁵ is the first socialist economist in Marx's *Manchester Notes* to stand with the proletariat. Thompson's *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness* (abbreviated as *Inquiry on Distribution of Wealth*) was the first text to be published by an English socialist economist. In Thompson's opinion, material production was the sole foundation on which society depends for survival¹⁶ and production is society's only lasting source of wealth.¹⁷ Therefore, no matter what the circumstances, men must continue to produce or be destroyed.¹⁸ This appears to be an eternal necessity. However, what must be further defined is the role of nature in material production, in the transformation of natural material into human social wealth; in short, it has no role. Humans and human labor do everything.¹⁹ Thompson defines the subjective labor of man as the most important guiding element in production; this is vitally important to Marx's philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism. *I have noticed that Marx's general theory of historical materialism in The German Ideology first establishes the foundation of material production, while his special theory of historical materialism in Grundrisse is based on the labor theory of value.* Therefore, "Let the labor of any community cease for but one year and how many of that community would be preserved in life **by the materials or energies of nature?** Not only the comforts but the very **existence** of all nations depend on the eternal operation of labor."²⁰ *In the first chapter of The German Ideology, Marx directly quotes the basic meaning of these sentences in his critique of Feuerbach's sensuous natural materialism.* It is interesting to note that Thompson proposed this idea especially in an attempt to delineate between labor force and the product of labor. The force of labor comprises things that **will be produced**, while the products of labor are things that have already been produced.²¹ Thus the focal point of the production of labor falls on the living labor of the human subject. *This point would come to be very important for Marx's later economics construction.*

Equally interesting is the fact that Thompson affirmed the view that **exchange** was necessary to modern production. Affirming exchange is, in fact, a recognition of the significance of the **division of labor**. He inherited this view from Smith.

¹⁵William Thompson (1775–1833) was an English socialist economist. His primary works include *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness* (1824) (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*); *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* (1825); and *Labor Rewarded. The Claims of Labor and Capital Conciliated: or, How to Secure to Labor the Whole Products of Its Exertions* (1827).

¹⁶William Thompson, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness*, ed. William Pare (London: Wm. S. Orr / Co., 1850), p. 193 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 208).

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 171 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 187).

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 48).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 34).

²⁰*ibid.*, p. 7 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 31).

²¹*ibid.*, p. 67 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 89).

The division of labor is the specialization of productive technology; at the same time, it is a further condition of the wholeness and cooperation of productive labor in time. Thus exchange is like labor, it is necessary to beneficial and expanded production.²² Therefore without exchange there can be no production, no further production of wealth. Labor without exchange, like exchange without labor, are nearly the same in their uselessness.²³ Thompson profoundly realized that it was exchange in expanded production that drew people out of their own self-worlds.²⁴ General division of labor and exchange truly free man from the closed existence of feudal land ownership. *This viewpoint has much merit, though in the 1844 Manuscript Marx did not realize it. It was not until Grundrisse that Marx would directly identify this line of thinking on a more scientific foundation.*

Thompson also believed that labor and exchange were not only the sources of production, but also the sources of all morality and happiness.²⁵ *This is not quite the case. He was unable to understand labor and exchange did not exist on the same level.* To use the words of another Ricardian socialist economist John Francis Bray,²⁶ man's character is an impression made by surrounding circumstances upon that which constitutes human existence.²⁷ This expression makes a reasonable point. The idea that man's character and morality can be formed in production is not a natural materialist viewpoint, in which material and consciousness are in antithesis, but is rather a **social materialist** viewpoint. Bray makes an even more trenchant point: "the production and proper distribution of wealth is the first thing to be considered, because it forms the foundation on which the superstructure of pleasures essentially human must be based."²⁸ Here Bray is deeper and more precise than Thompson. On this point, Thompson used an example of the morality of the worker: "can a group of naked, starving people care for their reputation?" In wretched living conditions, it is impossible for the poor to understand "morality." For them, thought and preaching is useless:

Motives arise from **things**, from **surrounding circumstances**, not from the idleness of words and empty declamation. Words are only useful to convey and impress a knowledge of these things and circumstances. If these states of things do not exist, words are a mere mockery.²⁹

Marx made a similar observation in The German Ideology, writing that consciousness is my link to my circumstances. If a man is hungry and cold, he does not have the leisure of pondering morality. To use the words of another anti-

²²*ibid.*, p. 38 (Chinese transl.: *Caifu fenpei yanjiu*, p. 61).

²³*ibid.*, p. 35 (Chinese transl.: *Caifu fenpei yanjiu*, p. 58).

²⁴*ibid.*, p. 64 (Chinese transl.: *Caifu fenpei yanjiu*, p. 86).

²⁵*ibid.*, p. 44 (Chinese transl.: *Caifu fenpei yanjiu*, p. 67).

²⁶John Francis Bray (1809–1895) was an English socialist economist. His primary work was *Labor's Wrong and Labor's Remedy* (1839). Marx read his this book as part of his research for *Manchester Notes*.

²⁷John Francis Bray, *Labor's Wrong and Labor's Remedy* (Leeds: David Green, 1839), pp. 112–113 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 120).

²⁸*ibid.*, p. 63 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 66).

²⁹Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 190 (Chinese transl.: *Caifu fenpei yanjiu*, p. 205).

bourgeois thinker and English socialist of the 19th century, Thomas Hodgskin,³⁰ “All attempts, therefore, to improve the morality and the minds of the millions, [...] while there is a deficiency of food in the land, must all be hopeless and vain.”³¹ This establishes the same theoretical premise as Thompson: man must produce first before he can do anything else. This is the direct foundation of Marx’s historical materialism. More importantly, Thompson goes on to make another point that conforms to the viewpoint of the historical dialectic: there is no eternal and unchanging system, just as there is no eternal and unchanging idea. Thus the quest for an eternal and unchanging thing is a common mistake. Thompson writes:

The institutions of insecurity, generating peculiar moral or immoral habits, and causing endless modifications in the production and distribution of wealth, not only differ in every country on the face of the globe, but are continually varying in the same county. Hence the improbability of establishing any permanent or universal truths on such partial treacherous foundations.³²

This viewpoint was directed, of course, at the natural truth (natural law) of the eternal and unchanging market economy advocated by the defenders of bourgeois society. This viewpoint would have an important influence on Marx’s ability to clearly see the unhistorical essence of bourgeois ideology.

Of course, even as productive labor produces ideas, ideas also influence productive labor as well as the lives of people. This can be seen in two ways: first, science and technology in the form of knowledge is internally linked to production. However, this link developed through a historical process. In the early stages of social development, labor and knowledge were unified. As society progressed towards civilization, it was inevitable and natural that labor and knowledge grow further and further apart. This is because as the process of labor becomes more varied, complex, and intricate, it requires increasingly advanced technology. As knowledge comes to encapsulate ever broader subjects, more and more time must be dedicated to obtaining this knowledge. In the production of modern society, “science and art have made such conquests over the external substances and powers of nature, in rendering their properties and energies subservient to human use.”³³ However, under the conditions of bourgeois society, those with knowledge and those who labor in production are widely separated: “Knowledge, instead of remaining the handmaid of labor in the hand of the laborer to increase his productive powers, to guide its distribution so as to raise to the highest its capacity of giving enjoyment, has almost everywhere arrayed itself against labor, not only

³⁰Thomas Hodgskin (1787–1869) was an English socialist economist. His primary works include *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (1825), *Popular Political Economy* (1827), and *Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted* (1832).

³¹Thomas Hodgskin, *A Lecture on Free Trade, in connexion with the Corn Laws*, Delivered at the White Conduit House, on January 31, 1843 (London: G. J. Palmer, 1843), p. 19 (Chinese transl.: Thomas Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy* (London: Charles / William Tait, 1827), pp. 255–256).

³²Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 434 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 437).

³³*ibid.*, p. 221 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 234).

concealing its treasures from the laborers, but systematically deluding and leading them astray, in order to render their muscular powers entirely mechanical and obedient.”³⁴ *In fact, this view that science and technology become forces of capital arrayed against the worker in the bourgeois social system was further developed in Marx’s Capital, written in the 1860s.* Thompson imagines that once society has developed to a “perfect stage,” labor will be reunited with knowledge to never be divided again; at that time, the demand for knowledge will become a need of every individual, and “the very progress and development of the social art has unfolded the **means** [to obtain knowledge].”³⁵

Second, knowledge also exerts an important influence on man’s social life. Thompson discovered that man has the tendency to live in the “circumstances surrounding the actors,”³⁶ a state created by productive labor. *Marx’s later use of the phrase “our surrounding world” in The German Ideology to refer to the external objective world is very close to Thompson’s use here.* Those states of things and circumstances in which mankind find themselves placed with respect to each other, both as affecting knowledge and production.³⁷ In modern bourgeois society, knowledge became a means to rule over man using religious, political, or other social institutions. *Knowledge here plays the role that Marx describes in the second manuscript of the first chapter of The German Ideology; it is the ideology that rules over class consciousness.* Thompson observes that “hitherto mankind has been governed by the unreflecting habits formed by institutions, with the necessary supplement of force.” After the invention of the printing press, “a new and altogether incalculable power of operating on mankind has been silently working its way”; this was the increasingly powerful force of knowledge, which, after being expressed on matters of general interest, it forms a kind of moral force, the force of **public opinion**. “When formally expressed, it will be the legal ascertained will of a rational community regulating its own affairs.”³⁸ However, those who rule over society and do not plan to consider general interest in regulating society necessarily use pretended knowledge, secret ways, and all manner of deception to maintain their power, such as the connection between man and God. The essence of ideology is the use of a false “general interest” to conceal class interest and the use of false relationships to replace social relations that truly exist. *I believe that this line of thinking that focuses on the criticism of ideological knowledge was inherited by the Frankfurt School in the 20th century.* Thompson believed that the development of knowledge would completely break down all the new, invisible, all-governing rules.³⁹

Thus we can see that it was practically a common understanding among Ricardian socialist economists that one must emphasize and correctly understand the effect of scientific knowledge on production. As Hodgskin puts it, “political economists have not inquired into the natural laws regulating the progress

³⁴*ibid.*, p. 199 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 213).

³⁵*ibid.*, p. 200 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 214).

³⁶*ibid.*, p. 209 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 222).

³⁷*ibid.*, p. 216 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 230).

³⁸*ibid.*, p. 220 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 233).

³⁹*ibid.*, p. 220 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, pp. 233-234).

of knowledge.”⁴⁰ In his opinion, past political economists ignored the effect of knowledge (he defines this as mental labor); although Smith noticed this point, he did not consciously realize its importance. *It is obvious that Hodgskin did not understand the historical characteristics of Smith’s artisanal stage of historical development.* Hodgskin takes special care to criticize Say’s view that scientific knowledge was a fortuitous element in the development of production. Along these lines, in the second chapter of Hodgskin’s *Popular Political Economy*, he specifically discusses the effect of scientific knowledge and observation (natural science and technology) on productive force. In this chapter he especially stresses the inestimable effect of botany and geology on agriculture, and of chemistry and mechanics on industrial production. *As we have already pointed out, Marx did not read this book before 1845; he did not come into contact with the book until the ninth notebook of London Notes. Many of Hodgskin’s ideas were developed and expanded by Marx in both Grundrisse as well as his economics manuscripts written in the 1860s.* Hodgskin writes: “Before men could apply and regulate the first moving power, whether it be wind, water, or steam, which sets in motion the various and complicated machinery for cleansing, carding, spinning, and weaving cotton, the knowledge acquired by centuries of experience was necessary.”⁴¹ Here he refers to the natural science that forms the theoretical foundation of the various branches of technology. In fact, Hodgskin directly proposed the relation between science and social productive forces in the 19th century. Of course, the premise of his discussion of this matter was flawed, because in general productive practice is the **foundation** that brings about and pushes forward scientific development. Science only becomes a new **guiding** force after material production has developed to a certain level.

On another level, Hodgskin was opposed to Smith’s idea that the division of labor was the cause of technological progress. He believed that although knowledge and the division of labor advanced each other, introducing a new method would expand the division of labor; the division of labor would cause people to penetrate deeper into the object with an increasing level of specialization. However, he insisted that observation and technological invention preceded the division of labor.⁴² “Inventions always precede division of labor, and extend it, both by introducing new arts and by making commodities at a less cost.”⁴³ Objectively speaking, Smith was correct on this point.

I believe that another of Hodgskin’s ideas is worth discussing. He writes: “Capricious and unregulated as the will or desires of individuals may appear, the will and conduct of masses of men—and the more numerous they are, the more evident and certain is the truth—are regulated by permanent natural laws.”⁴⁴ Hodgskin here discovered the laws of social development that governed the objective progression from agriculture to industry to commerce:

⁴⁰Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 76 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 73).

⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 69).

⁴²*ibid.*, p. 79 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 75).

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 76).

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 83 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 79).

When we advance farther in the scale of civilization, and observe in almost all countries, whatever may be their form of government and whatever their situation, manufacturing industry, and of course the varied knowledge which is necessary to it, succeeding to agriculture; and commerce, with a knowledge of the art of navigation and constructing ships, whenever a people live near the borders of that ocean which washes the whole habitable globe, succeeding to manufactures.⁴⁵

Hodgskin also believed that no matter how intelligent a person may be, his thinking will necessarily be fashioned by the society and time period of which he is a member.⁴⁶ The influence of society on the mental capability of each individual is more important than any other influence.⁴⁷ *To use Marx's later expression, all ideas belong to a certain time period.* Using Watt as an example, Hodgskin writes: "There is no man who stands higher as a philosopher and a mechanic than James Watt; but **he** was indebted for most of his scientific and mechanical knowledge, for every thing, indeed, which constituted his talents, and which contributed to his glorious success, to his having been born in Britain in the 18th century."⁴⁸ If Watt had been born among the undeveloped gauchos of South America, he would never have been able to invent the steam engine. At the same time, "[the steam engine] is of no utility except in crowded countries, in which fuel is plentiful and manufactures established."⁴⁹ The inventions and thinking of one generation depends on the social development of their predecessors: "Their acquirements, their schemes, and their thoughts are closely and inseparably linked with the acquirements, the projects, and the thoughts of their predecessors, and of all around them; and their inventions and discoveries are the necessary consequences of preceding inventions and discoveries."⁵⁰ We can see that the emergence of science is dependent on **certain** social conditions (time and place); more importantly, ranks of industrial workers are also a necessary condition for science. If there were no industrial workers, then Watt's invention would be useless and would never have taken place. In Hodgskin's ideal world, "there is an absolute necessity for observation and practice, for mental and bodily labour to go hand-in-hand, neither preceding nor staying behind the other."⁵¹ I believe that Hodgskin's views here are both profound and valuable.

Later in commenting on Hodgskin, Marx wrote:

The whole objective world, the "world of commodities", vanishes here as a mere aspect, as the merely passing activity, constantly performed anew, of socially producing men. Compare this "idealism" with the

⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. 84 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, pp. 79–80).

⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 87 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 82).

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 87 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 82).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, pp. 87–88 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 82).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 88 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 82).

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 84). In addition, refer to Marx's discussion of this question in "Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky."

⁵¹*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 85).

crude, material fetishism into which the Ricardian theory develops in the writings “of this incredible cobbler,” McCulloch, where not only the difference between man and animal disappears but even the difference between a living organism and an inanimate object. And then let them say that as against the lofty idealism of bourgeois political economy, the proletarian opposition has been preaching a crude materialism directed exclusively towards the satisfaction of coarse appetites.⁵²

From this we can see that even after establishing historical materialism and accomplishing an economic revolution, Marx still felt a great deal of gratitude to this proletariat “comrade” who criticized bourgeois society.

5.2.2 Criticism of bourgeois society while still recognizing that political economy is a science

In the previous section we concentrated on a discussion of how socialist economists, in their economics research, inherited the social materialism that had only existed as a latent methodological premise for the classical economists. This allowed us to clearly see that although they were very early proletariat theorists, they still ardently rejected the fetishism of complete acceptance of reality that characterized bourgeois ideology. In terms of the context of young Marx’s **refutation** of political economy, there is another matter that we must explain: the theoretical critique of these socialist economists revealed that even while criticizing bourgeois society it was still possible to recognize that political economy was a **science**. To explain this point, let us return to Marx’s line of thinking with regards to Thompson in *Manchester Notes*. In the preface to his book, Thompson first criticizes the views of the “intellectual speculators” in political economic research. Thompson believes that they do not regard the physical laws of nature, “proclaiming man as capable of attaining happiness by his mental powers alone, **almost** independent of material subordinate agency.”⁵³ This is an idealist attempt of justification, because for the “intellectual speculators,” thought is everything; material activity (labor) is seen as something mechanical and base. Thompson counters: “What is thought but motion produced and **felt** in the brain? What is labor but motion communicated to and in cooperation with the ever-active energies of nature.”⁵⁴ *In Marx’s later Capital, we will see a similar expression.* Which of these two actions is most able to promote the real happiness of mankind? Of course it is the latter. This is a criticism of romantic ethics, including Sismondi and the humanist economists. There are two points here that merit a philosophical analysis: the first is Thompson’s unequivocal opposition to an idealistic conception of social history; the second is that he bases his thought directly on the objective

⁵²Karl Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert. Dritter Band*, vol. II/3.4 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, 1979), p. 1398 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhilun. di san ce*, p. 294).

⁵³Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. xix (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 11).

⁵⁴*ibid.*, p. xx (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 12).

activity of the human subject. This is an incredible viewpoint. As we have already discussed, this was a direct identification of materialism in classical economics.

The next object of criticism in Thompson's preface was the "mechanical" viewpoint of the political economists: their view that men were things, that the activity of men and the motion of machines was of equal value. All that this group of economists cared for was achieving the highest possible level of production and ensuring the most consumption or efficient demand: "By what means, or by whom, the articles were produced, whether by camels, horses, men, slaves or not slaves, whether by hard labor or easy labor, by healthful or life-consuming exertion, signified not." Who consumed the wealth, whether it was the minority or the majority, was not important either.⁵⁵ This is, of course, the essence of mainstream bourgeois economics and its fetishism. Thompson believed that man is not a machine, neither is he a thing of pure thought. Rather, man is a complex living being; to obtain happiness, man cannot depart from "material means." Without wealth, happiness is just an empty word. However, with the creation of wealth comes the question of how to equitably distribute and make use of wealth. Thus for Thompson, socialism was not an abstract idea of justice, but rather a concrete concept **demanding a material premise**. This makes his theoretical logic fundamentally different from that of the many romantic French and German utopian socialists, beginning with Sismondi. His logic was also different from Marx's at this time, because Marx also did not recognize political economy as a science, nor did he recognize that it was the possible foundation and theoretical premise for socialism.

In Thompson's opinion, justice could not appear with those moralists who "do not understand the truths of physical science and political economy," because good things for them will never be anything but dreams. Neither could true justice spontaneously appear in the natural laws of the political economists, who "direct their sole attention to the production and accumulation of wealth." This is because they do not attempt to apply the isolated elements of economics to social science. This is apparently an impossible conundrum. But Thompson proposes that **the demands of ethics and scientific objective laws should be united**. In his opinion, Bacon had already provided a way to escape from this conundrum: "Following in the road which he has demonstrated, our object is to apply to social science the ascertained truths of political economy, making these and all other branches of knowledge subservient to that just **distribution** of wealth which tends most to human happiness."⁵⁶ The recognition that a scientific premise would be necessary in order to study social justice from the political standpoint of the proletariat was an extremely important theoretical advancement. In other words, **it is entirely possible to establish socialism on the scientific foundation of political economy**. That this viewpoint would have such monumental influence on Marx's thinking is self-evident. It was inevitable that this line of thought became the **potential origin** of the great shift in Marx's foundation of philosophical logic, economic thought, and socialist philosophy.

For Hodgskin, political economy was identified as a "natural science." *On this point he agrees with Say*. In his opinion, political economy is "dictated by the

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. xxi (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 13).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. xxvi (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 17).

altered circumstances of mankind.”⁵⁷ He directly defines the object of this science as “the phenomenon of social production.”⁵⁸ In this science discovered first by Smith we see that “society being founded in natural laws, is regulated by them in every minute part, and at every period of its existence.”⁵⁹ In Smith’s opinion, the natural laws in social economic life are expressed as laissez-faire and objective adjustment (the invisible hand) in production and social life. However, Smith was not able to more deeply understand that the main character in social life was not natural material, but rather mankind. He did not realize that although we are conscious subjects, our natural instincts cause modern society, “unwilled by us, [to] lead to the present beautiful and comprehensive system of social production.” The relations in this social system become every more complex, to the point that man is no longer able to grasp them. In this objective, naturally formed system, what we find is that an unjust social reality appears that is in opposition to just “natural” science. Hodgskin points out that the development of society is not in simply affirming one form of existence, but rather in “continually outgrowing and casting off the swaddling bands with which the wisdom of our ancestors swathed its infancy.” Therefore, the “natural order,” which is defended by the bourgeoisie, becomes the object of Hodgskin’s critique. Importantly, Hodgskin makes it clear that his critical study is not an ethical attack on a moral level, but rather “strictly confined to developing the **natural** laws which regulate production only.”⁶⁰ Hodgskin’s ideas are a form of socialism founded on **objective laws**. *This is critical to a correct understanding of Marx’s philosophical revolution in 1845.*

Similar to Thompson’s analysis, from Hodgskin’s study we learn that there were two past views on political economy. First, some believed that it described a method for obtaining wealth as if it were natural science, that it was simply necessary to discover the objective laws that govern economic development. The second view completely rejects the legitimacy of political economy, because this so-called science “takes no account for man,” and especially because it views the laborer as a machine. It calculates the price of his bones and sinews, but refutes his “head, heart, and tongue.” The former group were the orthodox political economists, while Hodgskin refers to the latter as sentimental critics.⁶¹ *This group can actually be extended to include all the detractors of the bourgeois social system, including theologians and all the socialists who begin their critique with subjective ethics. We can see that before 1845, Marx also belonged to this latter group of critics.* Hodgskin is critical of both these views. I have found that he is searching for a way to **recognize objective laws while still insisting on adjusting the process of social economics**. He not only focuses on the justice of man’s existence, but also demands that the just operation of the social system (distribution) be **beneficial to the development of production**. In other words, **socialism must conform to the development of productive force**, another point that was essential to the construction of Marx’s later **scientific** socialism.

⁵⁷Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. xiii (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 6).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. viii (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 4).

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. xii (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 5).

⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. xxi (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 10).

⁶¹*ibid.*, p. 2 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, pp. 13–14).

5.2.3 Affirmation and logical inversion of the labor theory of value

When this theoretical logic meets political economy, the attitude of proletariat political economists in their analysis of bourgeois society necessarily experienced a great change. What questions did Thompson seek to answer? He did not speak of poverty in general, but rather sought to discover why in a society where production is advanced and wealth is plentiful, would the vast majority of those who produce wealth be relatively impoverished, while the tiny minority of non-laborers would become so incredibly wealthy, and apparently “happy.” He continues: “How comes it that the fruits of the labor of the industrious, after years of incessant and successful exertion, are mysteriously and without imputation of fault to them, without any convulsion of nature, swept away?”⁶² Thompson’s conclusion is “**the vicious distribution of wealth.**”⁶³ *This appears to the critical logic of traditional utopian socialists.* Thompson clearly points out that this does not require subjective ethical values, but rather use political economy to reveal new natural laws of just distribution, i. e., objective laws that do not require artificial help.⁶⁴ In Thompson’s opinion, the labor theory of value upheld by bourgeois political economy can be affirmed; labor is truly the sole source of wealth, the sole standard by which the value of wealth can be measured.⁶⁵ Under normal circumstances, the value of an object is equal to the smallest unit of labor required to produce it. *This is an imprecise expression of the labor theory of value, because he has not included the qualification of necessary labor.* Logically speaking, man produces wealth through labor in order to increase wealth, and the production, through labor, of wealth that nature could not bestow should have increased man’s happiness. However, “The ultimate object of political economy has been to increase the absolute mass of accumulated wealth in society, leaving it to moralists and politicians to divide the yearly produce and the permanent accumulation in whatever proportions their mysterious wisdom might think fit.”⁶⁶ Though the labor theory of value is easily applied to production and the accumulation of wealth, its utility disappears in the **distribution** of wealth; this is a tragedy of political economy.

It is not difficult for us to see that Hodgskin’s perspective in his research on the specific principles of political economy is also unique. He does not attempt to criticize economics from **without** the realm of economics, but rather from within. He believes that the problem with Smith, McCulloch, and others appears in distribution. This is because although the standard used by these scholars is correct in their recognition of labor as the source of wealth, their standard changes as soon as they leave this realm and move towards distribution. Here Hodgskin demands **consistency**: “[labor] is not only the source of all wealth, but the guide to just distribution.”⁶⁷ To make his point, he first cites a well-known argument by M. Canard on the means by which labor creates wealth: if all the labor that went

⁶²Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. xxviii (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 19).

⁶³*ibid.*, p. xxviii (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 20).

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 2 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 26).

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 13 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 37).

⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 29 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 52).

⁶⁷Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 20 (Chinese transl.: *Tong su zheng zhi jing ji xue*, p. 28).

into the creation of a watch were removed from it, it would revert to being a few grains of mineral. If all labor were removed from a piece of bread, it would revert to “a few stalks of gramineous herb.” Hodgskin expands this argument, pointing out that if the labor of bricklayers and carpenters were removed, buildings would also revert to primitive natural material.⁶⁸ In *Lecture on Human Happiness*, Gray⁶⁹ points out that in any society, “every necessary, convenience, and comfort of life, is obtained by human labor.”⁷⁰ Therefore Gray writes that “labor is the sole foundation of property... all property is nothing more than accumulated labor.”⁷¹ Before the intervention of labor, land has no value; all products are the result of labor. It is unjust that the laborer creates wealth without the ability to possess wealth. Of course, scholars such as Hodgskin did not attempt to use ethical and moral critiques to appease justice, but rather resorted to science.

The science of which Hodgskin speaks is the science that “discovers **all** the natural laws and circumstances, which influence and regulate the production of wealth.”⁷² This is a “science founded on the permanency [of these natural laws], together with the permanency of those laws by which the material world excites similar sensations in us.”⁷³ The natural law which Hodgskin was so eager to prove was none other than the **necessity** of human labor. As labor is the source of all wealth, then to forgo labor is to forgo eating, wearing, and using: it is to lose the right to live. Hodgskin writes: “[labor] is a law of the universe, like the principle of gravity. It permanently and constantly influences and regulates the conduct of all mankind.”⁷⁴ Therefore, “all the minute branches of the production and distribution of wealth, are regulated and controlled by circumstances flowing from the necessity to labour; just as every part of the material world is regulated and controlled by natural laws.”⁷⁵ As such, social rules should be set according to natural laws. These natural laws are exactly opposite to the natural laws (“natural order”) of bourgeois political economy. *We can read “natural laws” here as objective laws.*

We have already explained that labor is the sole source of wealth. As such, “All wealth, including gold and silver, is the produce of labor; and those who do not labor cannot have any thing to pay their tradesmen with, which is not the produce of labor.”⁷⁶ The more labor is performed, the wealth is created; if this is true, then why does the laborer become more and more impoverished? Hodgskin also attempts to search for the cause of this slavery. First, unlike many other critics, Hodgskin does not believe that the cause of this slavery is the division of labor. *Hodgskin divides the division of labor into two categories: first is the division*

⁶⁸Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, pp. 28–29).

⁶⁹John Gray (1799–1883) was an English socialist economist. His primary works include *Lecture on Human Happiness* (1825), *Social System* (1831), *An Efficient Remedy for the Distress of Nations* (1842), and *On the Essence and Uses of Money* (1848).

⁷⁰John Gray, *Lectures on Human Happiness* (London: London School of Economics / Political Science, [1825] 1931), p. 15 (Chinese transl.: *Renlei xingfu lun*, p. 11).

⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Renlei xingfu lun*, p. 33).

⁷²Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 45).

⁷³*ibid.*, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 32).

⁷⁴*ibid.*, p. 28 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 34).

⁷⁵*ibid.*, p. 29 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 35).

⁷⁶*ibid.*, p. 117 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, pp. 105–106).

caused by the different hobbies and personalities of individual humans (labor 1), and second is the division caused by geographical characteristics (labor 2). Second, the cause of slavery is not the sociality and exchange of labor caused by the division of labor. He sees that in social labor under conditions of the division of labor, “each laborer, let his task be what it may, only performs a part in the great work of civilized social production.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, “separated from his comrades, from other productive laborers, he has little or no wealth-creating power.”⁷⁸ “Every thing we now use or enjoy, is the result of joint and combined labour.”⁷⁹ Thus there must necessarily be exchange of labor, i. e., domestic exchange of labor 1 and international exchange of labor brought on by labor 2. This constitutes domestic and foreign trade. In Hodgskin’s opinion, the division of labor and exchange are the “great means” by which civilization is advanced. These “means” of themselves are not the causes of injustice and slavery. *Gray also argues that “Exchange [is] the parent of Society. As it is by labour that all things valuable to mankind are produced, so is it by exchange that individuals are enabled to partake of a great variety of things which their own labour could never by any possibility, have commanded without it. [...] Exchange, therefore, may be denominated the bond and principle of society.”*⁸⁰ Third, with exchange necessarily comes money, which represents general labor. Hodgskin writes: “Labor was the original, is now and ever will be the only purchase money in dealing with Nature.”⁸¹ In its most direct sense, money is also not responsible for the enslavement of the majority of mankind.

If slavery is not caused by the division of labor, the exchange of labor, or money, then how is it caused? Hodgskin answers this questions clearly: natural laws are innocent: “poverty is altogether the result of social institutions.”⁸² *Bray also believed that in modern society, machines of themselves were good, indispensable. The poverty of the modern working man does not arise because machines have replaced his labor, but rather because of social institutions.*⁸³ The true causes of poverty are capital and the bourgeois class. In Hodgskin’s opinion, this is because “besides providing for the subsistence of the laborer, labor must also bring profit to the capitalist.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, landowners and capitalists produce nothing. Capital is the product of labor, while capital is only a part of that product. When this product is stolen without recompense, only a portion of what the worker has produced is left for him to consume.⁸⁵ Therefore Hodgskin writes in reference to

⁷⁷*ibid.*, p. 137 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 122).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 137 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 122).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, p. 142 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 122).

⁸⁰John Gray, *The Social System: A Treatise on the Principle of Exchange* (Edinburgh: W. Tait, 1831), pp. 56–57 (Chinese transl.: *Shehui zhidu*, p. 39).

⁸¹Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, pp. 219–220 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 188).

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 236 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 201).

⁸³Bray, *Labor’s Wrong and Labor’s Remedy*, p. 83 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jizuzhi fang’an*, p. 88).

⁸⁴Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 238 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, pp. 202–203).

⁸⁵Thomas Hodgskin, *Travels in the North of Germany, describing the Present State of the Social and Political Institutions, the Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, Education, Arts and Manners in that Country, particularly in the Kingdom of Hannover*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable,

the operation of bourgeois economics: “Capitalists becoming the proprietors of all the wealth of the society, as it is produced, act on this principle, and never—as the rule—will they suffer laborers to have the means of subsistence, unless they have a confident expectation that their labor will produce a profit over and above their own subsistence.”⁸⁶ This is a “principle of slavery!” It violates the natural laws of the necessity of labor. Thus Hodgskin resolutely opposes what bourgeois society identifies as natural laws. *To use Thompson’s words: “What then is the most accurate idea of capital? It is that portion of the products of labor which, whether of a permanent nature or not, is capable of being made the instrument of profit.”*⁸⁷ For Hodgskin, capitalists are not workers; in every sense he is useless in production. Capital without machines or tools cannot independently produce: “it is nonsense to attribute productive power to the instruments labour makes and uses,” because all capital is created by man.⁸⁸ For instance: “The united labors of the miner, the smelter, the smith, the engineer, the stoker, and of numberless other persons, and not the lifeless machines perform whatever is done by steam engines.”⁸⁹ Without workers, all machines and tools are without value. Furthermore, without frequent use, machines will fall into disrepair.⁹⁰ At the same time, all the interest accumulated by capital is the product of labor.⁹¹ Thus we see that the exchange of capital and labor is **actually the exchange of capitalist’s use of the past results of the labor of workers with current living labor**. With every exchange, the capitalist again appropriates the labor of the worker.

This idea of the **inequality of exchange** was a common understanding among the majority of socialist economists. According to John Bray, “one party **gives all**, and the other party **takes all** — and herein lies the essence and spirit of all inequality.”⁹² Bray believed that all living things had to obey the law: thou must work. However, “man only can escape this law; and, from its nature, it can only be evaded by one man at the expense of another.”⁹³ According to the view of political economy, the exchange of commodities is determined by the cost of production; thus exchange should be “**equitable**.” If exchange is equitable, then the labor dispensed by both parties should be equal. However, in the real bourgeois social system, workers spend the labor of one year to exchange for the value of a half-year’s labor of the capitalist.⁹⁴ The result of the repetition of this exchange is “exchanging **nothing** for something.” He continues: “the whole accumulated profit, or interest, or whatever it may be called, which every capitalist receives under the present system — is

1820), vol. 2, p. 9.

⁸⁶Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 52 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 53).

⁸⁷Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 178 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 193).

⁸⁸Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 247 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 209).

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 250 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 212).

⁹⁰Thomas Hodgskin, *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (London: Charles / William Tait, 1825), pp. 59–60.

⁹¹Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, p. 256 (Chinese transl.: *Tongsu zhengzhi jingjixue*, p. 217).

⁹²Bray, *Labor’s Wrong and Labor’s Remedy*, p. 23 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiu zhi fang’an*, p. 23).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 43 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiu zhi fang’an*, p. 45).

⁹⁴*ibid.*, p. 48 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiu zhi fang’an*, p. 51).

taken from the producers at large.”⁹⁵ “When the workman has produced a thing, it is his no longer — it belongs to the capitalist — it has been conveyed from the one to the other by the unseen magic of unequal exchanges.”⁹⁶ In Bray’s opinion, the banking system of bourgeois society obtains gain through a medium; this is the most obvious example of profiting without working. Gray, on the other hand, argues “that the productive classes *DO NOW* support, not only themselves, but every unproductive member of society!”⁹⁷ “It is our system of exchange which forms the hiding place of that giant of mischief which bestrides the civilized world, rewarding industry with starvation, exertion with disappointment.”⁹⁸ To prove this point, Gray in *Lecture on Human Happiness* cites the work of a notable British statistician to demonstrate that the “producing class” in England in 1812 produced 426,230,372 British pounds of wealth. Thus each worker, on average, produced 54 British pounds; however, their average yearly income was only 11 pounds, 1/5 of the value that they produced. The rest was appropriated by the capitalist class.⁹⁹ This is a very persuasive statistical proof.

5.2.4 Should productive force be developed? Opposing the objective basis of bourgeois society

We can see that in Thompson’s analysis of human productive labor, he attempts to highlight **certain historical contexts**, or what he directly identifies as the **historical reasonableness** of bourgeois society’s modes of production. In a comparative sense, Thompson writes: “Three modes of human labor are discussed and contrasted in the following pages: first, labor by force, or compulsion direct or indirect; second, labor by unrestricted individual competition; third, labor by mutual co-operation.”¹⁰⁰ The first mode of labor is the slave or feudal labor in bourgeois society; the second is labor under conditions of bourgeois society; the third is the future, new form of labor which he affirms. We can see that Thompson recognizes the advance of bourgeois society itself, because bourgeois society was responsible “to an immense extent, [for] the **removal of feudal restraints.**” However, “the restraints which these establishments impose, as compared to the rule of justice, of security and equality, are most mischievous, and ought to cease. The restraints which they impose, compared with that utter insecurity and usurping rule of force, that characterised feudal times, is as vexatious mischief compared to utter desolation.”¹⁰¹ The difference between primitive society and modern civilized society can be measured by the difference in their levels of productive force. Thompson points out that in its influence on man’s happiness, accumulated wealth is insignificant when compared with the productive force of the same society un-

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 58 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang’an*, p. 61).

⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 61 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang’an*, p. 64).

⁹⁷Gray, *Lectures on Human Happiness*, p. 69 (Chinese transl.: *Renlei xingfu lun*, p. 67).

⁹⁸Gray, *Social System*, p. 57 (Chinese transl.: *Shehui zhidu*, pp. 39–40).

⁹⁹See statistical tables and discussion, Gray, *Lectures on Human Happiness*, pp. 16–20 (Chinese transl.: *Renlei xingfu lun*, pp. 12–20).

¹⁰⁰Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. xxxi (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 22).

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, pp. 102–103 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 122).

der any circumstances of civilization. For this reason man must take into greater account productive forces and their free development.¹⁰² Hodgskin historically points out that “With that appropriation [of land], however, was connected the slavery of the agricultural labourer; who has ever been in a worse condition, politically speaking, throughout Europe, than the manufacturing and commercial labourer.”¹⁰³ This is an extremely important historical attitude. *To use Bray’s words, “that state of society or form of government which existed at one period of a nation’s history, and was sufficient for all its wants, will never be tolerated at a later period.”*¹⁰⁴

We have seen that many socialist economists were able to historically affirm the utility of bourgeois society in the development of productive forces. At the same time, their fundamental opposition to the modes of production of bourgeois society was also **based on the development of productive forces**. Thompson later points out that at the end, the modes of production of bourgeois society hinder the development of productive forces; the sum of social production is reduced as the short-sighted utilitarian activity of capitalists increases.¹⁰⁵ It is also in this sense that the vast majority of socialist economists opposed viewing the economic laws of bourgeois society as eternal and natural laws. In order to destroy the barriers to social production erected by bourgeois society, they proposed liberating the **future** productive force of society.¹⁰⁶ This is an extremely important viewpoint.

At the same time, it is in this sense that the socialist economists jointly opposed the **anarchy** that reigned in the economic operation of bourgeois society, because this anarchic state of production destroyed the development of productive forces. For instance, Gray clearly opposes the view of bourgeois political economists that “there exists in our Social System a self regulating principle, and that the stream of commerce, like that of water, only requires to be let alone to find its own level, and to flow on smoothly and prosperously.”¹⁰⁷ Thus they believe that “the general plan of society is founded upon some immutable basis, some unalterable law of nature.”¹⁰⁸ Gray believed that this is a fatal mistake, because “it renders us the willing slaves” Acgt of the current order. He argued that this unregulated commercial system would ultimately lead the majority of mankind to fall into the abyss of poverty and misery. He directly opposes McCulloch’s support for the economic viewpoint of laissez-faire, using a metaphor to point out the fallacy in McCulloch’s logic:

as rationally tell an army of soldiers, that by killing each other they will conquer their common foe; or a band of musicians, that by each playing beautifully, but no matter what tune or in what time, their music will

¹⁰²Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 453 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 454).

¹⁰³Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, pp. 135–136 (Chinese transl.: *Tong su zheng zhi jing ji xue*, pp. 120–121).

¹⁰⁴Bray, *Labor’s Wrong and Labor’s Remedy*, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: *Dui lao dong de pohai ji qi jiu zhi fang’an*, p. 9).

¹⁰⁵Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 185 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 200).

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 444 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 446).

¹⁰⁷Gray, *Social System*, p. vii (Chinese transl.: *She hui zhi du*, p. 3).

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, p. 3 (Chinese transl.: *She hui zhi du*, p. 8).

be delightful; as to tell a nation of competitors in the deployment of capital, that by destroying each other's interest, they will promote the general good.¹⁰⁹

In discussing the money system of bourgeois economy, Gray points out “**That if fetters our productive powers**; throws into inextricable confusion and disorder the whole machinery of commerce, and gives rise to the existence of a national anomaly, of which the inmates of a lunatic asylum might be ashamed—difficulty, embarrassment, distress, starvation, **in the midst of superabundance.**”¹¹⁰ He argues that bourgeois society “lacks a regulatory and guiding power; using this power, the various parts of our commercial system would be able to adapt to one another, producing a coordinated whole, and thus replacing the previous uncoordinated system.”¹¹¹ Compared with Hegel's spiritual correction of society through the blind market operation of state and law, this socialist critique finally suggests the **conscious adjustment of real social forces**. This is truly an incredible advance.

In Bray's opinion, the natural laws of the so-called spontaneous operation of the so-called bourgeois market were actually what were responsible for the conflicts and destruction of smooth economic operation: “Competition is only one of a class of human feelings and actions which originate from uncontrolled self-love, and which ever produce discord, envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness.”¹¹² This state “spontaneously produces the inequality of wealth and inequality of power.”¹¹³ This continues to the point that “[W]e have left both the end and the means to chance — to uncontrolled circumstance — which has apportioned to each man his labours, and his rewards, [...]”¹¹⁴ Bray points out that the present bourgeois society operates according to man's natural abilities and not according to his natural rationality. Those this may be appropriate for livestock, it is not the principle of human life. “[A]nd therefore man's natural incentives to action must be artificially constrained and guided, that they may conduce to, instead of thwarting, the great design of society.”¹¹⁵ His views here are the same as those of Gray that we have just discussed.

Because of this, Bray demands the fundamental reform of this unjust system. He points out that social reforms had taken place in past eras, “but these changes and reforms have never yet touched the social system; they have only alleviated or modified the minor wrongs which the system itself brought into existence.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, in order to eliminate injustice and evil, **the present social system must be completely eliminated**, here referring to the private system of bourgeois soci-

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 233 (Chinese transl.: *Shehui zhidu*, p. 142).

¹¹⁰John Gray, *An Efficient Remedy for the Distress of Nations* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1842), p. 4 (Chinese transl.: *Fangzhi renmin buxing de kekao shouduan*, p. 229).

¹¹¹Gray, *Social System*, pp. 5–6 (Chinese transl.: *Shehui zhidu*, pp. 9–10).

¹¹²Bray, *Labor's Wrong and Labor's Remedy*, p. 118 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 126).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 108 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 115).

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 41).

¹¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 119 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, pp. 126–127).

¹¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 15 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang'an*, p. 14).

ety.¹¹⁷ Bray proposed establishing a new society where property was commonly owned; only thus could the past elements of bourgeois society that **destroying the development of productive force** be transformed into new, positive elements. Free trade and large-scale machinery are not the causes of social evils, but rather the “friends and helpers” of social development.¹¹⁸ Bray proposes an extremely important viewpoint, that “[a]s present evils, however, depend on the present constitution of society, knowledge alone will not have the power to remedy them, so long as this constitution is maintained.”¹¹⁹ With this declaration he reveals the truth, that what is vital is **real physical revolution**.

It is based on these critiques that these proletariat economists proposed their various socialist plans, drawing up blueprints for a better future. Thompson calls for a kind of “equal individual competition,” and “the mode of production by labor, with mutual cooperation.”¹²⁰ This is a cooperative commune freely united together. In this place, the destructive elements of bourgeois society are all abolished: “They would save the waste, at least within the precincts of the association, of mere unproductive consumption. They would save the waste of labor and skill, now unemployed, through mere ignorance or want of market, or now uselessly, or perniciously, directed. They would save the waste, now consumed under the name of profits, of wholesale and retail dealers... productive force would be concentrated together.”¹²¹ In terms of the development of human society, if the old modes of production are no longer profitable, then man can turn to new and superior modes of production; this is socialism. This is “a mode which does not admit of over-stocking, [because] on themselves alone will depend the supplying of all their essential wants.”¹²² **Socialism is thus not some kind of beautiful dream, but is rather a new mode of production that spurs the development of productive forces:** this is a truly penetrating insight, a completely new line of thought!

I believe that the **scientific** critical line of thought that we have discussed in this section had a great impact on Marx. **Starting from objectively developing material forces of production and not from the value postulate of “man” or “the essence of man,”** this opened a completely new philosophical realm. This was the greatest theoretical treasure left by the English socialist economists.

5.3 Max Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own*

In 1844, another significant event took place in German philosophy: the publishing of Max Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1845). In my earlier discussion of *Theses on Feuerbach* I mentioned the conversation between Engels and Marx about Stirner’s book. What was the book about? What was its effect on Marx’s philosophical thinking

¹¹⁷Bray, *Labor’s Wrong and Labor’s Remedy*, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang’an*, p. 17).

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 186 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang’an*, pp. 199–200).

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 211 (Chinese transl.: *Dui laodong de pohai ji qi jiuzhi fang’an*, p. 229).

¹²⁰Thompson, *Principles of Distribution*, p. 270 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 282).

¹²¹*ibid.*, p. 299 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, pp. 308–309).

¹²²*ibid.*, p. 448 (Chinese transl.: *Cai fu fen pei yan jiu*, p. 450).

at this time? Our past research has never been able to give a clear answer to these questions. According to the results of my most recent research, Stirner's book actually had a great deal of influence on the progression of modern European thought. It was the first comprehensive critique of classical humanist logic from Feuerbach to the Enlightenment, and in a sense, Stirner was the first contemporary western thinker to completely and consciously abolish metaphysics in a modern context. Though Stirner mixes many fallacies and fantastic thinking into his book and although there is almost nothing of value in his own theoretical logic, *The Ego and His Own* has a great deal of scholarly value in terms of the logical standard of modern philosophical history. In my opinion, this book had a direct catalytic influence on Marx's final move away from humanism and towards the scientific revolution of historical materialism. The fact that Marx and Engels used 7/10 of *The German Ideology* to refute this book shows its negative status.¹²³ We now begin a serious discussion of this important book.

5.3.1 The general theoretical logic of Stirner's *The Ego and His Own*

Max Stirner is the pen name of Johann Kasper Schmidt.¹²⁴ *The Ego and His Own* was written from 1843 to 1844, when it was published in October in Leipzig. *The publishing date at the time was marked as 1845.*¹²⁵ Because of this book, many thought of Stirner as an anarchist. Stirner is viewed as little more than a clown by the Marxist historical research of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. However, our simple designation of Stirner as a shallow theorist has prevented us from deepening our understanding of the theoretical significance of Stirner on Marx's philosophical revolution. I believe that this state of affairs must change.

Stirner begins *The Ego and His Own* with the declaration: "All things are nothing to me" (also translated as "I have set my affair on nothing"). In response to the humanist slogan "man is the highest essence of man" put forth by Feuerbach, Hess, and young Marx, Stirner declares that for real existing individuals, "Nothing

¹²³Jenny Longuet put it even more to the point: "In summer 1845 Engels and Karl were busy writing a critique of German philosophy, and certainly one factor to promote their work was the appearance of *The Ego and His Own*. They succeeded in writing a profound work which should rather have been published in Westfalia." See *Remembering Marx and Engels*, p. 251.

¹²⁴**Max Stirner** (1806–1856) was a 19th century German philosopher. He was born in Bavaria, Germany, in October 1806. Stirner studied philosophy at the universities of Berlin, Erlangen, and Königsberg between 1826 and 1829. He graduated with a degree in philosophy from Berlin university in 1835. His thesis, "On Education," did not pass. In 1839 Stirner began teaching at a private girl's middle school. In 1842 he wrote for young Marx's *Rheinische Zeitung*. He passed away in June 1856. His primary works include *The Ego and His Own* (1844) and *Reactionary History* (1852).

¹²⁵Engels was able to obtain a copy of this book before it was published. On November 19, 1844 Engels wrote to Marx saying that Stirner appeared to be a talented and independently thinking member of "Die Freien" ("The Free"), directly expressing his views on Stirner's book. In November when Marx read *The Ego and His Own* he did not take any excerpts or make any notes. On December 2, Marx wrote to Bornstein, telling him of his plan to provide the newspaper *Vorwärts!* With an article criticizing Stirner. Though Marx would not finish this article, he would later write to Engels expressing his disagreement with Engels' appraisal of Stirner (this letter has been lost). On January 21, 1845, Engels replied to Marx, informing the latter that he now agreed with Marx's views on Stirner.

is more to me than myself!"¹²⁶ *This is the logical origin of Marx's concept of "individuals in reality" as found in The Germany Ideology.* The key phrases of Stirner's subjective designation are "I," "Ego," and "Own." These three are of the same essence, though the affair of the "own" is "nothing." Simply put, the "I" refers to the individual **in reality** who does not depend on any object or any totality. According to my understanding, Stirner's "own" is actually closer to Nietzsche's "overman," in that it proposed a new humanism in opposition to the species-essence individual of classical humanism. This "own," which is based on nothing, can even be thought of as the precursor to the free state of existence of "man," "subject," and "author" in today's post-modern philosophy. Its "nothing" not only refers to political anarchy, but also to an **ontologically** complete abolition and freedom; this was the first fundamental overthrow of traditional metaphysics. In this light, the significance of Stirner's thought is not only historical, but also **modern**. Such an interpretation will allow us to expose the deeper context of Marx's philosophical revolution, accomplished only after his critique of Stirner.

I have remarked that in this book, Stirner primarily opposes the oppression of the various forms of "species" (essence) and "totality" (system) external to man. It is not difficult for us to see that this meant he was in opposition to almost all the schools of thought popular in Europe at the time, including Christian theology, Enlightenment thinking, the civil consciousness of political economy, and even radical humanism and communism. As such, it appears overly narrow to simply classify him as an anarchist. It is likely that Soren Kierkegaard read Stirner's work; we can be sure that Stirner was writing to oppose Kierkegaard's theology based on neo-humanism.¹²⁷ Stirner was one of the first to be conscious of the **end of traditional philosophy**; his philosophical thinking can be thought of as paving the way for Nietzsche. *Zelený argues that in addition to Hess, Stirner was likely one of the first of the Young Hegelians to comprehend the end of speculative philosophy and propose practical philosophy.*¹²⁸

The Ego and His Own is divided into two parts: the first deals with "man," and the second with "I." The first part targets "man" (species-essence) in conducting a historical analysis and theoretical critique of the various Western social philosophies throughout history, while the second part apparently establishes Stirner's own theories, though this still takes the form of attacking others. I believe that the refutational elements in the first part of the book are more valuable.

Stirner proposes, by way of introduction in the first chapter of the first part, a chronology of the development of the human individual ("human life"). He divides the growth of individuals into three stages: the first is childhood, a realist period of man's involvement with the object, of "trying to get to the bottom of things,

¹²⁶Editor's note: all of the following references to Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* refer to the German original text. Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1845), p. 8 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 5).

¹²⁷Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) was a well-known modern Danish theological philosopher, widely regarded as the founder of neo-humanist existential philosophy. His primary works include *Either Or* (1843), *Repetition* (1843), *Fear and Trembling* (1843), *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), and *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844).

¹²⁸Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, p. 68.

to get at what is 'back of' things."¹²⁹ The second stage is youth, and unlike the first stage, "the youth takes up an **intellectual** position," where "everything earthly recedes into contemptible remoteness" because he discovers that his essence is spiritual: this is man's "first discovery."¹³⁰ The third stage is adulthood. Here, man begins to "take the world as it is," not like the youth who instead "everywhere fancying it amiss and trying to improve it." The adult realizes that "one must deal with the world according to his **interest**, not according to his **ideals**."¹³¹ This is what Stirner confirms as the egoistical "**second** self-discovery," not being tied down by objects but rather objectively and truly starting from a real standpoint. Thus, "Boys had only **unintellectual** interests (i. e. interests devoid of thoughts and ideas), youths only **intellectual** ones; the man has bodily, personal, egoistic interests."¹³² What Stirner uses here is a veiled metaphor. Stirner audaciously criticizes all the thinkers before him ("the ancients" and "the moderns"). The ancients concerned themselves with visible phenomena, while the moderns, beginning with the middle ages, all fell into the category of immature, young, abstract, universal **spiritual determinism**; only Stirner himself truly represented mature adult thinking.

I believe that part of Stirner's analysis of the historical development of ancient philosophy is worthwhile, namely his description of the historical transition from the **rational abstraction** of ancient Greek philosophy to **idea-essence** of monotheistic Christian theology. To Feuerbach's declaration that the world is truth for the ancients, Stirner adds that the ancients lived in a sensuous and material earthly world, and that the end of the ancient era came when the relation with the "world of things" was dissolved. *This is Heidegger's presence-at-hand "in the world."* Stirner consciously points out the existence of philosophical logic is actually the **deepening of one's special understanding of concrete things to a general comprehension and non-sensuous "purification."** This is the internal logic the progressed form the Eleatic "One" to Plato's relativity, and finally to Descartes' "I think therefore I am." In the face of this kingdom of ideas, all **earthly things** are destroyed.¹³³ Spirit has nothing to do with things, "but only with the essence which exists behind and above things, with thoughts."¹³⁴ This is the victory of idealism, the premise of medieval Christianity, the beginning of a spiritual world. God is spirit,¹³⁵ and therefore heaven demands that living, real individuals die before attaining it; theology rejects material reality. I believe that here Stirner directly identifies the historical logic of Western culture, which had been veiled by Hegel's philosophical speculation. Feuerbach, who stood Hegel's philosophy on its head, did not understand this point on a deep level. This is a higher point in Stirner's critique of Feuerbach's humanism.

¹²⁹Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, p. 14 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 8).

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 16 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 10).

¹³¹*ibid.*, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 12).

¹³²*ibid.*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 13).

¹³³*ibid.*, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 18).

¹³⁴*ibid.*, p. 27 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 20).

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p. 42 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 32).

5.3.2 The refutation of Feuerbach's classical humanist logic

Stirner's primary target of criticism in his book is Feuerbach. *At that time in Germany, many radical young thinkers immediately joined the Feuerbachian school, to cite Engels.* Stirner criticizes and refutes the two most notable theoretical points of Feuerbach's philosophy: Feuerbach's dual refutation and inversion of Christian theology and Hegel's idealist philosophy. *We know that these were the two greatest theoretical contributions of Feuerbach's philosophy in the history of philosophy.* Feuerbach maintains that inverting religion (God) will yield man; inverting Hegelian speculative philosophy will yield the truth in which materialist sensuousness predominates. This latter point was the basis for natural materialism and humanism, affirmed by the majority of young leftist scholars at the time, including Marx and Engels. Stirner, on the other hand, retorted that to invert the subject-predicate relationship does not truly solve the problem, because this inversion is **nothing but an exchange of concepts**. It replaces the concept of God with the concept of "man," it replaces the concept of "spiritual" with the concept of "sensuous." This is a fundamentally **deceptive** revolution, because God and the Absolute Idea still exist and only "fix yet more oppressively." This is because, "to expel God from his heaven and to rob him of his **transcendence** cannot yet support a claim of complete victory, if therein he is only chased into the human breast and gifted with indelible **immanence**. Now they say, The divine is the truly human!"¹³⁶ **Man becomes the new God.** In other words, it was Stirner's opinion that Feuerbach's critique of Christianity and Hegel was nothing but a covert logical deformation of religion and speculative philosophy, and thus could not be comprehensive. I believe that Stirner's reflective critique is both profound and pertinent.

Stirner continues:

With the strength of **despair** Feuerbach clutches at the total substance of Christianity, not to throw it away... [but] to keep it by him forever. What he says is that we had only mistaken our own essence, and therefore looked for it in the other world, but that now, when we see that God was only our human essence, we must recognize it again as ours and move it back out of the other world into this.¹³⁷

However, as an essence, this "**Man** reaches beyond every individual man, and yet — though he be 'his essence' — is not in fact **his** essence (which rather would be as single as he the individual himself), but a general and 'higher' essence."¹³⁸ Thus concretely living "I" am not the highest essence to you, nor you to me. In our temporary body of flesh (what Heidegger would later call being-toward-death) resides an eternal essence; this is the abstract "man" that exists as a "species." Feuerbach exclaims that "man is the highest essence of man," but in fact, this species-essence "man" is the past God, an idealized spirit. God had become man,

¹³⁶Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, p. 64 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 51).

¹³⁷*ibid.*, pp. 43–44 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 34).

¹³⁸*ibid.*, p. 51 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 40).

but man was nothing but spirit: “Man is **spirit**.”¹³⁹ This is just a “process which is **easy to master**.” From here, man “has ascended to absolute height, and we are related to him as one is related to the highest being, i. e. religiously.”¹⁴⁰ The only difference here is that this time we do not call this relationship “holy,” we call it “human.” The vertical theological relationship between myself and God is replaced by the relationship between man and **Species-Man**. Therefore, “In the end the relation to the human essence, or to ‘Man,’ as soon as ever it has shed the snake-skin of the old religion, will yet wear a religious snake-skin again.”¹⁴¹ On this subject, Stirner makes a profound observation: “At the entrance of the modern time stands the ‘God-man’... Man has killed God in order to become now — sole God on high.”¹⁴² Such is the great accomplishment of the bourgeois enlightenment: “God has had to give place, yet not to us, but to **Man**.”¹⁴³ *The main idea here accomplishes the same goal as the critique of theology and humanism in Nietzsche’s On The Genealogy of Morals but in a different way; however, the two are, in essence, the same.*

Stirner believes that in Feuerbach’s humanist revolution directed against theology, there are still fixed ideas that act as maxims, principles, and standpoints. For Hegel, **the past is called the idea, a thing of thought and essence; the present is called man, species-essence, and humanity**. Beginning from here, “earthly doings [are] surveyed and — despised.”¹⁴⁴ Stirner writes: “Feuerbach, in the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, is always harping upon **being**. In this he too, with all his antagonism to Hegel and the absolute philosophy, is stuck fast in abstraction; for **being** is abstraction, as is even **the I**.”¹⁴⁵ Stirner believes that Feuerbach’s sensuous things are still **abstract**, because he tries “to clothe the materialism of his ‘new philosophy’ with what had hitherto been the property of idealism, the absolute philosophy.”¹⁴⁶ At a deeper level, the materialist Feuerbach still starts with an abstract idea; in other words, he is **nothing but a latent idealist**. This accusation certainly has merit. *I believe that this identification had a profound influence on Marx. Marx has no choice but to wonder if the species-essence and idealized labor in the 1844 Manuscript were logical ideas and value postulates.*

Stirner believes that Feuerbach’s “true man” still establishes a kind of heaven. It seems as though if the estrangement of the essence of man can be transcended and the return of man’s essence can be realized, then a free kingdom will be reached, for there “nothing alien regulates and rules him any longer, no influence of the earthly any longer makes him himself alien.”¹⁴⁷ For Stirner, this means that “to live and work **for an idea** is man’s calling, and according to the faithfulness of its fulfillment his **human** worth is measured,” while at the same time the world of “innumerable

¹³⁹*ibid.*, p. 55 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 44).

¹⁴⁰*ibid.*, p. 76 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 61).

¹⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 63 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 51).

¹⁴²*ibid.*, p. 203 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 165).

¹⁴³*ibid.*, p. 203 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 165).

¹⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 82 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 67).

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. 454 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 377).

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 456 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 378).

¹⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 89 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 73).

‘personal’ profane interests” is declared illegitimate.¹⁴⁸ Is this not an **inversion of the kingdom of reality and ideas**? Is this not **rule by the idea**? We must admit that Stirner’s questions here inspire our reflection. In Stirner’s opinion, the transition from theology to Hegel to Feuerbach is nothing but the chronological movement of time, where holy spirit becomes the ‘**Absolute Idea**.’ Here, after “manifold reactions,” the Idea splits into “philanthropy, reasonableness, civic virtue, etc.”¹⁴⁹ Fundamentally speaking, these are but different manifestations of the same logic. This is because for Feuerbach, “as people separated the ‘essence of Man’ from the real man, and judged the latter by the former, so they also separate his action from him, and appraise it by ‘human value’.”¹⁵⁰ Stirner trenchantly points out that this still means that “**Concepts** are to decide everywhere, concepts to regulate life, concepts to **rule**.”¹⁵¹ However, the concepts here are not Hegel’s objective reason, but rather **Man** (*die Gattung*). Under this premise, although we no longer suffer for God, “That [mankind] may develop, [Man] causes nations and individuals to wear themselves out in its service.”¹⁵²

In fact, Stirner implies that Feuerbach’s humanism is the theoretical foundation of contemporary social thought. Therefore, he must next reveal the actually existing essence of the various social schools of thoughts.

5.3.3 The basis of Stirner’s critique of bourgeois society and socialism

After completing his fundamental refutation of Feuerbach, Stirner turns the focus of his attack against almost all schools of social thought that had existed or were existing. Using the same standard applied to Feuerbach, the three so-called “liberalisms” that escaped from medieval slavery all come under the judgment of the “owner.”

Stirner turns first to political liberalism. Here Stirner directly criticizes the civic consciousness of bourgeois society. Stirner observes that “With the time of the **bourgeoisie** begins that of **liberalism**,” seeing, however, that bourgeois liberalism still seeks to rule. Unlike the rule of medieval God, this is a “dominion of reason:” “The liberals are **zealots**, not exactly for the faith, for God, but certainly for **reason**, their master.” However, “if reason rules, then the **person** succumbs.”¹⁵³ Thus Stirner believes that bourgeois liberalism makes abstract reason the master of real men; this line of thought is still unable to escape slavery to concepts. *This is also similar to today’s post-modern philosophy.* In Stirner’s opinion, in comparison to the medieval ages, “Liberalism simply brought other concepts on the carpet; human instead of divine, political instead of ecclesiastical, ‘scientific’ instead of doctrinal.”¹⁵⁴ For this reason he is particularly opposed to bourgeois liberalism’s emphasis on the state, the so-called “**general interest of all men**,” while ignoring

¹⁴⁸Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, p. 101 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 82).

¹⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 125 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 102).

¹⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 126 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 103).

¹⁵¹*ibid.*, p. 126 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 103).

¹⁵²*ibid.*, p. 6 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 4).

¹⁵³*ibid.*, p. 139 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 113).

¹⁵⁴*ibid.*, p. 127 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 103).

the “particular interests” of individuals in reality. In this condition, “One must give up **himself**, and live only for the State. One must act ‘disinterestedly,’ not want to benefit **himself**, but the State.”¹⁵⁵ He believes that the state is founded on the **foundation of the slavery of labor**; if labor were to be free, then the state would disappear.¹⁵⁶ In our analysis up to this point we can see that although Stirner’s ambition was great, his vision was very narrow. The bourgeois liberalism of which he wrote was primarily the civic consciousness that was unique to Germany at the time. The idea that the state should become the master was a characteristic of Germany’s nationalistic bourgeois political economists, such as List, Rodbertus, etc.

However, Stirner makes two valid points here. First, he reveals that the essence of bourgeois freedom of the press was a freedom only reserved for the bourgeoisie. He discovers that the bourgeoisie only resists when the newspaper and book censors oppress arbitrarily. At the same time, the bourgeoisie is “extremely inclined and willing to tyrannize over the press by ‘press laws;’ i.e. the civic liberals want liberty of writing **for themselves**; for, as they are **law-abiding**, their writings will not bring them under the law. Only liberal matter, i.e. only lawful matter, is to be allowed to be printed.”¹⁵⁷ Law replaces authority, and man submits himself to slavery in a legal form. Stirner piercingly points out that what bourgeois society demands is an “**inhuman ruler**.” *This critical line of thought was inherited by the 20th century Frankfurt School, in its critique of ideology*. Second, Stirner criticizes bourgeois free competition. He believes that in free competition, “Only through the thing can one **balk another** (e.g. the rich man balking the impecunious man by money, a thing), not as a person.”¹⁵⁸ Stirner writes:

“Money governs the world” is the keynote of the civic epoch. A destitute aristocrat and a destitute laborer, as “starvelings,” amount to nothing so far as political consideration is concerned; birth and labor do not do it, but **money** brings **consideration**.¹⁵⁹ ... **Competition** shows itself most strictly connected with the principle of civism.¹⁶⁰

Stirner questions: “But do **persons** really compete? No, again **things** only!” Furthermore, “[competition] originated, you know, in persons becoming free of all personal rule.”¹⁶¹ This is because not every person has the **means** to compete, which are property. For Stirner, the bourgeois revolution could only, at the most, improve conditions somewhat, because it did nothing but replace the old masters with **new ones**. Stirner’s lack of economic understanding was his true weakness, which doomed his overall critique of bourgeois society to be unscientific. This was also the primary point of attack that Marx used to criticize Stirner in *The German Ideology*.

¹⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. 131 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 107).

¹⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 153 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 124).

¹⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. 143 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 116).

¹⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 144 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 117).

¹⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 151 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 122).

¹⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. 345 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 284).

¹⁶¹*ibid.*, pp. 346–347 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 286).

Stirner next turns his attention to socialism. He refers to it as “social liberalism.” He understood that socialism opposed the private system of bourgeois society. However, in his opinion, the fact that socialism did not allow individuals to own property but rather called for ownership by “all,” the “all” here referred to society. For the socialists, “**no one must have... that society** alone maintains the possessions.”¹⁶² Similarly, this “**true society**” is not a metaphysical thing, but rather a true “us.” This is another expression of the “species” that Stirner despises. “Before the supreme **ruler**, the sole **commander**, we had all become equal, equal persons, i. e., nullities.”¹⁶³ Thus Stirner directly criticizes the communists, because for them, good labor is the essence of man, “labor is our sole value... that we are **laborers** is the best thing about us, this is our significance in the world.” Based on labor, “everyone is to cultivate himself into a man”; however, in real bourgeois society, “condemning a man to machine-like labor amounts to the same thing as slavery.” This is because “If a factory worker must tire himself to death twelve hours and more, he is cut off from becoming man.”¹⁶⁴ In the eyes of the communists, “**Services** determine value, — i. e. those services that are worth something to us, and consequently **labors for each other, labors for the common good.**”¹⁶⁵ Stirner comments that communists “first declared free activity to be man’s essence.”¹⁶⁶ This point was apparently addressed to Hess’ philosophical humanism and communism. We can be certain that Stirner was not aware that Marx was in the process of writing the *1844 Manuscript*. Nevertheless, Marx’s philosophical humanism and communism of the time also came under Stirner’s attack.

Furthermore, there is another line of analysis that is very interesting. Stirner was unable to accurately understand the social relations in bourgeois society. However, he is quite serious as he differentiates between the manner in which bourgeois society and socialism deal with the subject/object relationship in social history. He points out that in bourgeois society, people are freed from the dictatorship of man, but the **accidental** dictatorship caused by the developmental trends of various relations are preposterously seen as normal. *This refers to Smith’s “invisible hand” in economic life, as well as the common life in the political games of the bourgeoisie.* What comes into play is this conception of society is **fortune**.

Competition, in which alone civil or political life unrolls itself, is a game of luck through and through, from the speculations of the exchange down to the solicitation of offices... The Socialists want to put a stop to this activity of chance, and to form a society in which men are no longer dependent on **fortune**, but free.¹⁶⁷

Here they expect to see a new era and the end of **hazard-playing**. *This is obviously an incorrectly understood conception of the planned economy.* He continues his

¹⁶²Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, p. 154 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 125).

¹⁶³*ibid.*, p. 155 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 126).

¹⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 158 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, pp. 128–129).

¹⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 157 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 128).

¹⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 160 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 131).

¹⁶⁷*ibid.*, pp. 159–160 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 130).

critique: “Society, from which we have everything, is a new master, a new spook, a new ‘supreme being,’ which ‘takes us into its service and allegiance!’”¹⁶⁸

Stirner concludes with a criticism of humane liberalism, primarily targeting philosophers such as Bauer. To put it bluntly, his critique here is absolutely worthless.

5.3.4 What, after all, was Stirner trying to accomplish?

In the theoretical proof contained in the second part of Stirner's book, what we see first is, once again, critique of others. Only after diligent and careful analysis do we find his own real thoughts — his explanation of “I,” “the owner,” and “the Ego.” At the same time, what we see here is that after criticizing virtually all other theories in existence, what Stirner offers in replacement is something even more laughable, even more deserving of criticism.

From our preceding discussion we can see that Stirner had already observed: “what, therefore, man and the human are — on this point the various grades of liberalism differ, and the political, the social, the humane man are each always claiming more than the other for ‘man.’”¹⁶⁹ Different species-humans possess different species-essences. In fact, this “human” and “species-essence” were both abstract, and this humanism, in essence, was still feudalism that had yet to escape from despotism. “**Man** is the God of today... God was the Lord, now Man is the Lord; God was the Mediator, now Man is; God was the Spirit, now Man is. In this threefold regard the feudal relation has experienced a transformation.”¹⁷⁰ It is here that he directly criticizes Marx, writing that some have discovered and proposed the demand that we must become true species-existence.¹⁷¹ *Here Stirner specifically cites Marx's On the Jewish Question.* Stirner argued that Marx's viewpoint here actually changed man into something not real that was opposed to man in real life, because Marx's theory viewed anything not in harmony with the **concept** of man as inhuman, and therefore **real** man is inhuman. Stirner profoundly pointed out that over the past centuries, there has not been a man that conforms to the concept of man; in Christianity, there was only one — Jesus — who was a man above all others.¹⁷² In every form of the development of liberalism, man in reality always becomes inhuman relative to some concept of man. It is a false logical contradiction that only appears in theology to say that man in reality is not a man but rather inhuman. Humanism is the **religion of man**, which is simply the final metamorphosis of the Christian religion.¹⁷³ **We must admit that Stirner aptly critiqued young Marx's humanism.** I believe that this was the direct reason for Marx's decision to ultimately turn way from humanist philosophy.

Based on this critique of all humanist species-philosophy, Stirner proposes a new conception of history: “I am! **Man**, the end and outcome of Christianity, is, as

¹⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 163 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 133).

¹⁶⁹*ibid.*, p. 326 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 269).

¹⁷⁰*ibid.*, p. 243 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 199).

¹⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 230 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 188 and footnote 1).

¹⁷²*ibid.*, p. 233 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 190).

¹⁷³*ibid.*, p. 230 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 189).

I, the beginning and raw material of the new history, a history of enjoyment after the history of sacrifices, a history not of man or humanity, but of — **me**.”¹⁷⁴ This is because “**Man** is only an ideal, the species only something thought of. To be a man is not to realize the ideal of **Man**, but to present **oneself**, the individual.”¹⁷⁵ Refutation of abstract species and affirmation of individual men in reality became the logical starting point of later neo-humanism. *It is not difficult for us to see that the historical logic of neo-humanism based on individuals began with Stirner, and not, as is widely believed, with Kierkegaard.* Stirner writes that “I” in reality (the individual in reality) was “neither God nor **Man**.”¹⁷⁶ This is because “I never execute anything **human** in the abstract, but always my **own** things; **my** human act is diverse from every other human act, and only by this diversity is it a real act belonging to me.”¹⁷⁷ My existence is not the unrealizable, abstract essence of species-man; rather, mine is a living, unique existence.

Stirner clearly expresses his opposition to viewing freedom as “escape from something.” For instance, bourgeois liberalism claims to escape from despotism, socialist freedom claims to escape from the rule of capital. Stirner believes that this is false freedom, because “In the measure that I conquer freedom for myself I create for myself new bounds and new tasks.”¹⁷⁸ Because Stirner does not believe there is such a thing as a free kingdom where we escape from all inevitability and from all bonds, he uses “nothing” to replace freedom. He opposes all things sacred, because “**Everything sacred is a tie, a fetter**.”¹⁷⁹ Thus he opposes civilization, because “the whole condition of civilization is the **feudal system**, the property being Man’s or mankind’s, not **mine**. A monstrous feudal State was founded, the individual robbed of everything, everything left to ‘man.’”¹⁸⁰ Individuals are nothing but “specimens” of this human “species.” He continues: “In all this the individual, the individual man, is regarded as refuse, and on the other hand the general man, ‘Man,’ is honored.”¹⁸¹ His “owner” is **individual man in reality**. *I believe that Stirner’s view here was directly and critically accepted by Marx. In our later discussion of The German Ideology we will delve into concrete analysis of this point.*

Stirner’s “I” demands a kind of uniqueness that the state and society are unable to give. The “owner” demands a kind of unique “union” and community of free men; this alliance is “created by me, it is my creation.” From this perspective, the society of communism is closest to Stirner’s ideal.¹⁸² “All religion is a cult of society, this principle by which societary (cultivated) man is dominated.”¹⁸³ In communism, this principle attains its highest level. Society is all in all. In opposition to this worship of society are relationships, which are for individuals.

¹⁷⁴Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, p. 237 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 194).

¹⁷⁵*ibid.*, p. 239 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 196).

¹⁷⁶*ibid.*, p. 44 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 35).

¹⁷⁷*ibid.*, p. 236 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 193).

¹⁷⁸*ibid.*, pp. 205–206 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 167).

¹⁷⁹*ibid.*, p. 284 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 234).

¹⁸⁰*ibid.*, p. 386 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 319).

¹⁸¹*ibid.*, pp. 268–269 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, pp. 220–221).

¹⁸²*ibid.*, p. 411 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 340).

¹⁸³*ibid.*, p. 413 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 342).

The union exists for you and through you, the society conversely lays claim to you for itself and exists even without you, in short, the society is **sacred**, the union your **own**; consumes **you**, **you** consume the union.¹⁸⁴

This is the connection and divergence between the union and society.

Stirner believes that “my relation to the world is this: I no longer do anything for it ‘for God’s sake,’ I do nothing ‘for man’s sake,’ but what I do I do ‘for my sake.’”¹⁸⁵ The true man does not lie in the future, an object of longing, but lies, existent and real, in the present. I do not make myself the goal, but rather the starting point. If I become the “goal,” then “still far from myself, I separate myself into two halves, of which one, the one unattained and to be fulfilled, is the true one. The one, the untrue, must be brought as a sacrifice; to wit, the unspiritual one.”¹⁸⁶

Stirner’s self is different from Fichte’s general self; it is an absolutely unique “I.” This is the “unique one”¹⁸⁷ Stirner writes:

Christianity’s magic circle would be broken if the strained relation between existence and calling, e. g., between me as I am and me as I should be, ceased... to the egoist only **his** history has value, because he wants to develop only **himself** not the mankind-idea, not God’s plan, not the purposes of Providence, not liberty, etc. He does not look upon himself as a tool of the idea or a vessel of God and he recognizes no calling.¹⁸⁸

This is the view of the zealot Stirner towards individual life. Actually, this historical condition of his “I” (the unique one) that departs from material production and from certain inter-human relations is an abstract figment of imagination. This magic answer that he uses to criticize everyone else is, in reality, a completely laughable argument.

Stirner arrogantly proclaims: “If I concern myself for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say: All things are nothing to me.”¹⁸⁹ For the egoist, “nothing” is the most precious. The logical proposition of neo-humanism appears as such: **opposition to God, opposition to all essentialism, emphasis on present existence and mortality.** *I believe that many of Stirner’s ideas, as well as those of Nietzsche and Heidegger, almost “belong” with post-modernism.* Without a doubt, Marx would disagree with these views; however, Stirner’s critique of Feuerbach certainly became a logical introduction for Marx. Stirner’s refutation of humanist species-philosophy, critique of the value postulate starting point, and attention to real social economic facts helped spur the great change in Marx’s philosophy. From an external perspective, the sudden disappearance of the logical framework of estranged labor in the 1845

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 418 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, pp. 345–346).

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 426 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 352).

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 438 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 363).

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 483–484 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 402).

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 489–490 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, pp. 406–407).

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 491 (Chinese transl.: *Weiyizhe ji qi suo you wu*, p. 408).

On List constituted the first signs of this shift, while in *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology* Marx finally criticized and surpassed Feuerbach's humanism, establishing the science of historical materialism. Of course, it was not until Marx comprehensively established his new philosophical views in *The German Ideology* that he was able to effectively respond to Stirner.

Chapter 6

The Construction of Marx's Scientific Worldview

In our discussion of the past chapter we began to reveal the complex context of Marx's philosophical revolution from the perspective of his own economics research as well as the unique theoretical background of the time. This allowed us to more accurately understand and place Marx's new philosophical outlook within the greater historical context of his time. Returning to the progression of Marx's theoretical construction at this time, where *Theses on Feuerbach* was an early work of genius (according to Engels), *The German Ideology* was the first systematic and concrete elucidation of Marx's new worldview. The basic theoretical prototype of Marxist philosophy is completely expressed in *The German Ideology*, especially in the first chapter of the first volume. As such, this book plays a vital role in Marxist philosophy and in the development of philosophy in general.

6.1 The Textual and Discourse Structure of *The German Ideology*

For Marx, there was still an important theoretical road to travel between his *Theses on Feuerbach* written in April and his establishment of a new theoretical system in *The German Ideology*. The emphasis of Marx's thought at this point was no longer general philosophical debate; he had already realized that all efforts at developing theoretical logic had to be based on the study of social reality. At that time, the most important element of reality to be studied was economics. It was this scientific study that dealt with reality that separated Marx and Engels from the "German philosophical system" and the "German ideology." A completely new scientific worldview — historical scientific materialism — was finally constructed. Just as Marx was realizing this great philosophical shift, a bizarre philosophical debate was unfolding in the German philosophical world: this was the self-entanglement of the "German ideology." This is the objective micro-background of the writing of *The German Ideology*.

6.1.1 The specific objective context of *The German Ideology*

At the end of 1844, Marx and Engels did not have time to include a refutation of Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* before *The Holy Family* was published. We know that when Marx arrived in Brussels in February 1845 he focused his attention on the study of political economy, and that it was under these circumstances that he wrote *On List* in March 1845. In April he wrote *Theses on Feuerbach* before continuing his study of economics. From July to August of that year, Marx and Engels traveled to Manchester, where they hurriedly continued their study of economics in addition to participating in social activities, producing *Manchester Notes*. It was precisely during this time — from June to October of 1845 — that a great deal of important articles and books were published by German philosophers.

In June 1845, Hess published his book *The Recent Philosophers*, about which he had written to Marx on January 17; the book commented on Bauer, Stirner, and Feuerbach. Here Hess expands on the views he expressed in *On The German Socialist Movement*. He directly criticized Feuerbach's disregard for the expression of the estrangement of man's essence in economic reality, focusing on the estrangement in relations of finance and money. In *The Recent Philosophers*, he criticizes Bauer, Stirner, and Feuerbach for only paying attention to the contradictions and conflicts between the ideal species and individual men. Because this critique was merely refutation and transcendence on a subjective level of consciousness, it could not change the isolated state of individuals in the reality of civil society, and Hess therefore strongly advocated moving towards the practice of socialism in order to reunite "the fragments of theory and reality."

From June 25 to 28 of the same year, the second issue of the 1845 edition of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* was published in Leipzig. This issue included an article by Feuerbach: *Discussing "The Essence of Christianity" with "The Ego and Its Own"*. In this article, Feuerbach responds to Stirner's critique, emphasizing that his philosophy did not refute individuals, that his concept of "sensuous" was also the true content of individuality. It was at the very end of this article that Feuerbach first refers to himself as a "communist." It is interesting to note that this issue of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* also published Julius' article "The Conflict Between Visible and Invisible Sects or A Critique of Critique of Critical Criticism."¹ In this article, Julius points out that a major line of thinking between *On The Jewish Question* and *The Holy Family* was a **combination of Feuerbachian humanism and materialism**. He criticizes Marx for continuing the "duality" that Feuerbach used to oppose reality (individuals in civil society) against species-essence. Julius directly points out that "species-being" is a new form of religious sect. Though this view was slightly different from Stirner's, it accomplished the same goal.

On October 16–18 of the same year, the third issue of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* published an article by Bruno Bauer: "Characteristics of Ludwig Feuerbach."² In this article, Bauer directly criticizes Feuerbach for not truly separating

¹G. Julius, "Der Streit der sichtbaren mit der unsichtbaren Menschenkirche oder Kritik der Kritik der kritischen Kritik," *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* (Leipzig) 2 (1845): 326–333.

²anonymous [Bauer, Bruno], "Charakteristik Ludwig Feuerbachs," *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* (Leipzig) 3 (1845): 86–146.

himself from Hegel. Because Feuerbach's "species" and the essence of man are both actually kinds of transcendent sacred things, Feuerbach's species-essence is still Hegel's absolute, Kant's thing-in-itself, and Christianity's God. It is nothing but a religion with its name changed. It is important to remark that Bauer criticizes Marx and Engels for continuing the materialist philosophical development of Feuerbach with their concept of "humanism in reality" in *The Holy Family*. He accuses Marx, Engels, and Hess of using **species to oppress individuality** (self-consciousness). Also in the third issue of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift*, Stirner published "The Critics of Stirner,"³ his response to the various critiques of *The Ego and His Own*. He analyzes and distinguishes philosophers such as Feuerbach, Bauer, and Hess. Here he refers to Hess, Marx, and Engels as the primary representatives of "real socialism" and "sacred socialism."

This were the theoretical developments taking place in Germany just after April 1845. Marx and Engels joked that it was a "religious convention at Leipzig." As a matter of fact, Marx's philosophical basis at this point in time was no longer the logic of philosophical ethics, but rather social history, and in particular **economic development in real life**. Building on the foundation established in *Brussels Notes A*, he had already experienced the philosophical revolution of *Theses on Feuerbach*, before finally establishing a **completely new scientific principle of history based on material production** through *Brussels Notes B*. Later, in his thinking for *Manchester Notes*, Marx directly realized a complete shift of the whole of his theoretical thought through a broader line of logic employed in the study of political economy (especially English socialist economists). This was the establishment of the scientific worldview of historical materialism, of the premise of scientific political economy, and of the real path and direction of scientific socialism. It was not that Marx did not directly reflect on the philosophical logic of the German thinkers of the time — Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* surely exerted a profound influence on Marx, causing him to break the chains of Feuerbachian species-essence logic — but Marx did not simply return individuals from species on the level of philosophical logic. Rather, he reflected on the whole of the logic of philosophical history from a comprehensive perspective of history. Marx no longer moved within the old logical framework of philosophical logic, but rather overthrew, at a basic level, this metaphysical system; Marx's new worldview was not metaphysical, it was a new **historical science**.

Although Marx's primary theoretical inspiration at this time was political economy, he and Engels were forced to reevaluate the old philosophy in the face of the turmoil in Germany's philosophical scene. On the one hand, they engaged in self-reflection and criticism, revisiting their prior philosophical beliefs; on the other hand, they comprehensively constructed the theoretical logic of a new worldview, thus profoundly separating themselves from the "German ideology" of the day. Marx and Engels decided to write a book to accomplish these two goals, a decision that led directly to *The German Ideology*.⁴ *In past research, writing for The German Ideology was thought to have begun in September 1845; the newest*

³Max Stirner, "Recensenten Stirners," *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* (Leipzig) 3 (1845): 147–194.

⁴In the early 1980s, one of the editors participating in compiling volume III/2 of the MEGA 2, Galina Golowina, suggested that in its earliest stage *The German Ideology* did not consist of two volumes

information reveals that the writing actually took place in November 1845. The additional parts added to the second volume of The German Ideology ("True Socialism") was not completed until 1847.

6.1.2 A general overview of the writing and text of *The German Ideology*

The German Ideology is divided into two volumes and eight chapters, comprising about 50 printed pages in all. Volume I contains a preface and three chapters and primarily criticizes the philosophical viewpoints of Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner while also explaining the basic principles of the new worldview of Marx and Engels. Volume II is made up of five sections and focuses on criticizing the "True Socialism" school of thought. The Complete Works of Marx and Engels *only contains the first, fourth, and fifth sections*. From the existing text, Marx and Engels originally planned on comprehensively criticizing the philosophical and social schools of thought in Europe and especially Germany at the time. The first volume primarily criticizes the Young Hegelians, emphasizing primarily Feuerbach, because according to the *Theses* (in which Marx developed his new worldview), his new philosophical revolution was formed through the direct refutation of Feuerbach's philosophical logic. However, as they began writing the first volume, they did not expect to devote an entire chapter to the elaboration of their own new worldview; as such, the structure of the first volume gradually forms with the development of the theoretical logic in the process of writing. It is important to note that Marx and Engels' did not have the intention of establishing a new philosophical worldview in one chapter while they were still working on the first volume. The structure of the first volume as we can read it now only took its shape as its logic was gradually developed in the process of writing. *The writing of The German Ideology was, itself, a part of this philosophical revolution*. The content of what was set as chapter one is extremely important, because Marx and Engels believed that only Feuerbach was deserving of "serious reflection," and because the establishment of their new philosophical worldview was primarily based on the critique of the theoretical definitions Feuerbach's philosophy. This means that the new worldview was established in the "supersession of Feuerbach" (to use Lenin's words).

The writing of *The German Ideology* began in November 1845 (after the publishing of the third issue of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* and its primary text was basically completed by April 1846. Between January and April 1847, Engels added the last chapter of the second volume ("True Socialism"). From the latest textual and research information we can see that Marx and Engels did not originally plan on writing a major work. Rather, they wished to express their own views on the chaotic philosophical issues raised by *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift*. Their primary goal was to differentiate their new worldview from what they surpassed

but had been originally intended by Marx, Engels and Hess for publication in a periodical. I am not absolutely convinced of the practical value of this idea. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

— the “German ideology.” Therefore, the manuscript of the first volume was not originally divided into chapters and sections, but rather existed together as critical material directed against Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner. As the writing progressed, Marx and Engels decided to devote an entire chapter to the critique of Feuerbach. Therefore, they extracted all the content on Feuerbach and history from the original manuscript, then extracted their expression of their own new worldview from the chapter on Stirner, forming a new chapter: “I, Feuerbach.” After this, Marx wrote a preface for the entire work, also working with Engels to re-write the first portion of the first chapter of the first volume twice. This would later become the fourth and fifth parts of the first chapter. Here we will primarily focus on the interpretation of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*.

The German Ideology was not published while Marx and Engels were alive. It was not until 37 years after Engels’ death in 1895 that the book was first published in The Soviet Union.⁵ The first chapter of the first volume concentrates on explaining the positive aspects of Marx and Engels’ new worldview. In other words, the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology* was the first and only systematic expression of their new philosophical worldview.⁶ As such, this is one of the most important classical texts of Marxist philosophy as we truly understand it. However, this portion of manuscript was unfinished and has been damaged through the years. A few pages have been seriously damaged, and the first chapter is missing 12 pages (the second chapter is missing 20 pages). With the first publishing of the book in 1932, Soviet scholar Adoratskij re-ordered the content of this manuscript in order to make it a complete work. *This is the textual form of what we see today as the first chapter of the third volume of The Complete Works of Marx and Engels in Chinese.*

In later research, people gradually realized that there were many holes in the 1932 original version of the first chapter of the first volume as edited by Soviet scholars. First, in 1962, as Siegfried Bahne was organizing materials in the Amsterdam International Institute of Social History, he discovered three pages in an envelope entitled *Drucksachen für das Mitglied des Reichstages Herrn Bernstein*. The three pages were titled “Published in Volumes 3 and 4 of *Socialist Documents* as ‘III. Sankt Max’” — these were three of the lost 12 pages of the first chapter

⁵Some portions of *The German Ideology* were published between 1899 and 1921. In 1924, the Marx-Engels Institute in the former Soviet Union edited and translated the Marx-Engels Manuscripts (*Marx-Engels Archiv*). In the first volume of the Manuscripts was published for the first time in Russian the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*. This was the Eldar Ryazanov edition, which was compiled according to the Ryazanov’s methods then restored by Ernst Czöbel. In 1926, the Marx-Engels Manuscripts published the German edition of this book. In 1932, the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in the former Soviet Union published in German for the first time the full text of *The German Ideology* in the fifth volume of the first part of MEGA 1. This is the Adoratski edition, which was compiled according to the edits made by Adoratski then actually edited by P. Weller. The following year, the Adoratski edition was published in Russian. The manuscripts of both the Ryazanov edition as well as the MEGA 1 edition were organized into volumes (Band), sections (Abschnitt), and chapters (Kapitel). Author’s footnote to the second edition of this book.

⁶This expression primarily took the form of “settling accounts with our former philosophical conscience.” Refer to (Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,” p. 10 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan,” p. 10)).

of the first volume of *The German Ideology*. That same year, these three pages of manuscript were published in the first part of the seventh volume of *International Commentary on Social History*. Second, many scholars began to realize the importance of restoring the original line of logic in Marx and Engels' thinking. In the mid-1960s, the young Japanese Marxist scholar Hiromatsu Wataru criticized the Adoratskij version of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*.⁷ Therefore, in the October and November issues of the 1965 edition of *Philosophical Questions*, The Soviet Central Marxist-Leninist Institute published the new edited version of *The German Ideology*, as well as an essay by Georgi Bagaturija entitled "The Structure and Content of the First Chapter of K. Marx and F. Engels' *The German Ideology*." The following year, the text was published by itself. This version was organized by the well-known expert in Marxist texts Bagaturija. Bagaturija divided the two volumes (*Band*) of *The German Ideology* into chapters (*Kapitel*) and sections (*Abschnitt*). This ordering of the first chapter of the first volume basically restored the original sequence used by Marx and Engels. It also divided the five manuscripts into four parts according to the content of the text, resulting in 27 sections. According to the understanding of the editor, 25 sub-headings were added to clarify the organization. *The heading of the first section was written by Marx and Engels, while the 26th heading was originally a marginal note by the author.* In 1966, the fourth issue of the *Journal of German Philosophy* published the original text, using the ordering of the Russian translation, only deleting the 26th heading added by Bagaturija.⁸ In 1988, China published a new translation of the first chapter — "Feuerbach."⁹ This translation primarily used the 1966 German manuscript, including the 27 subheadings of the

⁷Wataru Hiromatsu [广松涉], "Deyizhi yishi xingtai' de bianji shang cunzai de wenti," (德意志意识形态)的编辑上存在的问题 [Some questions in the editing of "The German Ideology"], *Weiwu lun yanjiu* 唯物论研究 [Research in Materialism], no. 第 21 号 [No. 21] (1965 年春季刊 [spring 1965]).

⁸In 1972, former East German scholar Inge Taubert published a preprint of her edition of the First Chapter of *The German Ideology*, intended to be a trial edition of MEGA 2 I/5. By and large, her text follows the 1965 Russian edition, however she divided the manuscript into seven parts and kept the original author's marginal notes. See pp. 33–119 and 399–507 of MEGA 2 I/5, Proband.

In 1974, the Japanese scholar Hiromatsu Wataru published a Japanese version of the First Chapter of *The German Ideology* which follows the original layout of the manuscript as faithfully as possible (see Wataru Hiromatsu, ed. [广松涉], *Wenzixianxue yujing zhong de "Deyizhi yishi xingtai"*, 文献学语境中的〈德意志意识形态〉[The German Ideology in a Philological Context], trans. Peng Xi 彭曦 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe 南京大学出版社, 2005)).

Appearing in 1979, the Chinese edition in vol. 42 of the *Collected Works* included three pages of the original manuscript which had been discovered only recently (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels [Ka'er Maksi, Fulidelixi Engesi 卡尔·马克思、弗里德里希·恩格斯], *Deyizhi yishi xingtai. Dui Fei'erba, Bu. Baowei'er he Shidina suo daibiao de xiandai Deguo zhexue yiji geshi geyang xianzhi suo daibiao de Deguo shehuizhuyi de pipan*, 德意志意识形态. 对费尔巴哈、布·鲍威尔和施蒂纳所代表的现代德国哲学以及各式各样先知所代表的德国社会主义的批判, vol. 3 of *Makesi Engesi quanji*, 马克思恩格斯全集, Zhongwen di yi ban 中文第一版, ed. Zhonggong zhongyang Makesi Engesi Liening Sidalin Zhuzuo bianyiju 中共中央马克思恩格斯列宁斯大林著作编译局 (Beijing 北京: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社 [People's Press], 1960), 11–640). In 2004, Inge Taubert and Prof. Hans Pelger published together in the 2003 Marx-Engels Yearbook a preprint of the first two sections of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, labeled "Vorabpublikation" (see *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 2003*).

⁹A new Chinese translation of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology* was published under the title *Feuerbach* by People's Press in 1988. This edition preserved some of the editorial marks inserted by Bagaturija. When the Central Translation Office prepared the manuscript for a second edition, the editorial marks were completely eliminated even though the

Russian version in an appendix at the end of the book. This will be the version I use in my discussion in this book.¹⁰

Compared to the original third volume of the Complete Works of Marx and Engels, the new stand-alone Chinese version shows some important changes. *I believe that the work of Chinese scholars in seriously, systematically, and comprehensively studying The German Ideology has been insufficient. Bagaturija was the first to make a serious attempt at this.*¹¹ *The Chinese scholar Le Zhiqiang has also attempted this.*¹² *This research has had some measure of influence on the general structural analysis of The German Ideology, but as soon as it approaches the specific content of the text, these works all revert to the traditional interpretive framework; it is not difficult to guess the results of the context of this research.*

In the present version, the original five manuscripts written by Marx and Engels have been split into four parts. Chronologically organized, the five relatively independent manuscripts of the first chapter are as follows: first, the concrete explanation of the new philosophical worldview, comprising 29 pages of the first manuscript, organized now as part two; second, 43 pages of the second and third manuscripts in taken from two places in chapter three, organized now as parts three and four; third, the fourth and fifth manuscripts, where a general preface and overview of the new worldview was written, organized now as part one.

6.1.3 On the textual structure of the first manuscript of volume one of *The German Ideology*

I believe that Marx and Engels set two primary goals for themselves in the first chapter of their work: first, to criticize the idealist conception of history that lurked beneath Feuerbach's old materialism, while at the same time "settling" their own original theoretical logic framework (primarily Marx's humanist philosophical logic after his first philosophical shift in 1843–1844) and thus establishing a new philosophical vision; second, on this basis, theoretically and systematically express their new Marxist worldview. This was the theoretical crux of their new worldview, and was also the most difficult process of logical construction. Considering the existing manuscripts, neither of these goals was completely realized in a formal

original structure of the text was preserved. During his visit to Nanjing University in August 2008, Prof. Bagaturija informed us about the editorial situation of the manuscript. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁰The original manuscript includes the title: "I, Feuerbach." In 1883, after re-reading Marx's manuscripts, Engels added the words "Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks."

¹¹Refer to Bagaturija: "The Structure and Content of the First Chapter of K. Marx and F. Engels' *The German Ideology*", in: *Philosophical Questions*, 1965, vols. 10–11; "A Great Discovery by Marx", China People's University Press, 1981; as well as Bagaturija's unpublished thesis: "The historical position of Marx's and Engels' *The German Ideology* in Marxism", Russian National Archive, 1971. During his visit to Nanjing University in October 2008, Prof. Bagaturija presented this book to the Research Center of Marxism and Social Theory at Nanjing University.

¹²Refer to Zhiqiang Le [乐志强], "*Deyizhi xingtai*" *jianming jiaocheng*, (《德意志意识形态》简明教程 [A Concise Curriculum for "The German Ideology"]) (Guangdong: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe 中山大学出版社 [Sun Yat-sen University Press], 1988).

sense.¹³ To say that neither was “completely realized” does not mean that Marx and Engels did not resolve the issues that they set out to resolve, but rather that they did not complete their theoretical construction in its entirety.

Before beginning our analysis, I would like to briefly highlight two points: first, as we know, Marx wrote *Theses on Feuerbach* in the spring of 1845 while living in Brussels. This was a summary of Marx's thought and research after his major shift in understanding. *These theses were written in April of 1845 while Marx lived in Brussels; they were included on pages 51–55 of the notebooks he kept from 1844–1847 and were titled I, On Feuerbach.* These “theses” were written with a specific object (Feuerbach) in mind. This revolutionary leap in understanding had two theoretical levels: first, to establish a clear separation between Marx and Feuerbach (as well as all old materialism); second, to establish the basic logical points of Marx's new worldview. There is ample evidence to indicate that this important philosophical revolution was accomplished independently by Marx. *According to the research in Marx's notebooks between 1844 and 1847, the theses were written after Engels had arrived in Manchester. The exact date was sometime after April 5th but before April 30th.* After Engels arrived in Brussels on April 5th, he arrived at a theoretical understanding with Marx, and the two decided to write *The German Ideology* together. Considering the basic line of thought in *Theses on Feuerbach* and the overall logical structure of *The German Ideology*, although *The German Ideology* expands on all the points contained in *Theses*, I believe that the *Theses* were not an outline for the writing of *The German Ideology*; at the most, they constitute a **thought outline** for *The German Ideology*. *Georgi Bagaturija suggests that The German Ideology is more developed than Theses in terms of theoretical logic; I believe that this is very imprecise, because the two texts differ in terms of logical perspective.*

The majority of the main text in the first chapter of *The German Ideology* appears to have been written by Engels.¹⁴ *Some of the text may also have been written by Joseph Weydemeyer.*¹⁵ However, the content and characteristic think-

¹³In his 1888 work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy*, Engels mentions the first chapter of *The German Ideology*: “The section dealing with Feuerbach is not completed. The finished portion consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history... it contains no criticism of Feuerbach's doctrine itself.” See Friedrich Engels, “Vorbemerkung zu ‘Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie’,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. 1/31, p. 123 (Chinese transl.: “Ludeweixi Fei'erbahe de Deguo gudian zhexue de zhongjie' yi shu xuyan,” p. 412).

¹⁴Refer to footnote 1 at the end of the Russian edition of *Feuerbach*, 1965.

In August 2008, together with a colleague, I visited the famous International Institute of Social History of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences where we were given a warm and cordial welcome. The persons in charge of the Institute granted direct access to their archive, and thus we were glad to see with our own eyes the very original manuscripts and historical traces of Marx, Engels and other famous thinkers of the Second International. We were exceptionally honoured to receive a complete set of copies of the precious original manuscript of the first section of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. This was the very first time that we directly could obtain first-hand information about this document. Besides that, we also were given a complete copy of the first manuscript of the *1844 Manuscript*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁵**Joseph Weydemeyer** (1818–1866) was an early activist of the labour movement both in Germany and the United States of America as well as an organizer of the American Section of the First

ing in this portion of the manuscript both undoubtedly belong to Marx. It may be possible that this portion of the was dictated by Marx and then transcribed by Engels. Such a situation would have unfolded thus: first, before arriving in Brussels, Engels is still involved in a furious debate with the critics of *The German Ideology*.¹⁶ After meeting Marx and discussing things with him, Engels comes to accept Marx's views, which made it possible for him to develop such a clear, new line of logic in so short a time. Next, this important portion of content was still in the process of writing in the second half of 1846. On August 15, 1846, Marx continues to work while Engels travels to Paris.¹⁷ Finally, the main portion of the text was written in Engels' more elegant hand on the left half of the page, reserving the right side of the page for Marx and Engels' corrections. Because this was the most important content in the entire book, Marx and Engels would not have given the rough draft to the publisher, so what we have now is most likely the corrected version that Engels copied himself. Of course, this is merely deduction on my part. *I discussed this question with Professor Sun Bokui. He suggested the basic points of the above narrative, and I agree with his assumptions. The Japanese scholar Hiromatsu Wataru emphasizes that Engels is the lead author of The German Ideology, and he also thinks that Engels is the main creator of historical materialism. These points are absolutely unacceptable.*¹⁸

As Marx and Engels began writing their manuscript, they planned on simultaneously criticizing Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner. *Some scholars believe that Marx and Engels originally wanted to criticize Bauer and Stirner while "protecting Feuerbach's materialism."* Such an assertion is imprecise.¹⁹ Later in the process of their writing they changed their original plan, using the first chapter to criticize Feuerbach while systematically elucidating their own new worldview. Therefore, this portion of the manuscript (29 pages) is made up of two different parts. First is criticism of Feuerbach's materialism, which is also a "settling" of accounts of their

International. He was born in Prussia on February 2nd, 1818. In 1839, he graduated from Berlin Military Academy. In early 1845, he resigned from military service and became a newspaper editor. In December 1845 he joined Marx in Brussels who was in the process of founding the Communist Correspondence Committee. Around 1846, he contributed to the manuscript of *The German Ideology*. In 1847 he joined the Communist League and founded an associate organization in Cologne. In July 1857, Weyedemeyer went into exile in Switzerland, and in November of the same year, he moved to New York in the United States. In May 1852, he founded a Marxist organization, the *Proletarierbund* or American Workers' League. In the same year, he started the journal *Die Revolution*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁶Refer to the letters Engels wrote between November, 1844 and March, 1845: Engels to Marx in Paris (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali), Engels to Karl Marx in Paris (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bali), Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Barmen, 22. Februar–7. März 1845, 22 February 1845, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, III/1:266–269 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er) and Engels to Karl Marx in Brüssel (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er).

¹⁷Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Paris, 19. August 1846, 19 August 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 26 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er, p. 36).

¹⁸Refer to the appendix of Hiromatsu's *Wenzianxue yujing zhong de "Deyizhi yishi xingtai"*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁹Refer to Beijing tushuguan Ma-Lie zhuzuo yanjiushi, ed. [北京图书馆马列著作研究室 [Marxism-Leninism Research Office of the Beijing Library]], *Ma En Lie Si yanjiu ziliao huibian (1980)*, 马恩列斯研究资料汇编 (1980) [Collected Studies on Marx and Engels (1980)] (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe 书目文献出版社 [Book / Document Press], 1982), p. 96.

own philosophical beliefs (pages 1–10); Second is direct expression of Marx's new philosophical views (pages 11–29). We can see that the content of the first portion of this manuscript was direct expansion and deepening of the points brought of in the *Theses*; it was also the premise of the new Marxist worldview. The second portion of the manuscript, on the other hand, was the establishment of the basic principles (the historical “ontological” qualifications of general materialism) of Marxist philosophy by Marx and Engels; this was the **logical line of thought 1, embedded in a philosophical context**. Also in the second portion of the text we find a scientific critique that proceeded from the division of labor to realistically and historically criticize bourgeois society's modes of production; this was **logical line of thought 2, embedded in an economics context**. The original framework of this text also formed a major line of theorizing in the first manuscript.²⁰ I believe that this is the most valuable theoretical text that treats the basic principles of Marxist philosophy's general historical materialism.

A textual study of Marx's work reveals that Marx extracted two important theoretical pieces from his the third chapter of the manuscript (the chapter on Stirner) and grafted them into the first chapter, writing them into pages 30–35 (of the second manuscript) and pages 36–72 (of the third manuscript). The second manuscript contains a treatise on the ruling class consciousness, while the third manuscript contains a historical explanation of a new theoretical line of thinking, i. e., of the historical place of the development of the human subject in social history.

After completing the primary writing of the first manuscript, Marx and Engels wrote a preface to the first chapter, trying to provide an overall summary that would reflect their new philosophical worldview; this would become the beginning of the first chapter. As such, we see here two different attempts. The first was directed towards the “man” of Feuerbach, Stirner, and others — it moved from individuals in reality to production, and then to modes of production. It was a line of thinking moved from social phenomena to penetrate the essence (fourth manuscript); this is a re-writing of line of thinking 1. The second attempt was to derive the basic principles and conclusions (fifth manuscript) of historical materialism from the real development of bourgeois society's private system; this is an addition to line of thinking 2.

It is extremely important to understand the editing and translating of the first part of the first chapter of *The Germany Ideology*, as this was a important cause of division and debate in past research. In the most recent compilation, the first portion of manuscript is the result of the combination of the fourth and fifth manuscripts. It is my personal opinion that in fact, the fourth and fifth manuscripts were efforts by Marx and Engels to give an overall summary of their new views from two different perspectives, after having already established their new philosophical worldview. Scholars have long neglected the importance of a correct understanding of the internal logical structure of this first portion of manuscript; even with the publishing of the new compilation, there are still a

²⁰In earlier translations, the order of these two manuscripts was inverted, thus corrupting the Marx's and Engels' original line of thought. In modern translations, the original order was restored.

number of imprecise assumptions. In the opinion of Bagaturija, the editor of the new compilation, the first portion of manuscript was nothing but two unfinished transcriptions by Marx and Engels and the fifth manuscript simply corrected the fourth manuscript. Unfortunately all the new translations accepted his views. I, however, am unable to accept these assumptions, because I believe that this theory seriously underestimates the significance of the first manuscript.

I believe that we cannot consider the fourth and fifth manuscripts as nothing more than transcripts of the first chapter by Marx and Engels (based only on the content of the introduction or an analysis of the writing, this finding is unfounded). Rather, I believe that after basically working out a fundamental framework of their new philosophy, they first planned to re-write a new “beginning” (preface) for the first volume, in which they would explain the the pertinence of their philosophical critique; next they planned to add a “beginning” (summary) of the positive views they would express in the first chapter (actually, this summary would most likely encapsulate the content on the entire book). The content of the preface is both clear and precise. Although the fourth and fifth manuscripts are consistent on this point, after the same introduction, they manifest two different “beginnings” that approach the content from two different lines of thought. This shows the difficulty in understanding this issue. Unfortunately, this portion of content was never completed. However, the unified whole of the two manuscripts reveals a comprehensive expression of a new philosophical world outlook.

This ends Marx and Engels’ un-paginated five pages of the fourth manuscript. There are several possibilities for why the manuscript ends here: first, the summary along this line of thought had already been completed and therefore Marx and Engels were ready to transition to the systematic critique of Feuerbach in the first manuscript; second, they felt that the summary of the fourth manuscript still needed additional content; third, they felt that summary along this line of thought was not logically compatible with the systematic expression later in *The German Ideology*, and therefore they would have to re-write another “beginning.” After specific research on this manuscript, I am inclined to support the third possibility. Let us now move into the labyrinth that is Marx and Engels’ manuscript and first attempt to trace out a map before turning to analysis of a true exit.

There are 16 pages in the fifth manuscript. The preface contains $4\frac{1}{2}$ pages, of which the first 2 pages are basically the same as the fourth manuscript. However, beginning from about the third page, Marx and Engels added about three pages of new material as a preface. The subtitle was changed to “A, Ideology in General, German Ideology in Particular.” What follows is a large section of specific explanation of the “German ideology.” Please note that this section does not only (or “primarily”) criticize Feuerbach, but rather provides a critique of the whole of the “German ideology.” The last line of writing added to this section of the preface contains a theoretical transition: “It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surrounding.” This line evidently completes the preface. However, the manuscript ends here (on the fifth page). *The second half of the fifth page is left blank, and the writing continues on*

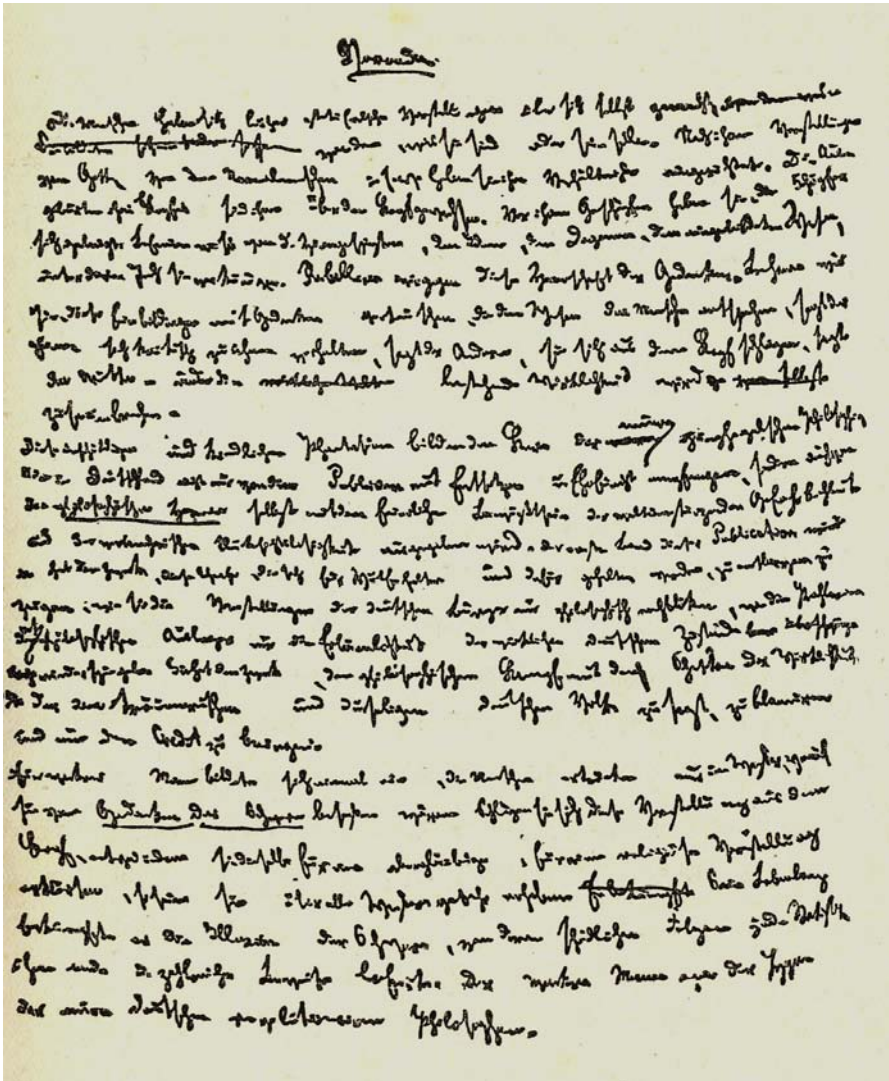


Figure 6.1: Facsimile of a page of the preface of *The German Ideology*

the sixth page.

The text on the next page (page 3 to 4 of the fifth manuscript) is a section of independent theoretical expression. This expression proceeds from the concrete development of historical progression to explain the new worldview of Marx and Engels. This introduces a different perspective than that of the writing that followed the preface of the fourth manuscript. The former perspective proceeds from the structural nature (synchronic nature) of society, following the logical analytical line of thought that moved from phenomenon to essence; the latter per-

spective proceeds from the procedural nature (diachronic nature) of social history and engages in economic theoretical explanation using the concrete developmental process of three social forms: tribal, ancient, and feudal ownership. It is not difficult to see why the placement of this section of text would be controversial. In the newest compilation, the editor assumes that the un-deleted section of text from the fourth manuscript should be added after the introduction to the fifth manuscript. After the structural discussion, he believes that they proceeded from the process to analyze history; finally, this section was ended with the small conclusion at the end of the fifth manuscript.

However, a specific analysis of this section of text reveals that it is difficult to justify these assumptions. This is because Marx and Engels here are not engaging in theoretical summary, but are rather conducting very concrete, actual analysis of social forms. Considering the entirety of the chapter, the most similar content to this section is most likely the beginning of the third manuscript, grafted in from the third chapter. Perhaps the reason why the pages numbered 36–39 are missing from the third manuscript is because Engels transcribed this portion of text and planned to move it forward. Engels²¹ marked the fifth manuscript with the numbers 1 through 5, directly connecting it to the first manuscript, of which the 29th page was numbered 6 through 11. However, Marx erased Engels' marks, numbering the first manuscript 1 through 29, continuing the same numbers through the second manuscript, and finally ending with number 72 on the third manuscript. *I have discovered that Hiromatsu Wataru's Japanese translation of Feuerbach, published in 1974, moves this portion of text to the beginning of the third manuscript; this is most likely for the same reasons that I have just discussed.*²²

We can see from the existing documents that Marx and Engels repeatedly engaged in profound and delicate corrections of the manuscript of the first chapter. According to the correction suggestions and different markings on the manuscript, I hypothesize the following process of correction: First, Marx writes a draft of the chapter, which is later transcribed by Engels (this is the primary manuscript which is in existence today). Next, Engels corrects the manuscript (copy-editing marks), before Marx finally corrects it (copy-editing marks). This very well may be the basic process by which the manuscript came to be.

6.1.4 The complex discourse of *The German Ideology*

After completing our analysis of the textual structure of the manuscript of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, we will next turn to another important question: what is the underlying discourse structure of *The German Ideology*? This is also the next question that I would like to consider. In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*, my identification of the overall philosophical logic of *The German Ideology* primarily focused on the basic perspective of historical analysis. In that book, I proposed the concepts of the

²¹According to late Mrs. Taubert's opinion, the introductory note originally attributed to Engels was in fact added by Bernstein. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²²See Hiromatsu, *Wenxianxue yujing zhong de "Deyizhi yishi xingtai"*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

general and narrow outlooks of historical materialism, as well as the objective and subjective dimensions of the historical dialectic (the dominant and latent dimensions).²³ However, shifting to a broader context, that of Marx's economic research, makes this situation much more complex. I have discovered that it is insufficient to attempt to understand *The German Ideology* from a purely philosophical perspective. The philosophical revolution Marx realizes here is not a simple linear philosophical shift in outlook; without the basis of economics and the value objectives of socialism, it would have been impossible for Marx's new worldview to come to pass. Here we must unveil some macro elements of Marx's context in order to achieve a breakthrough in our understanding.

First, in terms of philosophy, Marx came under the direct, negative attack of Stirner. This made Feuerbachian "species-philosophy" the primary object of critique. *Marx covers over his humanist mistakes in the unpublished 1844 Manuscript*. This was the first great defeat of Marx's deeply-rooted romantic and humanist ideas, also implying the utter collapse of Sismondi's economic romanticism. However, we should not view Marx's philosophical shift here as simple theoretical alternation between **species and individual** within his old philosophical logic. *Such alternation can be seen in the shift from the individual self-consciousness in Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature and the labor species-essence in the 1844 Manuscript*. In fact, Marx fundamentally surpassed all old philosophy. This shift was rooted in the more fundamental, important shift in Marx's economic outlook, i. e., **the shift from direct refutation of bourgeois political economy from the standpoint of the proletariat to the basic affirmation of bourgeois political economy**. Through his *Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*, Marx had already discovered that Ricardo was the only philosopher devoid of romantic inclinations; he cared only for **objective reality**. The philosophy of the Ricardian socialist economists had already influenced Marx into accepting a new conclusion: **the objective logic based on bourgeois political economy was the only thing capable of truly pointing out the real road to the overthrow of bourgeois society**. Thus, **political economy here becomes the foundation of all of Marx's thinking and theoretical expression** at this time (Petty's "positivist science"). However, Marx's logic is the logic of restructured critique of reality. This is because for the political economists, the economic reality controlled and constructed by bourgeois modes of production was non-critical; thus the whole science of political economy was also non-critical. Therefore, the foundation of Marx's philosophical theories at this time was built on the supersession of the classical political economic standpoint. This is a new and important subsidiary awareness.

I have noticed that in *The German Ideology* and especially in the portion devoted to opposition against Stirner in the third chapter of the first manuscript, Marx directly references economics 10 times.²⁴ It is an important logical identifica-

²³See the second chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²⁴Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, pp. 106, 192, 209–210, 210, 374, 377–378, 391 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi*

tion to note that Marx **relies on economics** to surpass Stirner. For instance, many of Marx's important theoretical proofs have economic critique for their premises. Marx writes: "free competition and world trade gave birth to hypocritical, bourgeois cosmopolitanism and the notion of man."²⁵ The true, real foundation of humanist philosophical logic was the bourgeois economic kingdom. Marx continues: "Money is a necessary product of definite relations of production and intercourse and remains a 'truth' so long as these relations exist."²⁶ Furthermore, "rent of land, profit, etc., these actual forms of existence of private property, are **social relations** corresponding to a definite stage of production."²⁷ These were all attempts to confirm the historical nature of the political economic structure itself. In fact, it is not difficult for us to see that the discourse of political economy became at this time the **ontological discourse** with which Marx faced the world, even if this discourse was not yet complete at this time. On the other hand, although Marx had begun a new critique of bourgeois political economy, this critique was still just a logical refutation, because it had not yet received the support of the micro-structure of scientific research. *This predicament would continue until The Poverty of Philosophy, in which Marx follows and builds upon Ricardo. It was not until Grundrisse and Capital that Marx would truly complete his scientific criticism.*

Second, the new philosophical discourse that Marx built on the foundation of economic discourse came to pass with the "utter departure" from all metaphysics. This discourse was a completely new **real historical discourse**. I believe that there is a certain degree of difference between the philosophical logic of *The German Ideology* and the **philosophical starting point** of *Theses on Feuerbach*. As an overall, philosophical logical starting point, *Theses on Feuerbach* resolved a fundamental theoretical paradox using modern social practice, beginning to manifest the logical intentions of a new worldview, i. e., the context of history. On the other hand, *The German Ideology* directly begins to build this new historical context into a complete "historical science." In fact, this was no longer a resolution of the general philosophical basic questions of traditional philosophy. I believe that this is because the premise of *The German Ideology* moved beyond "philosophy."

In Marx's critique of Ruge, he clearly opposes the philosophers of his day in their "to [waving] [their] clumsy arms about and [displaying] [their] pedantic-farcical mask[s]."²⁸ Marx goes on to point out that "One has to 'leave philosophy aside,'²⁹ one has to leap out of it and devote oneself like an ordinary man to the study of actuality."³⁰ Departing from philosophical speculation and devoting oneself to the study of history as an ordinary man **in reality** was an important identification that Marx made as his premise. Under the influence of Hess, Marx had already come to realize a fundamental problem with Stirner's egoistical zealotry,

xingtai, pp. 127, 233, 254, 255, 461, 462, 465–466, 483).

²⁵*ibid.*, pp. 139–140 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, pp. 169–170).

²⁶*ibid.*, p. 183 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 221).

²⁷*ibid.*, p. 186 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 225).

²⁸*ibid.*, p. 216 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 262).

²⁹Stirner, "Recensenten Stirners," p. 187, cf. Hess, *Die letzten Philosophen*, p. 8.

³⁰Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 216 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 262).

which was that the movement from God to man, from logic to the species-essence of man, from self-consciousness to the sovereign activity, from the freedom and justice of democracy to communism, and even including Stirner's individuals and "nothing," if these concepts were understood only as metaphysical logical propositions, then they were nothing but the **professional** object of philosophers. Even if these premises change with the latest philosophical trends, even if they change concepts and categories, even if they are disguised with words such as practice, production, and "scientific socialism" (Hess), they all still **proceed from ideas and logic**. By this time, Marx had come to the following realization:

It is the old illusion that changing existing relations depends only on the good will of people, and that existing relations are ideas. The alteration of consciousness divorced from actual relations — a pursuit followed by philosophers as a profession, i. e., as a **business**, is itself a product of existing relations and inseparable from them. This imaginary rising above the world is the ideological expression of the impotence of philosophers in face of the world. Practical life every day gives the lie to their ideological bragging.³¹

Here we can see that Marx (and Engels) did not view themselves as traditional, old philosophers. Rather, their new philosophical worldview **proceeded from the social life and historical circumstances of "ordinary men" facing reality**. This break with past philosophers allowed Marx to truly break off the fetters that forced philosophers to search for the **ideal "other world"** existing behind things; these fetters had bound down philosophers since the Eleatic School. Marx returned from this "other world" to the world of true life. Of course, this was not merely the sensuous life of individuals in a Feuerbachian sense, but was rather the **real, historical, concrete** process of social life. The start of this foundation was, at the time, primarily economic life in "civil society," i. e., material production, economic exchange, and the division of labor. The philosophical thinking point with which Marx faced the world historically overlapped for the first time with the premise of classical political economy.

This shift allowed Marx to truly separate himself from the businesslike, philosophical "knights:" these philosophers "wisely refrain from examining division of labour, material production and material intercourse, which in fact make individuals subordinate to definite relations and modes of activity. For them it is in general only a matter of finding new phrases for interpreting the existing world."³² This is a great rupture in terms of philosophical logic. I believe Marx's new historical science based on economics and real history was historical materialism (*Historischer Materialismus*) and the historical dialectic. This was not the sum of any form of old philosophy (it was not, for instance, the sum of old materialism and the old dialectic), but rather a philosophical elevation of social historical circumstances

³¹Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, pp. 357–358 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 440).

³²*ibid.*, pp. 373–374 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, pp. 460–461).

themselves. This identification indicates that the practice in *Theses on Feuerbach* was not an old philosophical category, nor was it connected to humanism or old materialism. The concept of practice in Marx's new context had only one meaning, which was the real social material progress. Proceeding from practice thus meant proceeding from man's social material activity. The direct theoretical foundation here is not "metaphysical" philosophy, but rather political economy, based on modern industry and the reality of bourgeois society. Most importantly, Marx's historical discourse was a critical supersession of the social materialism in bourgeois political economy. The "history" in historical materialism and the historical dialectic is not **an identification of position in history, but rather an "ontological" identification.** *This is an important point that we will visit at the beginning of the next section.*

Finally, Marx's historical scientific discourse is extremely complex. I have already pointed out in my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic* that historical materialism can be divided into the **general** and **special** theories of historical materialism.³³ *In The German Ideology, Marx first established the general theory of historical materialism; it was not until Grundrisse that the special theory of historical materialism would finally be constructed. In The German Ideology, this latter line of critical logic only appears latently.* The general theory of historical materialism explains the primitive relations (philosophy in general) in the circumstances of social history within Marx's new worldview; in my opinion, this is Marx's philosophical re-construction of an economic latent premise. Obviously there is no **direct critique** here. However, in Marx's process of surpassing the social materialism of political economy, the most important step was the establishment of the scientific historical dialectic, i. e., the idea that the life of any person is a concrete, real existence under certain conditions of history. Furthermore, any external object can only be historically revealed in a certain historical context. Therefore, in the historical dialectic, there is no social existence that is eternal. Herein lies the utter and revolutionary nature of Marx's new worldview. In this sense, the essence of the general theory of historical materialism is critical. As for the special theory of historical materialism (Marx does not directly differentiate the two in his own texts), it is a philosophical discourse that more nearly aligns with real economic life and matches the development of contemporary capitalist economics. *Because he did not differentiate between the general and special theories of historical materialism, young Lukacs in his book History and Class Consciousness incorrectly views the entire theory of historical materialism as the "self-consciousness of capitalist society."*³⁴ Because of the constraints of history itself at the time, Marx's description at this time was nothing more than an insufficiently precise general explanation of Europe's economic social forms. The theoretical logic of the special theory of historical materialism implied **direct critique** from the beginning; this was a real critique of everything from the division of labor to the whole of bourgeois society's modes

³³See the preface of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

³⁴See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 312 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 312).

of production. Here Marx substitutes economic division of labor for philosophical alienation. Thus Marx attempts to derive the contradiction and opposition between real productive forces and relations of production; this will be the topic of our discussion in the third section of this chapter.

6.2 The Historical Existence and Essence of the New Outlook of Marxist Philosophy

Historical materialism has been the subject of much research and discussion for over a century and a half. However, we have never seriously wondered what the concept of “history” in Marx’s historical materialism really means. Many mistakenly believe that the historical qualification in Marx’s historical materialism carries the same meaning as it does in our common understanding of social history. Thus this piece of “common sense” that seemingly needs no proof was passed down for years. I have discovered that in seriously considering the internal, operating context of *The German Ideology*, i. e., in considering the original context of the development of Marx and Engels’ new worldview, the idea of “history” in the overall establishment of Marx’s philosophy was not simply a special social historical field, but rather implied a more important philosophical ontological qualification. This then implies that historical materialism was a comprehensive philosophical outlook and a new historical discourse, i. e., a historical science clearly identified by Marx and Engels themselves. Political economy constitutes the important base of this science.

6.2.1 The discourse and historical qualification of Marx’s “historical science”

On the fourth manuscript of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology* we find the following line of text: “We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable; the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist.”³⁵ The boundaries of Marx’s context here are very clear: “The only science is historical science. (*Wissenschaft der Geschichte*)” *In the manuscript of the first chapter, Marx did not directly use “historical materialism,” but he did identify in multiple places that this was a “historical theory” (Geschichtsauffassung) in opposition to idealism.* What is critical here is the meaning of historical science in this context. To arrive at this answer, instead of making abstract theoretical assumptions, we will first proceed with our analysis from the context of the text.

In the first paragraph of the first page of the first manuscript of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, Marx proposes an identification of history. In response to the subjective philosophical view of philosophers on the “liberation” of man (the liberation of man in the theological critique of Bauer and Feuerbach,

³⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, pp. 9–10).

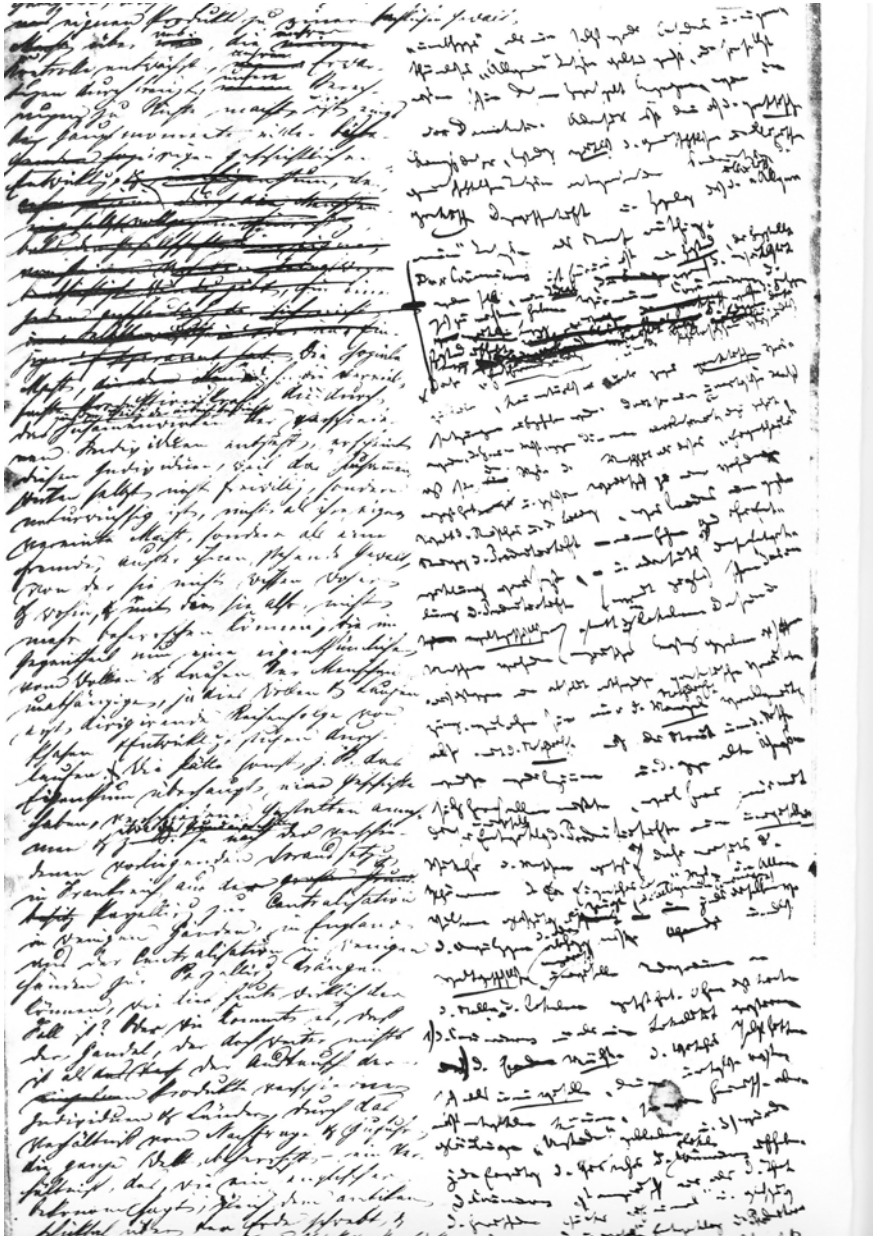


Figure 6.2: A facsimile of a page from the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*

as well as the “individual liberation” of Stirner’s critique of “species-philosophy”), Marx separates philosophical liberation from true liberation, i. e., **real** liberation (see the second marginal note on the first page). Marx points out that no matter how thorough a philosophical liberation may be (perhaps referring to Stirner’s almost nihilist “nothing”), “the ‘liberation’ of man is not advanced a single step... it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means.”³⁶ According to this definition, we can see that Marx’s real liberation is **the social practice formed by man’s sensuous material activity**. Thus Marx continues, giving an example:

Slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. “Liberation” is a historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse.³⁷

Thus, the idea of “history” (*Geschichte*) appears again for the first time in Marx’s new worldview. First, it is the concept of social historical **activity**, as opposed to mental activity. This is not the simple **continuity** of **substantive material** reality, but rather the real social life and process of development currently being generated by man’s practice. *Therefore, when the Western Marxist Sidney Hook’s view that the idea of history in Marx’s new philosophical outlook was not simply “everything that happened in the past” is basically correct.*³⁸ *Lukacs and Schmidt provide profound insight in their observation that the idea of history in Marx’s historical materialism is not an object that can be described, but rather is a concept that is constituted.*³⁹ It is widely known that a historical view was not the invention of Marx; in Germany, thinking on the development of history was an important element of philosophy from Johann Herder to Kant to Hegel. However, Marx discovered that German philosophers often used “history” and “historical” in a subjective manner however they wished, but that “they do not touch on reality.”⁴⁰ Marx’s “history,” on the other hand, directly implies the history of human social practice in reality. *Marx’s thinking here directly borrows from his earlier Theses on Feuerbach.*

³⁶Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, pp. 26–27 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 18).

³⁷Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Joseph Weydemeyer, *Die deutsche Ideologie*, Artikel, Druckvorlagen, Entwürfe, Reinschriftenfragmente und Notizen zu *I. Feuerbach* und *II. Sankt Bruno*, ed. Inge Taubert and Hans Pelger, Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 2003 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), p. 6 (Chinese transl.: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels [Ka’er Makesi, Fulidelixi Engesi 卡尔·马克思、弗里德里希·恩格斯], *Guanyu Fei’erbaha de tigang*, 关于费尔巴哈的提纲, trans. Zhonggong zhongyang Makesi Engesi Liening Sidalin zhuzuo bianyiju 中共中央马克思恩格斯列宁斯大林著作编译局 (Beijing 北京: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社 [People’s Press], 1988), p. 18).

³⁸See Hook, *Dui Ka’er Makesi de lijie*, p. 98.

³⁹See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 221) and Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi he jigou*, p. 31).

⁴⁰Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 22).

Second, history implies social **relations**. This does not refer to the situation and connections (*Beziehung*) of man's general existence, but rather to the **mediated** relations (*Verhältnis*) of "industry," "agriculture," "trade," and "intercourse." In fact, this is the relation between production and "economics," especially the social relations created by **modern** practice — industry. According to the context of *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx's idea of "history" here are primarily the historical circumstances **guided** by the human subject on the basis of industrial production, or, in other words, the new social existence created by man's material productive activity. This does not refer to the relation between man and nature in the natural economy before industry; there, man's existence was only as a **passive element** in the natural process that took place around him, **choosing** and **assisting** the natural material production of the ground. This means that the economics foundation qualified by Marx's "history" is not an agricultural society, nor even a mercantilist economy, but rather **the modern economic process of industry and based on industry of which classical economics approves**. This is the **first** time that large-scale industry created a new relation between man and nature, as well as a social existence, in which man occupies the dominant position. The subject of wealth is no longer the result of external nature ("natural wealth"), but is rather the direct result of man's activity ("social wealth"). Therefore, Marx's practice at this time is primarily the material productive activities of industry. *In his text On List, these activities are described as the practice that is abstracted and elevated from industrial forces*. The practice of industrial production is also a new material existence, man's **true social historical existence**. I believe that this "history" has been redefined according to Marx's "ontological" qualification. It is in this context that Germany is a country that has shown "very little historical development," or "insufficient historical development."⁴¹ Though Germany had a long historical existence in terms of agricultural production, it lacked the **modern** historical existence of modern industry, trade, and intercourse (exchange).

It is apparent that there was no place in any of the past philosophies (Hegel, Feuerbach, Stirner, and Hess) for this idea of "history" based on industrial practice. I must say that the context of Marx's "history" was supported by the results of his political economic research. This is the social materialist premise in the background of classical economics. *In this sense, young Lukacs is correct in his observation that the substantive truth of historical materialism and the truth of classical political economy are both of the same type.*⁴²

At this point, there are five pages missing from the first manuscript. Beginning at page 8, Marx directs his criticism towards Feuerbach. From page 8 until the end of page 10, Marx criticizes Feuerbach's philosophical **materialism**. In the last section of page 10, we can see that Marx emphasizes the point that "[for Feuerbach] materialism and history diverge completely."⁴³ In this same paragraph we find Marx's famous declaration that "As far as Feuerbach is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history he is not a materialist."⁴⁴ It is clear that this **relation of historical materialism** is extremely important.

⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 19).

⁴²See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 312 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 311).

⁴³Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 22).

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 22).

Past interpretations of this text have explained Marx's definition of Feuerbach here by suggesting that Feuerbach is materialist in his conception of nature but idealist in his conception of history. This also supposedly explains why Engels writes that Feuerbach is a "unfinished" materialist. I believe that this interpretation does not fully account for Marx's true context at this point in time. The key is what counts as understanding of any history. According to our interpretation above, Marx's historical qualification does not only imply the narrow field of social history, but also confirms, in the context of the philosophical noumenon, the historical progression formed by the progress of man's real historical practice. Therefore, the first aspect of Marx's critique here of Feuerbach's materialism attempts to explain how Feuerbach does not understand that in dealing with the material world, if it is man who faces natural material, he must "must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men."⁴⁵ This is, in other words, a natural existence mediated by certain social practices. Although Feuerbach recognizes the priority of natural material, this natural material is assumed to be directly attainable and unchangeable; Marx, on the other hand, emphasizes to us that the natural world **that man sees** is always **historical**. Young Lukacs exaggerates this point, writing that nature is a social category, thus resulting in an ontological transgression. Furthermore, a simple refutation of the "natural dialectic" becomes his logical necessity. This was not Marx's original intent; he was only trying to explain that since the advent of man, the objective natural object that enters the realm of practice can only be gradually **revealed** in accordance with man's historical circumstances. As we have already discussed, this was Marx's scientific resolution to Kant's proposition.⁴⁶ Thus Feuerbach's natural materialism is still historical idealism on a deeper level, because all sensuous material in the old materialist concept of nature is still a non-historical, subjective assumption.⁴⁷

Thus Marx is able to continue his critique of Feuerbach: "He does not see how the sensuous world around him is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations."⁴⁸ Here, the historically formed "sensuous world" around **man** replaces Feuerbach's imprecise, purely sensuous, general perceptual nature. It is evident that Marx is using **history** to re-qualify this natural materialist premise. This is because "Even the objects of the simplest 'sensuous certainty' are only given [us] through social development, industry and commercial intercourse."⁴⁹ To put it more broadly, the **representation** of any natural object in human historical circumstances is historical. This is a further resolution of Kant's proposition.

⁴⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 10).

⁴⁶See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 312 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 311).

⁴⁷Therefore when the traditional philosophical interpretive framework explains the idea of social existence in Marx's historical materialism using the abstract, non-historical, and objective concepts of geographical environment and population, it is actually still a form of historical idealism.

⁴⁸Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 20).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, pp. 32–33 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 20).

Marx goes on to ask, “where would natural science be without industry and commerce?” Even this pure natural science is “provided with an aim, as with its material, only through trade and industry, through the sensuous activity of men.”⁵⁰ On a deeper level, the natural science in the conception of nature is not the epistemological world of phenomena identified by Kant, nor is it Hegel’s made up, alienated façade, but is rather **nature existing under certain social circumstances** and mediated by human social practice. Of course, this does not mean that natural material will completely “melt into” practice.⁵¹ This means that any object that appears in human history can only be perceived by us **because of** certain social activity taking place at a certain period in time. Here we see an extremely important scientific definition, namely that although Marx’s historical materialism of course implied a historical conception of nature, Marx would not recognize an **abstract conception of nature separate from concrete historical circumstances** (such as, for instance, the ahistorical abstract conception of material in the traditional philosophical framework). This shows that the concept of “history” in Marx’s historical materialism is a **total** philosophical qualification.

The second aspect of Marx’s critique is that Feuerbach is idealist in his investigation of history (meaning primarily man’s existence). This does not mean that Feuerbach believes in the determinism of the idea as soon as he enters the realm of social history; he himself opposes Hegel’s view that man is the instrumental realization of the Idea, materialistically understanding man as having a “perceptual” objective existence. However, in Marx’s view, merely viewing man as an objectively existing “perceptual object” (population) is not enough. The more important aspect of man’s existence is perceptual **activity** (this is an addition to *Theses on Feuerbach*, which only explains that objects should be understood as perceptual activity), which is practical, social historical, material, active existence, as well as the particular living conditions and social relations created by this historical activity. It is precisely these particular social **relations** that form the historical essence of men in reality. *It is in this sense that Professor Sun Bokui was able to profoundly realize that the “material” in historical materialism did not refer to substantive existence, but rather to objective social activity and relations.* In Marx’s historical materialism, the subject of social existence does not refer to the material substantive objects discussed in the traditional philosophical interpretative framework, such as “geographical environment” and “population;” rather, it refers to practical **historical activity**. Thus practical historical activity becomes the foundation for both the natural world surrounding man, as well as for man himself. On this point, Engels writes:

So much is this activity, this unceasing sensuous labour and creation, this production, the basis of the whole sensuous world as it now exists, that, were it interrupted only for a year, Feuerbach would not only

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 33 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 21).

⁵¹Schmidt correctly points out this point, going on to conclude that as the conditions disappear which are needed for the objective form given to natural objects by practice, “artificial material” retreats towards natural material. See Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de ziran gainian*, p. 72).

find an enormous change in the natural world, but would very soon find that the whole world of men and his own perceptive faculty, nay his own existence, were missing.⁵²

In the critique of true socialism in the second volume of *The German Ideology*, Marx profoundly points out that “society [at any period of history] should not always have been a true image of nature.”⁵³ This is because “‘natural human affinity’ is a historical product which is daily changed at the hands of men; it has always been perfectly natural, however inhuman and contrary to nature it may seem, not only in the judgment of ‘Man,’ but also of a later revolutionary generation.”⁵⁴ Later, Marx wrote that Feuerbach’s mistake was in using idealist methods to make our surrounding perceptual world independent; he did not view the surrounding world as the product of particular, temporary periods of historical development. It is apparent that proceeding from labor activity, production, industry, and commerce to explain the world around us was a line of logic that could not have been derived from any of the prior philosophical materialist traditions. It was the direct result of Marx’s acknowledgement of the social materialist ideas in classical economics.

I would also like to point out that after Marx wrote *Manchester Notes* between July and August of 1845, he was profoundly influenced by the views of the Ricardian socialist economists, in particular their critique of bourgeois society based on real economic reform. Thus Marx was able to directly propose that his new worldview was based on a practical materialism that was built on historical reform. Marx writes: “For the **practical** materialist, i. e. the **communist**, it is a question of revolutionising the existing world, of practically attacking and changing existing things.”⁵⁵ This also means that another fundamental meaning of historical materialism is the historical objective change brought caused by human social practice. This is the true foundation for the comprehensive materialist historical dialectic. Therefore Marx continues his critique of the materialist philosophers who are similar to Feuerbach: “[They are compelled] to relapse into idealism at the very point where the communist materialist sees the necessity, and at the same time the condition, of a transformation both of industry and of the social structure.”⁵⁶ This means that merely giving precedence to objective existence in social life is still not historical materialism; the logic of historical materialism demands continuously objectively changing existing history.

However, this may lead readers to wonder if many of Marx’s views stem, to one degree or another, from the social materialism of classical economics, what

⁵²Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 33 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 21). As can be seen from the manuscript, the words in this portion of text were inserted into the margin by Engels. See also Hiromatsu, *Wenzianxue yujing zhong de “Deyizhi yishi xingtai”*, p. 19. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

⁵³Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 459 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 562).

⁵⁴*ibid.*, p. 464 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 567).

⁵⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 32 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 19).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 34 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 22).

exactly is his historical materialism? This is a crucial question. In the background discussion included in the first chapter of this book we studied the social materialism that existed in the latent philosophical framework of early political economy. Its three theoretical levels, from material production to the scientific abstraction of social economic relations, all identify the fundamental effect of non-sensuous social material conditions on ideas and other social life, within the realm of social history (the philosophical views of the Ricardian socialist economists did not surpass social materialism). To use the definition given by Marx in *The German Ideology*, “political economy, however, had already given expression to the fact that the chief relations of exploitation are determined by production in general, independently of the will of individuals, who find them already in existence.”⁵⁷ *Hegel’s philosophy simply repeats this logic using inverted objective idealism.* This important thought forms the premise of Marx’s new materialism.

However, I believe that first, the most important premise in bourgeois political economy is the qualification of “nature.” This “nature” has been the essence of all of bourgeois ideology since the Enlightenment; it assumes that after escaping the “man-made” oppression of feudal despotism, the living conditions of human society had transitioned into the state of existence most compatible with human nature. They did not realize that this so-called “nature” was nothing but the spontaneous expression of the economic activity of bourgeois society’s market economy. Their “nature” represented eternity; this is ahistorical and conforms to a given ideology. *Hegel refutes this point with his “second nature” qualification.*

Second, because of the first point, the social materialism of the bourgeois political economists necessarily inverted the dominance of economic forces over man and the relations between men brought on by particular particular bourgeois social relations into relations of exchange between things. They saw the general movement of society and the eternal developmental laws of human society as natural, thus forming a **bourgeois ideology centered on fetishism**. This means that on a deeper theoretical level, social materialism is still **historical** materialism. Thus Marx points out that for bourgeois political economists, though there was history in the past, once civilization enters bourgeois society, history comes to an end. Bourgeois political economists did not and could not see that the fundamental basis of human social existence was a **practical process that never ends, that refutes itself, that points to the future**. This is the genuine implication of the **historical existence** of human social life. This long-hidden historical truth was never truly discovered, never truly brought to light until Marx. It was based on this point that Marx created **historical** materialism and the **historical** dialectic, distinct from social materialism. It should be noted that although Ricardian socialist economists proposed the necessity of surpassing bourgeois social history, their refutation took place under the premise of acknowledging the existing economic modes of production and in demanding some economic realtions (especially relations of distribution). Thus their theories were not comprehensive either, and they were unable to truly separate themselves from the bourgeois ideology.

⁵⁷Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 391 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 483).

In short, the new materialism of *The German Ideology* is evidently not natural materialism (not even Feuerbachian philosophical materialism stripped of its mechanical properties), nor was it social materialism, which recognized the persistence of material conditions in the realm of social history; rather, it was a materialism based on Marx's own qualification of man's historical existence. This was the basic qualification of Marx's new philosophy: **historical** materialism. This was not a philosophy that used a new logical system, but rather one that used a new scientific method and historical discourse.⁵⁸ However, up to this point, this was only a logical identification by Marx; the fundamental difference between his new worldview and all the old philosophies (especially social materialism) still needed the concrete logic of a new historical discourse in order to be built. Marx provides a positive qualification and definition of history.

6.2.2 The four primitive relations of mankind's historical existence

The general construction of historical materialism in the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology* begins on page 11. According to my interpretation, this is the logical expression of the general theory of historical materialism. Here Marx uses the four **primitive relations** of human social existence to qualify history.

The first of these relations is the qualification that Marx refers to as the "first premise of all human history," "the first premise of history," and "the first act of history" (*die erste geschichtliche Tat*). This is the real, historical relation **between man and nature**. More specifically, this is the historically existing, first primitive relation: **production of material livelihood**. *This is where Marx adds his first marginal note: **history***. Marx writes that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history;" in order to live, men must first have food and drink, habitation and clothing. *Here Marx adds his second marginal note: "**Hegel**. Geological, hydrological, and other conditions. The human body. Demand, labor."* *It is my opinion that these notes were added by Marx later, because Hegel discussed the geological conditions of world history in his book Historical Philosophy. This addition was directly reflected in the fourth manuscript.* Marx writes:

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 a 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.⁵⁹

Compared with the **total** qualification of practice in *Theses on Feuerbach*, this qualification of production that appears in historical activity is more profound and more concrete on the level of its basic logical structure. Here Marx makes the point that the real starting point of the structure of social existence and the

⁵⁸Schmidt calls this the shift from system to history. See Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur*, pp. 49–50 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi he jiegou*, p. 45).

⁵⁹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 17 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbach*, p. 23).

progression of social history was material livelihood and production. *The Chinese scholar Xu Yirang noticed that in The German Ideology, Marx's philosophical line of thought transitions from practice to production. However, his critique of "practical materialism" based on this point is overly simple.*⁶⁰ Marx could not have based this point on any old philosophy; he could only have developed this thinking by confirming the first level of the modern social materialist philosophy in classical economics (specifically the philosophy after Petty and the physiocrats). However, Marx was the first to consciously elevate this important reality of human material subsistence to the level of philosophical universality. Of course, this does not mean that modern production is the foundation of history, but rather that Marx had discovered that the basis of all social existence was the dynamic relationship between man and nature. This kind of consciousness in terms of scientific logic was something that classical economics could not hope to attain. Therefore Marx writes: "In any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance."⁶¹ It is apparent that the fundamental qualification of this new historical discourse does not begin with philosophical speculation, but rather a kind of common sense that a child could understand. The beginning of the reality of human history is the production of material livelihood; this means that in order to create history, man must be able to live, and the first needs of living are the material conditions of eating, drinking, clothing, and habitation. In order to obtain these material conditions, man must create new living conditions differently from animals: this is material production. Because of this, the basic difference between man and animals is that man obtains his livelihood not by the ready use of natural material, but rather by creative, material production. **This is an eternal necessity of historical existence.** We can see that Marx's original qualification of history is first the **objective dynamism** of man. This is the **noumenon** and **foundation** of human existence. This is not the "I think therefore I am" of Descartes and Hegel, nor is it Feuerbach's "I perceive therefore I am;" rather it is "**We produce therefore history is!**" Of course, here Marx implies noumenon and foundation. At the same time, this is the materialist foundation of Marx's historical discourse. The foundational historical existence of man begins with objective material production, not with politics, laws, morality, or ideas. *Years later, Mao Zedong in his later years, as well as the "foundation pit" communists of the former Soviet Union forgot this point.*⁶² *This practical relationship of subsistence between man and material as later seen by Heidegger as the primitive relationship that was "being-in-the-world" as "Dasein" with the surrounding world present-at-hand.*

At this point, Marx once again cites the reality around him to conclude that because Germany had never provided an "**earthly** basis" for history, it consequently never had a historian. Marx's use of the term "historian" here obviously does not

⁶⁰Refer to Yirang Xu [徐亦让], *Rendao zhuyi dao lishi weiwu zhuyi*, 人道主义到历史唯物主义 [From Humanitarianism to Historical Materialism] (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe 天津人民出版社 [Tianjin People's Press], 1995), p. 184.

⁶¹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 17 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 23).

⁶²The *Foundation Pit* (1987) is a novel by Andrei Platonov. The landlords in the novel are "communists" who spend their time executing bourgeoisie and watching their fields grow weeds.

refer to the general meaning of the word, but rather to a historian who can truly face the reality of social economic production. In contrast, Marx directly points out that “the French and the English, even if they have conceived the relation of this fact with so-called history only in an extremely one-sided fashion, particularly as long as they remained in the toils of political ideology, have nevertheless made the first attempts to give the writing of history a materialistic basis by being the first to write histories of civil society, of commerce and industry.”⁶³ *I believe that here Marx actually directly identifies the true basis of historical materialism, which was the bourgeois **political economy** of France and England.* This declaration means that under the influence of ideology (“the toils of political ideology”), although bourgeois political economy was not clear on the historical place of the economic reality of bourgeois society, it had written the developmental history of bourgeois society (“the histories of civil society, commerce, and industry”). This “one-sided” historical description was an attempt to provide a materialist basis in truly facing history. Therefore, the social materialism of bourgeois political economy that gave precedence to economics (production) is the **refutational** foundation of historical materialism.

The second primitive relationship of history is the **reproduction** of material livelihood. Here Marx gives a **dynamic, process-oriented** reference to the primitive relations between man and material. Here Marx again mentions the “first act of history” (*erste geschichtliche Tat*), but this time it carries a dynamic, process significance of the “ontological” nature of history. He writes: “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 production of new needs is the first historical act.”⁶⁴ New needs are the historical result of production, but are only the internal needs that spur the smooth operation of production. The realization of these new needs forms the process of reproduction; of course, Marx’s use of “reproduction” is not the generally understood, simple reproduction, but rather the substantive development of production, which is formed by new needs created by tools. This implies that man’s historical existence implies an **internal time**. This time is not abstract continuity, but is rather formed by man’s concrete, immediate productive forces. *Writing on this point, Benjamin makes the point that the “history” of historical materialism is a structural subject. Its point of happening is not homogeneous, empty time, but rather time that is filled by immediate existence. This time is obtained by breaking abstract continuity.*⁶⁵ Thus Marx’s historical existence and time here occupy the same logical plane. *In the fourth manuscript Marx goes on to specifically explain his concept of time, as well as the limited dynamic existence of individual men in historical time. Heidegger’s Being and Time was constructed on this underlying ontological logic.* I have

⁶³Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, pp. 17–18 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 23).

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 23).

⁶⁵See Benjamin, quoted after *Benyaming sixiang xiaoxiang*, p. 210, and Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 57, p. 151). Georg Lukacs later said that “timelessness” is a methodological characteristic of bourgeois ideology. It is based on the reification of capitalist rationalized production in reality in which the life events of history are compressed and congealed into a kind of “space” of non-substantive things. This expression is extremely profound.

discovered that Marx's idea of **historical progression based on the reproduction caused by the new needs of tools** cannot be linked with any old philosophy. There could only have been one historical precedent for the historical process described by reproduction — political economy. Specifically, in the second part of *Brussels Notes* written by Marx between May and July 1845, he studied Gasparin's *Machines*, Babbage's *On The Economy of Machines and Manufactures*, and Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures*. Through the study of these political economic works and others, Marx profoundly realized that only advances in production based on a change of the instrumental system of the artisanal and industrial economy were the foundation of historical time. This idea that **production time constructs the essence of the material production of human society and the economic process** was a truer historical time than Idea time, political time, or literature time.

Having written to this point, Marx "surveys" the "German ideology" that surrounded him. The procedural nature of history was an internal tradition of the cultural thinking of modern Germany. However, Marx points out that because the most real foundation of the procedural nature of history was steadily advancing material production, the essence of the German "great historical wisdom" was false. The history of which they wrote was nothing more than a theological, political, and cultural idea postulate. In Marx's opinion, the German "historical speculation" had not been able to truly transition to "true history."

The third primitive relationship of history that Marx identifies is the production of **men themselves**. Although material production was the real starting point of human history, it is not the direct purpose for the existence of human society. Production occurs in order to maintain "man's livelihood," in order that he may live; as such, **the production and reproduction of the human subject himself**, which also is a foundational relationship that exists historically, forms the third aspect of production ("relations"). Marx writes that man's production occurs when people who reproduce their own lives everyday start to produce other people, i. e., propagate. Here, man's production includes two elements: the first is the natural production process of the human subject itself, and the second are the natural relations between subjects ("inter-subject" links). *This is the starting point of Heidegger's "Mitsein."* The material production that we discussed earlier refers to the relation between **man and material**; here we see **relations between people** in human production. In Marx's opinion, the relations between people were **social** relations from the start. This is the essence of the historical existence of man that surpasses the animal world. Man's natural production takes place through birth; man's subjective relationship starts with man's nature (blood relations).

The relation between man and woman, parents and children, the family. The family, which to begin with is the only social relationship (*das einzige soziale Verhältnis*), becomes later, when increased needs create new social relations and the increased population new needs, a subordinate one.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 24).

On the one hand, the family was the earliest unit of production. In the earliest of human history, man's production became the dominant element and material production was subordinate. However, as production itself developed, this state of affairs changed quickly. *Marx and Engels would provide a more detailed analysis and scientific explanation of this relation of production many years later.* On the other hand, Marx had already noticed the historical shift from family relations to new social relations.

At this point in his writing, Marx specifically notes that this is the third **aspect** of social historical activity, and not the third stage. "These three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages, but just as three aspects or, to make it clear, three 'moments,' which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today."⁶⁷ According to Marx's qualification, the progression of history is composed of the three aspects of the two forms of production operating together. Marx calls this total **historical qualification** man's "production of life."

From the text we can see that after completing the theoretical definition of the three primitive relationships of history, Marx immediately **conducts a further scientific abstract of the historical production qualification.** Here he identifies the essence of the two types of production as two important relationships: whether it is production that completes its own life through labor or production that completes another's life through procreation, "[they both] now appear as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship."⁶⁸ The two types of production **simultaneously appear as** two relationships. In material production, one aspect is the historical natural relationship between man and material, and the other aspect is that this production was always formed through the mutual activity of men. This is, again, the historical inter-personal social relationship. In man's own production, one aspect is the historical, natural blood relationship between men, and the other aspect is the historically formed social relations between men. Marx views the subject of social existence as **non-substantive** historical activity centered on production; the **essence** of social existence is **relationships**, a result that returns Hegel and Feuerbach to social economic reality. At the same time, we know that in the study of social existence, more deeply observing the invisible but objectively existing laws that govern social relations and social movements is another scientific abstract contribution of political economy. Marx's originality here manifests itself in his abstracting essence (the "One") from new economics in reality (the "Many"). However, this philosophical revolution does not proceed from the rational abstract of the Eleatic School to Platonian and Hegelian metaphysics, but rather towards the depths of historical reality. *Heidegger's "Dasein" (already in material) and "Mitsein" both begin from this point. The happening of "Dasein" is the relation between man and nature, i. e., production realized through labor. "Dasein" in the world is also "Mitsein," i. e., the relations between people. This "being-in-the-world" is the foundation of the overthrow of metaphysics.*

⁶⁷Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 24).

⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 24).

Here I must point out that the most important qualification of Marx's historical materialism was not only that he fundamentally grasped the essential points of political economy's social materialism, but also his scientific theoretical abstraction of social relations. For Marx, modern social relations were not the **fetishisms of bourgeois political economy that canonized objectified economic relations**, but rather **social relations as historical essential qualifications**. Here, this primarily refers to the "co-operation of many men" in the modern productive process. Marx quickly explains his important qualification: first, "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 (*Produktivkraft*).'" In other words, productive forces are a form of co-operation, and modes of production are always historical. Second, "the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society, hence, that the 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange." In other words, the level of social productive forces determines the basic nature of social existence. Third, "it is quite obvious from the start that there exists a materialistic 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.'"⁶⁹ This "history" is the structural process of change of man's social relations determined by particular modes of production.

After a long process in which Marx blazes a new theoretical trail, the underlying context of Marx's historical qualification is directly revealed here. For the first time after *Theses on Feuerbach*, in the first manuscript of *The German Ideology* Marx uses the key term "certain" (*bestimmt*) three times in close succession. *In our previous discussion, we saw that the concept "certain" also formed the central historical context of Theses on Feuerbach.* I believe that this "certain," which implies a historical context limited by time and space, separates Marx's historical materialism from all prior metaphysical philosophy, and also allows his new worldview to truly surpass the social materialism of political economy. Marx sets Hegel's historical concreteness and theory of "definite existence" (this "definite existence" became the starting point for all of existence in Heidegger's system) as the most important **essential point** and **sole starting point** of historical materialism. I summarize this as **historical, real, concrete social existence**. Natural phenomena and all the social and mental activity of the human subject are all re-confirmed on this point. *Therefore Hook, who worked within the context of Western Marxism, is correct in his observation that history in Marx's new philosophical worldview was not formed from an entire piece of cloth, but rather created under certain limited conditions.*⁷⁰ Furthermore, this special historical context is not abstract or empty, but rather, to use Marx's qualification, it is based on productive activity formed by certain individuals and in a certain way. *In the fourth manuscript, Marx confirms this essential point from the perspective of individuals in reality.* Where the three previous primitive relations discuss material productive activity, what Marx de-

⁶⁹*ibid.*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'er baha*, pp. 24–25).

⁷⁰See Hook, *Dui Ka'er Makes de lijie*, p. 58.

scribes here is **a deterministic element that forms certain productive activities** and that is abstracted from productive activity: **certain** modes of production. Marx writes in a marginal note that men have history because they must produce their own lives, and this they must do using **certain** methods.⁷¹ This implies that men collectively form certain modes (structures) of productive activity, and this **certain, ordered structure**, to a “certain” degree, forms the essence of this historical context. Marx concisely points out that “the method of this co-operation is, itself, ‘productive force.’”

This is the first time that we encounter the important qualification of **productive force** in Marx's new historical discourse. There are two levels of meaning to why Marx puts the words “productive force” in quotations. First, Hess had used a similar form of expression, and second, He confirms, for the first time, List's use of productive force in the context of economics. However, Marx's use of the term here is completely new. First, Marx writes here that co-operation is productive force, which evidently no longer has the same meaning as Hess' general “species” exchange (intercourse). Rather, Marx refers to the certain objective structure of collective productive labor that forms in material production. Second, Marx's productive force is not what List broadly identifies as social creative force, but rather is specifically placed as a structural utilitarian element in material production, i. e., man's certain **historical practical utility towards natural relations**.⁷² This means that the productive forces that Marx qualifies in historical materialism are the expression of certain levels of productive force. Therefore, productive force is a **utilitarian** qualification, i. e., the degree, strength, and level of certain modes or structures of production in their actual operation. *This shows that the traditional philosophical interpretive framework is incorrect in its assertion that Marx explains the three substantial aspects of the process of labor (the worker, tools, and objects) in order to substantively identify forces of production.*

As a matter of fact, Marx further qualifies man's historical existence on the deepest level of actual life in his new theoretical logic. As such, he immediately goes on to point out that the sum of the productive forces attained by human social history determines **social circumstances**. These historical circumstances form the fourth element of what Marx identifies as the primitive relations of history: the historical totality. In the three previous relationships, Marx abstracts modes of production and productive forces, identifying them as the noumenon that determines the characteristics of the essence of the social totality. Therefore, we must study and investigate “human history” only in conjunction with the history of industry and exchange. At the same time, the inter-human relations that happen in history are material relationships. These relationships are not “species-essence,” because man's exchange is determined by “need and modes of production,” i. e., determined by more fundamental productive forces. The history of man's relations and the history of man himself are equally long. The relation between the two continuously changes into new forms, appearing as what man can see to be “history.”

⁷¹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 25, margin note).

⁷²See my related articles: “Shijian gongnengdu,” “Shijian geju” and “Shijian gouxu.”

Marx noted that Germans were unable to write this “history.” Because in Germany there was no history constructed from large-scale industry or commerce (modern productive forces), because there had never been this kind of history on “this side of the Rhine,” there could not be historical “perceptual certainty” or experience. This caused the philosophical warriors of the “German ideology” to “lack the ability and materials to correctly understand history.”⁷³

In confirming the four aspects of the primitive relations of history, Marx writes that “we discover that man still has ‘consciousness.’” Because I have already discussed the theory of consciousness in Marx’s historical materialism, we will not conduct specific analysis of this point here.⁷⁴ I will simply point out the most critical point, which is that Marx believed that consciousness “has no history, no development.”⁷⁵ By this, Marx did not mean that consciousness really did not have its own process of development, but rather that it was “without entity.” **To not have history means not having a beginning.** This can be thought of as Marx’s scientific resolution to a basic question of philosophy.

6.2.3 Individuals in reality and historical existence

Where Marx in the first manuscript confirms mankind’s (“people’s”) historical existence using the **objective social totality**, he changes perspective in the rewritten fourth manuscript, conducting a general logical construction of history for the first time from the perspective of human **individuals** (“individuals in reality”). I believe that this shift from the objective dimension of the historical dialectic to the subjective dimension was made after considering the reasonableness of Stirner’s critique of “species-philosophy.”

Unlike his emphasis in the first manuscript that German philosophers had ignored the overall historical reality that centered on industry and commerce, here Marx writes that the real premise forgotten by the German philosophers is that “they are the real individuals (*die wirklichen Individuen*), their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, Marx specifically explains that these premises can be verified using **purely empirical methods**. I believe that there are three levels of meaning in this theoretical context: first are individuals in reality. This is a further definition of the historical existence whose essence is industry discussed in the first manuscript, because industry and commerce are not sacred things **separate from man**, neither is historical existence abstract human existence. Rather it is living, real individuals that make up the true subject of history. Second, “real individuals” does not refer to their physical existence, but rather primarily to their material life-activity, especially the fact that man’s material productive activity forms the foundation of individual existence. Third is the **new existence** that was inherited by this activity, created by conditional material life-conditions and men operating under these conditions.

⁷³*ibid.*, p. 19 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 25).

⁷⁴See my article: “Wo dui wo huanjing de guanxi shi wode yishi.”

⁷⁵*ibid.*, p. 16 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 16).

⁷⁶*ibid.*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 10).

Of these, the third point is what Marx defines in individual existence circumstances as the essence of historical existence. This is still the “certain” historical qualification: individuals in reality always encounter certain material conditions of existence. Therefore: “individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people’s imagination, but as they **really are**; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.”⁷⁷ The individuals that Marx emphasize here as operating under definite historical conditions are certainly different from the unconditional, absolutely free individuals that Stirner idealizes; rather, they are individuals in real historical circumstances. Unlike the individual perceptual passivity stemming from natural material described by Feuerbach, this is a passivity and constraint that originates from the material living conditions of history. More specifically, the existence of each individual will never be able to escape “productive forces, capital funds and conditions” under certain conditions of history.⁷⁸ These qualify the real basis of “man’s essence” in every historical age. They will forever be the certain historical essence of all of man’s existence. More importantly, another critical level of Marx’s explanation here of historical subsistence is that men in every age **create** their own history under certain historical conditions. *This point was not consciously identified by Marx in the historical qualification in the first manuscript. However, as an internal qualification of historical subsistence, production itself is creation. Thus, as Marx uses the changes in tools and modes of production to explain the advance of history, he is also explaining the creative essence of mankind’s historical subsistence.* Here Marx appears to directly define the definite **historical** creativity of individuals in **historical** subsistence. Marx writes: “At each stage [of history] there is found a material result: a sum of productive forces, a historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another, which is handed down to each generation from its predecessor; a mass of productive forces, capital funds and conditions, which, on the one hand, is indeed modified by the new generation, but also on the other prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite development, a special character.”⁷⁹ Therefore:

History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity.⁸⁰

It is evident that the historical subsistence of which Marx speaks is not simple **linear continuous time**, but rather a **historical time that sublates the past into itself, while simultaneously creating the present and moving towards the future.**

⁷⁷Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 15 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 15).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, pp. 27–28 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 37).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, pp. 27–28 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 37).

⁸⁰*ibid.*, pp. 27–28 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 32).

I have observed that Heidegger's concept of time was born from Marx's conception of time. Sartre's Critique of the Dialectical Reason also seems to discuss the issue of man's creative subsistence under certain conditions of history.

I should also point out that Marx's discussion of individuals in reality and historical subsistence was influenced by the history of economic development in political economy. Without this influence, the premise of productive forces and capital (which are different expressions of the concepts of accumulation and "prepayment" in the economic field of reproduction) could not have entered the scope of Marx's historical discourse. What's more, the idea of using purely empirical methods to verify truth was a direct copy of Petty and McCulloch's description of the "science" of political economy. Of course, we will soon see that in the concrete qualification of human historical subsistence, Marx's historical materialism vastly surpasses the social materialism of classical economics.

Next, the fourth manuscript conducts a concrete logical verification of historical subsistence, which takes men in reality as its standard. Marx writes that the first premise of all the history of mankind is undoubtedly the existence of living individuals. *This is obviously different from the explanation in the first manuscript. In his discussion of the first primitive relation in the first manuscript, Marx makes a marginal note indicating that the physical existence of individuals and natural conditions make up the first premise (this is the premise of old materialism).* Of course, Marx immediately continues his definition; his human historical subsistence does not refer to man's natural existence or the general relationship between man and nature: "The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men."⁸¹ Of course, this is a positive definition of natural existence and natural man, which Feuerbach took for perceptual objects and which Marx criticized in the first manuscript. He here writes that in terms of meaning, natural physical existence as population and geographical environment as natural conditions are not the social existence of human history. Of course, this is not to say that population and geographical environment are not the material basis of human social subsistence, but rather that it is man and natural conditions, which exist as the **result of production** and which proceed from the change that results from human activity in the progression of history, which are the **direct** material basis of social existence.

Proceeding from the subsistence of individuals in reality, how are we to view the internal rules of history? Marx answers by referring to the current "German ideology:" "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like." He writes this because Feuerbach and Bauer differentiated men from animals using human emotional relationships and alienated religion, while Stirner used egoism devoid of all rational species-totality to qualify individuals. None of these views were able to depart from the tradition of old philosophy that attempted to idealistically explain man from the level of ideas and illusions. In Marx's historical discourse, "They themselves [men] begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erba*, p. 10).

of subsistence (*Lebensmittel*), a step which is conditioned by their physical organization."⁸² *Please note that the production of "means of subsistence," which is directly connected to individual subsistence, is a precise economic term. The earliest production of man is the production of **means of subsistence** and not the production of **means of production**. Such a scientific conclusion could only be reached by an expert in economics, especially one in social economic development.*

Marx's qualification of historical subsistence is not some abstract species-essence which man ought to have (such as Feuerbach's natural species-essence, Hess' *a priori* "intercourse," and Marx's free, sovereign labor in the *1844 Manuscript*), but is rather production that begins as man historically departs from animal existence (motivated by "physically organized" animals). The social historical existence of mankind **appears historically** through production in reality at a definite stage of material development. We see again that Marx's shift to the standard of individual subsistence in reality — historical existence — begins with the production of man's material means of subsistence. Obviously, the "history" that he uses here is not the history of general material development, but rather a special existence of human social history. This is the original meaning of human historical social existence. Unlike the first manuscript, Marx does not directly use such modern qualifications as "industry" or "commerce" here to directly identify production; so doing allows him to truly abstract the idea of **production in general** in the general theory of historical materialism.

In my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*, I explained that using production to qualify history confirms that men will no longer, as animals, directly take from mother nature (direct natural dependence); rather, through the medium of production (practice), they obtain the means of subsistence that they need. This includes the changes to the foundation of nature that take place because of the activity of man in the progression of history (at the same time, this causes nature to lose its care-free, easy nature and makes it a new material condition of human subsistence). More importantly, the "material living conditions created by human activity" continuously expand and gradually come to occupy a dominant position. Men are no longer subservient to the care-free totality of natural process, but rather, because of productive activity itself, "indirectly produce their own material life itself."⁸³ It must be understood that in the early stages of human happening, social history was not constructed directly or consciously, but rather happened naturally. As such, the use of the word "indirectly" by Marx and Engels here is quite precise; it significantly implies the primitive state of historical subsistence. It was historical production that allowed man to depart from the animal (natural) world; it was because of production that human social historical subsistence was radically transformed. It was because of historical production that men developed extra-sensory tools of social intercourse that animals did not have (Hegel's abstract consciousness and language); that they developed religion, which belonged to human social life (Bauer); and that they developed all the other "species-essences" unique to man (Feuerbach and Hess). Here,

⁸²Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbach*, p. 10).

⁸³*ibid.*, p. 10 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbach*, p. 10).

Marx sarcastically mentions Stirner, because he “eats” world history every day, he is produced everyday by world history; it produces the “unique” which is his product, because he must eat, drink, wear clothes, etc.⁸⁴ This means that without material production, Stirner could not truly exist, much less exercise his theoretical zealotry. Thus Marx is able to conduct fundamental, historical criticism of the “German ideology.” *Of course, this is only a starting point of critical logic; the entire main text of The German Ideology is this critique’s concrete process of realization.*

Through this historical qualification, Marx attempts to demonstrate to us that man is truly a concrete, real individual, but that the overall qualification of man is not the characteristics of individuals, but rather a new collective life formed historically by material production. Man is the subject, but only men linked to social life are historical, real, concrete men; the reason man is able to be established as a historical subject, is the **social** productive activity that he builds himself. This is the reason why Marx begins to use the plural form “men” to explain production.

Marx’s use of production to define individuals, as well as his use of production to explain the historical subsistence of mankind, is obviously a general qualification that belongs in the early stages of social existence. On the surface, this qualification does not appear to surpass the social materialist theory that production is the basis of all; however, in reality, Marx does not simply regard production from the perspective of its chaotic totality, because all productive practice is concrete and orderly. It is the **functional** expression of the internal, structural organization and dynamic state of particular production. This refers to **modes of production** (*Produktionsweise*), the essence of certain historical subsistence. These, in turn, are what Marx referred to as the means by which men produce their own livelihood in social productive activity. These modes of production “depend first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce”; at the same time, it is related to “the production of the physical existence of the individuals,” but more importantly, modes of production are “a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite **mode of life** (*Lebensweise*) on their part.”⁸⁵ Thus we see that on one hand, the orderly structure of production is determined by material livelihood and the historical characteristics of man’s production itself: this is the historical premise of the two types of production that we discussed earlier. On the other hand, modes of production more clearly brought to light the **new orderliness** of the subjective activity of men in creating social history, an orderliness which is also the historical creativity of human subsistence. Therefore Marx summarizes, writing that man’s existence is one with production, and this unity is not external conformity, but rather internal productive **orderliness**; this is the productive force of which Marx wrote in the first manuscript. It refers to the productive power and level of production that what and **how** to produce. Digging deeper, we once again see the original meaning of the qualification of history of the critically important concept of “definite” productive activity that Marx used in the first manuscript.

⁸⁴Marx, Engels, and Weydemeyer, *Feuerbach*, p. 12 (Chinese transl.: Marx and Engels, *Fei’erbaha*, p. 33, note 2).

⁸⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, pp. 10–11 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, pp. 10–11).

It is these modes of production that form in human activity that historically constrain men, constraining also all life and relations of social intercourse (including exchanges of ideas) that take place outside productive activity. The sum of all the particular social relations that are constrained by definite modes of production form the essence of concrete, real, and historical man. I believe that this was the most important confirmation of the logical essence of the historical discourse in Marx's new philosophical outlook that he made himself. This was also the first time that he gave a general description of the historical existence of mankind, thus replacing the necessary premise of the humanist alienation conception of history to which he previously subscribed. However, the important significance of this point has been greatly veiled by the traditional research into historical materialism.

It is well known that as a communist and practical materialist, Marx was not interested in a general description of history, but rather concentrated on theoretical critique of real bourgeois society. However, I must point out that in terms of general theoretical logic, this confirmation of general historical materialism did not contain direct critical elements. For this, Marx would have to search out another new critical logic; the critique of the division of labor established on "empirical science."

6.3 Division of Labor and Real World History: A Real, Critical Discourse in Economics

In our discussion in the last section, we primarily revealed the implications of the basic principles of Marx's new historical discourse. This discourse is the general logic of the general theory of historical materialism. In fact, if we closely read the text of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, it is not difficult for us to see that there is another line of theoretical thought separate from the general philosophical expression that we have already discussed. This is the real critique of bourgeois society's system of ownership, proceeding from the division of labor and based on the developmental history of European economics. This is a scientific critical discourse that directly originates from Marx's preliminary affirmation of economics; at the same time, it is the direct theoretical basis for the construction of the special theory of historical materialism. I have noticed that this theoretical level has been largely neglected by past studies of Marxist philosophy.

6.3.1 The role of the division of labor in Marx's scientific critical discourse

As we have already seen, in Marx's process of constructing his new historical materialist worldview, both the first and fourth manuscripts began with a general logical setup to demonstrate the heterogeneity between the new Marxist philosophical outlook and that of old philosophy; this was an "ontological" confirmation of historical social existence. However, I have discovered that this general philosophical theoretical setup separate suddenly and markedly in both manuscripts, and what appears is a direct description of real history. Furthermore, unlike the first,

noncritical theoretical expression, Marx's historical exposition here directly transfers into a new scientific empirical critique. For convenience here, we will refer to the first theoretical exposition as "line of thought 1," and the second critical logic as "line of thought 2." *This is, in fact, a concrete identification of what Professor Yao Shunliang referred to when he wrote that philosophical and scientific criticism was more or less separate.*⁸⁶ In "line of thought 2," Marx introduces a new theoretical perspective through the use of a question form: the division of labor. The division of labor replaces the alienation qualification in his original humanist discourse. Alienation is a qualification of **philosophical logic**, while the division of labor is a **scientific, empirical concept**. *Soviet scholar Nikolai Lapin correctly points out that Marx removes completely the façade of philosophy, and studies comprehensively the problems of the division of labor and its social consequences. However, he incorrectly identifies this as the "second stage" of the writing of the first chapter, not realizing that this was really "line of thought 2" that appears in the logical ruptures of both the first and fourth manuscripts.*⁸⁷ It is evident that this shift takes place on a micro-level. Of course, we will see later that Marx's thinking on the division of labor was still somewhat insufficient.

The concept of the division of labor (*Arbeitsteilung*) could not be found in any past philosophy, because it was first a category of contemporary political economy. Specifically, it was the base of Smith's economics research. For Smith, the division of labor, as the division of tasks in an artisanal factory, was linked to productivity and exchange. In general, early bourgeois political economy held a positive opinion of the division of labor. Although Smith and other political economists noticed the one-sidedness of workers caused by the division of labor, they did not derive direct, fundamental criticism, lacking in particular a general critique of actual social history. After divorcing himself from the logic of humanism, Marx tended to base his thought on empirical science. Thus after conducting a general philosophical proof of historical materialism, he hoped that the essence of his new philosophy would not simply describe the world, but truly change the world. Criticism was always his primary theoretical objective. However, moving away from the logical essential inversion (the humanist alienation conception of history) of the humanist value critique, he returned, in the context of economics, to the line of thought that he refuted in the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*: Engels' **objective description that proceeded from economic logic itself** (this was the second discourse in the first notebook of the *1844 Manuscript*). Therefore Marx no longer focused on the loss and return of man's species-essence or the logical contradiction of humanity and inhumanity from a philosophical perspective, but rather returned to the **objective opposition and contradictions** brought on by actual social economic life, especially concrete material production. This new scientific critique of reality is fundamentally different from his humanist abstract value critique, both in terms of starting point as well as overall logic. *On this point Michel Foucault provides keen analysis. He writes that Marx emphasizes the fact that the conditions and basic principles of capitalist production lead to unhappiness. The purpose of capitalism*

⁸⁶Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 123.

⁸⁷Lapin, *Molodoj Marks*, pp. 301–302 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de qingnian shidai*, p. 336).

*is not to allow workers to go hungry; but if it does not allow workers to go hungry, it cannot develop. Marx uses analysis of production to replace his condemnation of exploitation.*⁸⁸ *The critique of reality revealed through the objective analysis of production is completely different from the moral condemnation of exploitation based on values.* Given Marx's level of understanding of economics at the time, he directly concludes that all the contradictions in social economic life are **all** caused by the division of labor. This is obviously imprecise. *In Manchester Notes, Marx records the views of Owen and others, who called for the destruction of the division of labor. However, unlike them, Marx's views directly proceed from economics.* As such, **the division of labor becomes the starting point of the second critical line of thought.** More specifically, the concept of the division of labor is developed before the theoretical exposition of the fifth manuscript. Using the idea of the division of labor, Marx derives a historical critical of actual society, i.e., the **historical critique** of the four forms of ownership that include bourgeois society.

I must add that Marx's understanding of of economic division of labor had not progressed beyond the level of Smith's artisanal division of labor. As such, most of his analysis is flawed; it is neither profound nor precise enough. For instance, Marx was unable to correctly differentiate between the historical advent of the division of labor in **society** versus **[collective] work**. The concept that he uses here is a **purely philosophical** category. *It was not until The Poverty of Philosophy that Marx correctly differentiated between the two. Marx's scientific resolution to the problem of the division of labor was not truly accomplished until the economics research that took place after 1857. By that time, he was able to more fully differentiate social division of labor and the division of labor in firms, scientifically pointing out that the division of labor under conditions of public ownership and natural communities did not lead to "alienation." Only the special social division of labor in a commodity (market) economy would lead to the inversion and "alienation" of social relations. It is, of course, extremely important that our research pay close attention to this point.*

Let us next analyze how Marx derives the problem of the division of labor. Returning to the text of the first manuscript, after Marx explains the three non-"ontological" elements of history — the birth and development of consciousness — the concept of the division of labor seems to appear without any prior warning. The emergence of the division of labor in the text immediately changes Marx's **general philosophical logical exposition** (logical line of thought 1) to an **empirical critique that directly faces real history** (logical line of thought 2). Because this line of thought was still constrained by the limits of Marx's historical knowledge and level of economics research, this attempt to directly face real history still carries an element of guessing. Marx's second line of thought emerges from the historical development of consciousness itself. As "consciousness of the immediate sensuous environment," consciousness at first was merely the "limited connection" between men and between men and animals in early social history. Later, as

⁸⁸Michel Foucault [Mixie'er Fuke 米歇尔·福科], *Quanli de yanjing*, 权力的眼睛, trans. Yan Feng 严锋 (Shanghai 上海: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社 [Shanghai People's Press], 1997), pp. 37–38.

production developed, “tribal consciousness receives its further development and extension.”⁸⁹ Marx’s description of consciousness here is already different from the general definition that he gives earlier of the circumstances of human historical subsistence; he cites real historical development as a reference, i. e., the concrete changes of consciousness itself on the basis of production. At this point, Marx’s line of thought abruptly shifts: “With these there develops the division of labor.” His use of the words “with these” indicates an objective description of real history. In Marx’s understanding, the division of labor “was originally nothing but the division of labor in the sexual act, then that division of labor which develops spontaneously or ‘naturally’ by virtue of natural predisposition (e. g. physical strength), needs, accidents, etc. etc. Division of labor only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears.”⁹⁰ The former is natural division of labor, while the latter is a major aspect of social division of labor. The division of labor creates a new possibility: “The **division of labor** implies the possibility, nay the fact that intellectual and material activity — enjoyment and labour, production and consumption — devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labour.”⁹¹ Thus Marx points out that the division of labor creates the **objective contradiction** between the three elements of productive forces, the state of society, and consciousness. In other words, “the only possibility of their [the three elements] not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labor.”⁹² It is obvious that Marx’s analysis here is not very precise, because as a mode of operation on the level of technology of productive forces, the division of labor could not be negated. More precisely, what Marx wants to negate is social division of labor, which leads to the **slave labor** that binds down mankind, i. e., the division of labor among workers. This shows uncertainty in Marx’s early use of economics categories. *Marx would gradually become clearer on these questions in his later economics research.* At this time, Marx believed that the division of labor entailed the following characteristics:

First, the division of labor causes the unequal distribution of labor and products, thus leading to the system of ownership. Marx writes that based on “the natural division of labor in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another,” this division of labor itself implies contradiction. Because the division of labor in the family is really the enslavement of wife and children by the husband, this “household slave system” conforms completely to the definition of ownership (**the private system**) in modern economics. Modern economists refer to this system as “the power of disposing of the labor-power of others.”⁹³ Thus Marx comes to the following conclusion: “Division of labor and private property are, moreover, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the

⁸⁹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 20 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 26).

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 26).

⁹¹*ibid.*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 27).

⁹²*ibid.*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 27).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 28).

product of the activity.”⁹⁴ This is the connection between the division of labor and the “first evil thing” (the private system).

Second, the development of the division of labor leads to the contradiction between the interests of individuals (or individual families) and the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another. This communal interest, or “general thing,” first of all objectively exists in reality as the “mutual interdependence of the individuals among whom the labor is divided.” As an independent form which represents the “common interest,” **countries** symbolize a kind of “illusory” general interest (behind which is fought out the real battles between the classes). In things like state and law, the ruling class makes “its own interest the general interest.”⁹⁵ In real individual subsistence, this general thing is “alien” and “independent” of individuals; it is in opposition to individuals. This is the second “evil thing.”

Third, the “fixation of social activity” that is the division of labor necessarily leads to the **material enslavement** of social existence. This is the third and most evil thing. Marx writes that as long as man exists in naturally formed society (*naturwüchsige Gesellschaft*), as long as there is conflict between individual and general interest, as long as the division of labor is not voluntary (Owen's view) but is historically and spontaneously generated, “man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him.”⁹⁶ This is because after the division of labor comes into being, “Each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood.”⁹⁷ In this kind of social development, Marx explains that “this fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now.”⁹⁸ *In the later third chapter, Marx more precisely defines this external force as production relations that are “the true basis of all real property relations”; however, “within the division of labor these relations are bound to acquire an independent existence over against the individuals.”*⁹⁹ *In other words, within certain modes of production that do not depend on will, there are always alienated, actual powers that rule over men but are not dependent on either dispersed individuals or the sum of individuals. Under these conditions, “The transformation of the individual relationship into its opposite, a purely material relationship, the distinction of individuality and fortuity by the individuals themselves, is a historical process, as we have already shown, and at different stages of development it assumes different, ever sharper and more*

⁹⁴Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 27).

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 27).

⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 27).

⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 29).

⁹⁸*ibid.*, pp. 22–23 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 29).

⁹⁹Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 342 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 421).

*universal forms. In the present epoch, the domination of material relations over individuals, and the suppression of individuality by fortuitous circumstances, has assumed its sharpest and most universal form.”*¹⁰⁰

Why is this the case? Marx explains:

The social power, i. e., the multiplied productive force (*Produktionskraft*), which arises through the co-operation of different individuals (*Zusammenwirken*) as it is determined by the division of labor, appears to these individuals, since their co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien (*fremd*) force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these.¹⁰¹

Next, Marx immediately comes to an extremely important logical confirmation: **this force was what he had previously identified as alienation!** “To use a term easily comprehensible to the philosophers,” this is “**alienation!**” This is likely why Marx always stands against the division of labor, rather than first confirming the progressive significance of the division of labor — as he did later — before finally historically explaining the reasons why the division of labor under conditions of the private system causes slavery. In Marx’s opinion at this time, the division of labor was the **root of evil**, one that could only be verified in the science of economics. Here Marx’s logical shift becomes clear, as he tries to **use scientific economic qualifications to replace philosophical value qualifications**. “Alienation” is a **value critique** (the “is” that should not exist), while the division of labor is the **real structure** of society (what “is”). To accomplish this end, Marx makes Stirner the target of his criticism in the third chapter, because Stirner was unable to understand truly happening historical truth:

How is it that in this process of private interests acquiring independent existence as class interests the personal behaviour of the individual is bound to be objectified (*sich versachlichen*), estranged (*sich entfremden*), and at the same time exists as a power independent of him and without him, created by intercourse, and is transformed into social relations, into a series of powers which determine and subordinate the individual, and which, therefore, appear in the imagination as “holy” powers.¹⁰²

In Marx’s opinion, Stirner’s “only concern is to present all actual relations, and also actual individuals, as alienated (to retain this philosophical expression for

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, p. 416 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 515).

¹⁰¹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, pp. 23–24 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, pp. 29–30).

¹⁰²Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 226 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, p. 273).

the time being), to transform them into the wholly abstract phrase of alienation. Thus instead of the task of describing actual individuals in their actual alienation and in the empirical relations of this alienation, purely empirical relations, the same happens here —the setting forth is replaced by the mere idea of alienation, of the Alien, of the Holy.”¹⁰³ Marx's use of the idea of “purely empirical relations” is extremely important; this is an identification of Marx's own empirical critical logic at this time, demonstrating a fundamental divergence from Stirner's humanist “idea of alienation, of the Alien, of the Holy.” *I have remarked that Soviet scholar Vasily Davydov proposed a relation between the division of labor and alienation in The German Ideology, but his discussion lacks clear definitions and textual analysis.*¹⁰⁴

I believe that the analytic line of thought that we have been pursuing implies that Marx was attempting to move towards a completely new direction in real history. Although these efforts were still immature, they were still hopeful signs. Marx goes on to elucidate a new conclusion: the necessary conditions for the negation of alienation and the division of labor. In order to more concretely demonstrate the difference between this conclusion and the logical results of humanism, let us pause our analysis of the text for a moment and first look at the specific historical logical unfolding of Marx's line of thought 2: the objective description of different forms of ownership in social history. After this pause, we will resume our discussion of the negation of alienation and the division of labor.

6.3.2 The four forms of social ownership in the division of labor and history

Let us begin with a section of **historical** analysis in the fifth manuscript. This section primarily explains the three forms of ownership. *There are two points I must explain here: first, Marx at this time had not discovered that there was a primitive society **without class or ownership**; second, what Marx describes here is only a history of the development of Western European economics and society. At this time, he had not yet noticed a holistic developmental process outside of his Euro-centric viewpoint.* In terms of the sequence of the text, Marx first completes his historical analysis of bourgeois society's system of ownership (the exposition in the third chapter of the first volume; later, in the revised edition, this exposition was selectively included in the third manuscript of the first chapter). Only after this does Marx add this section of descriptive text in the fifth manuscript. For explanatory convenience, we will invert the original writing sequence.

We can see that in the fifth manuscript, besides the introductory section that is similar to the fourth manuscript and unlike line of thought 1 that begins on the third page of the fourth manuscript (this is a sudden break from the

¹⁰³Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, p. 260 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, pp. 316–317).

¹⁰⁴See Yurii Nikolaevich Davydov, *Neomarksizm i problema sociologii kul'tury*, Неомарксизм и проблема социологии культуры [Neo-Marxism and Problems of Cultural Sociology] (Moscow, 1980), chapter 3, section 5.

first manuscript), Marx begins from the division of labor in constructing line of thought 2 on the third page of the fifth manuscript. At the very beginning of the second section of the fifth manuscript, Marx immediately writes: “How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labor has been carried.” He continues:

The division of labor inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labor, and hence to the separation of **town and country** and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labor. At the same time through the division of labor inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labor.¹⁰⁵

Marx speaks here of social division of labor. This is no longer simple “alienation,” but rather a broader concept of the division of labor, which usually approaches the level of productive forces. Such an understanding is evidently much more precise, comprehensive, and close to economic (historical) reality than Marx’s prior analysis of the division of labor. *One important issue that I must bring up here is the proposition made by Japanese scholar Mochizuki Seiji¹⁰⁶ in the 1970s that this portion of text on the division of labor was actually the theoretical logic of Engels. In his opinion, Marx approved of general division of labor, moving from “individuals in reality” to enter a “developmental history” of the division of labor; Engels, on the other hand, disapproved of general division of labor, beginning with “men who must eat and drink” to derive a “formal history of ownership” of the division of labor. He proposes that the views of Marx and Engels, who were at different levels of logic, made possible two historical theories, one that made the division of labor its premise, and the other that made it its result.¹⁰⁷ I do agree with this baseless and strange deduction.* Marx was trying to explain that the stage of the division of labor depends on the level of development of productive forces at the time.¹⁰⁸ He continues, asserting that “the various stages of development in the division of labor are just so many different forms of ownership.”¹⁰⁹ This means that the different stages of the division of labor “determine also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product

¹⁰⁵Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 11).

¹⁰⁶**Mochizuki Seiji** is a contemporary Japanese scholar of Marxist studies. Born in 1929, he entered the Department of Economics of Senshū University in 1951 to study economics. In 1956 he became an assistant at this department and rose to become a professor of economics in 1969. In 1975, he received his doctorate in economics. Beginning in 1989, he was appointed president of the university for a total of nine years until his retirement. His most representative work is *Marx’s theory of history* (1973). (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁰⁷See Seiji Mochizuki [望月清司], *Makesi lishi lilun de yanjiu*, 马克思历史理论的研究 (Tokyo 东京: Iwanami Shoten 岩波书店, 1973), pp. 155–260 for a discussion on the theory of the division of labor within *The German Ideology*. Mochizuki’s work stands out from the crowd of Marxist research papers written in 1970’s Japan. The book has been translated to Chinese by Dr. Han Lixin recently and is to be published by Beijing Normal University Press. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁰⁸Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 82).

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 11).

of labor.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, “the division of labor implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labor, of tools and materials, and thus the splitting-up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the division between capital and labor, and the different forms of property itself.”¹¹¹

Thus Marx relies on the limited economic and historical knowledge of the time to suggest three forms of bourgeois ownership, of which the first is “tribal ownership.” This is the earliest form of ownership based on natural division of labor that corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production. It is also an extension to broader society of what Marx proposed earlier was the division of labor between the sexes in the family, i. e., the ownership that moved from family slavery to social slavery. The second is the “ancient communal (*Gemeinde*) and state ownership.” This form of ownership comes into being when several tribes unite to form a city. Slavery still exists here, there is already “movable, and later also immovable, private property developing.” Here we find that “the division of labor is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests.”¹¹² The third is feudal or estate property. Marx writes: “the Middle Ages started out from the **country**,” what appears here is a feudal hierarchy based on the ownership of land. In the cities, on the other hand, there appears “corporative (*die Korporation*) property, i. e., ‘**guilds**.’”¹¹³ This artisanal feudal organization is a hierarchical system similar to the hierarchy in the villages. Furthermore, “the chief form of property during the feudal epoch consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labour chained to it, and on the other of the labour of the individual with small capital commanding the labour of journeymen. The organisation of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production — the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land, and the craft type of industry.”¹¹⁴

The fourth form of ownership is modern bourgeois ownership, a concept elaborated in the third manuscript. *As we have already discussed, this was moved from the third chapter of the first volume, where it was originally between the sections as “Society as Bourgeois Society” and “Rebellion.”*¹¹⁵ This section of content is actually not only a re-writing of the economic developmental history of bourgeois society, but also a history that describes how the development of contemporary production leads to changes in relations of intercourse. At the same time, it is a critical re-writing of historical philosophy. The discourse model here corresponds completely to the classical economic model that Marx purposefully avoided in the *1844 Manuscript*. As such, it is an important manifestation of Marx’s “line of thought 2” in *The German Ideology*. Let us dissect the description that Marx uses

¹¹⁰Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 11 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, pp. 11–12).

¹¹¹*ibid.*, p. 56 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 74).

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 12 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 12).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 13 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, pp. 13–14).

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 14 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 14).

¹¹⁵Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie. Kritik der neuesten deutschen Philosophie, in ihren Repräsentanten, Feuerbach, B. Bauer und Stirner, und des deutschen Sozialismus in seinen verschiedenen Propheten*, pp. 327–355 (Chinese transl.: *Deyizhi yishi xingtai*, pp. 403–437).

here. The division of labor forms the theoretical central axis of “line of thought 2,” commerce and productive forces are the driving forces of historical contradiction, and the theoretical goal is **world history**, which is ultimately constructed by the world-market of capital in the three stages of the development and formation of bourgeois society. *The concept of “world history” is one of Hegel’s ideas; however, here it no longer refers to the world history of the Absolute Idea, but rather to the world history of capital.*

Marx’s explanation of the first time period begins with the antagonism between town and country. He calls this the “greatest division of material and mental labor.”¹¹⁶ In the progression of human social history, this antagonism “begins with the transition from barbarism to civilisation, from tribe to State, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilisation to the present day.”¹¹⁷ Marx points out that “it is the most vivid expression of the subjection of the individual under the division of labour, under a definite activity forced upon him.”¹¹⁸ This slave-like subjection leads to the antagonism between “town-animals” and “country-animals.” Marx believes that “labor is here again the chief thing, **power over** individuals, and as long as the latter exists, private property must exist.” Finally, Marx writes that “The separation of town and country can also be understood as the separation of capital and landed property, as the beginning of the existence and development of capital independent of landed property —the beginning of property having its basis only in labour and exchange.”¹¹⁹ This is, without a doubt, a historical, fact-based description within the category of economics.

In his discussion of the first time period, Marx tries to explain that the developmental progress of late-middle ages European towns was actually the earliest development of Western bourgeois society. The starting point of this progression of economic development was manufacture workers under the constraint of guilds, as well as “naturally derived estate capital.” Next, the system progressed to the “separation of production and commerce,” evidenced by the formation of the merchant class. Because “commerce” was controlled by a particular class of society, it became fully developed, thus directly spurring the development of town production and division of labor, as well as the commerce between towns. In this commerce, “the local restrictions of earlier times begin gradually to be broken down.”¹²⁰ At this point, Marx’s discussion is still based on historical affirmation in his description of economics.

According to Marx’s analysis, the immediate result of the division of labor among towns was the emergence of manufactures; this was the start of bourgeois modes of production. What is active here is first labor that departs from the old modes of production (constraints of the guilds), as well as commercial capital, developed from naturally derived capital. Marx goes on to point out that commercial capital was capital in a modern sense. At the same time, he discovered that com-

¹¹⁶Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 50).

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 50).

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, pp. 39–40 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 50).

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 51).

¹²⁰*ibid.*, p. 42 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 53).

mercial capital “was from the beginning movable.”¹²¹ Movable commercial capital is also called movable property. *In the 1844 Manuscript, on the other hand, Marx was suspicious of this concept.* At this time, the “patriarchal relationship” between journeymen and masters that had existed in the guild-system began to be replaced by the “money relationship” between workers and capitalists in manufactures.¹²²

The second period began in the mid-17th century and continued until the end of the 18th century. This was a period of further development of manufactures. Beginning at the same time was the development of commerce and shipping, as well as a “world market” opened by the commerce of colonization. At this time, manufactures were still weak, subject to the expansion or contraction of commerce. Marx noticed that although the movement of capital was growing faster, the world market was divided into many small parts. The barriers between countries, as well as the clumsiness of production and the under-developed state of the financial system, all greatly impeded circulation. Therefore, comparing the manufacturing producers and merchants of this time with “the merchants and industrialists of the next period, they remain petty bourgeois.”¹²³ Regardless, capital, to a large degree, lost the natural character that it had once had.

I have discovered that here¹²⁴ (page 50 of the third manuscript), Marx once again concretely cites political economy in his writing (the first time was on page 18 of the first manuscript, when he cites Smith’s “invisible hand”). Unlike the *1844 Manuscript*, political economy **is no longer the object of critique, but is rather the real basis of Marx’s perspective of history.** This appears three times in succession on the same page. First, he cites Aikin in his discussion of the differences between eighteenth century commercial towns and factory towns; second, he cites Pinto in writing that “the eighteenth century was the century of trade;” third, he cites Smith in his discussion of the characteristics of merchants and manufacturers in the period of capital movement and manufacturing. This is the immediate textual representation of “line of thought 2.” *I have already pointed out that in the text of The German Ideology, such references appears about 10 times.*

Marx refers to the third time period as the developmental stage of “big industry.” He defines this as the period in which became prevalent “the application of elemental forces to industrial ends, machinery and the most complex division of labor.”¹²⁵ It was only at this new stage that bourgeois society “established means of communication and the modern world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralization of capital.”¹²⁶ It was this “big industry” that first created world history, because it made the satisfaction of the needs of all civilized countries and all individuals in these countries dependent on the entire world, and because abolished the past, naturally derived, closed state of the various countries. The concept that world history was

¹²¹Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 45 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 55).

¹²²*ibid.*, p. 46 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 56).

¹²³*ibid.*, p. 48, footnote (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 59).

¹²⁴*ibid.*, pp. 48–49 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 59).

¹²⁵*ibid.*, p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 59).

¹²⁶*ibid.*, p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 60).

created by big industry was a heavy blow to the ideal world history espoused by the believers in the “German ideology.” Marx writes that “[big industry] made natural science subservient to capital and took from the division of labor the last semblance of its natural character. It destroyed natural growth in general, as far as this is possible while labor exists, and resolved all natural relationships into money relationships.”¹²⁷ At this point it seems to be clear that we can clearly understand that Marx’s intention is to affirm the new world history created by bourgeois society’s large-scale production. However, this was not his true purpose. Marx was still set on criticizing bourgeois society, but this time he does derive a value negation from the alienation of the essence of man’s labor, but rather confirms the destruction of bourgeois society based on the **objective trends in economic movement** itself. First, the automatic system of bourgeois big industry creates “a mass of productive forces,” for which the private system became a fetter to their development.¹²⁸ Second, bourgeois society’s big industry destroyed the peculiar individuality of the various nations, creating a proletariat class “which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it.” More importantly, “big industry makes for the worker not only the relation to the capitalist, but labor itself, unbearable.”¹²⁹ The objective development of productive forces immediately refutes the productive relations of bourgeois society. This view is a concrete, historical elucidation of the two objective conditions that Marx introduces in his discussion of the division of labor and alienated relations as part of “line of thought 2” in the first manuscript. However, this movement from bourgeois society to communism is no longer accomplished with the transcendence of the alienation of labor and the return of man’s species essence, but rather with the result of the real development of history (economics). This is the real possibility of human liberation in world historical subsistence created by bourgeois society’s big industry itself. Now that we have completed this important definitional section, we can return to the discussion of the textual break in the first manuscript that we paused at the end of the last sub-section.

In the textual break in the second sub-section, Marx clearly identifies in “line of thought 2” of the first manuscript the phenomenon of “alienation” that necessarily emerges from the division of labor as the material created by man comes to enslave man. Next, Marx immediately points out that this “alienation” can only be abolished given two “**practical** premises:” these are the revolutionary objects that we just saw, the proletariat class produced by the development of bourgeois society’s big industry and the “alienation” that becomes unbearable.¹³⁰ Marx believes that “the transformation, through the division of labor, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one’s mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labor.”¹³¹ He goes on to re-confirm this view, emphasizing that the objective premise of the real-

¹²⁷*ibid.*, p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 60).

¹²⁸*ibid.*, p. 50 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 60).

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p. 50 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 61).

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 30).

¹³¹*ibid.*, p. 43 (Chinese transl.: *Fei’erbaha*, p. 65).

ization of communism must be the world-historical existence created by the great increase and high level of development of productive forces. This world-historical subsistence constructed by real bourgeois society's big industry, is a concrete, modern confirmation of human historical existence in "line of thought 1."

First, "this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their **world-historical**, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it **poverty** and extreme want are merely made universal."¹³² If all the old things reappear in the struggle for the necessities of life, then communism is nothing but an empty slogan.

Second, only with the universal development of productive forces "is a universal intercourse (*ein **universeller** Verkehr der Menschen*) between men established, and only thus can the world-historical rich intercourse relationships between men appear."¹³³ This is because:

The further the separate spheres, which interact on one another, extend in the course of this development, the more the original isolation of the separate nationalities is destroyed by the developed mode of production and intercourse and the division of labor between various nations naturally brought forth by these, the more history becomes world history.¹³⁴

We can see that the realization of this world history is an actual material process.

Third, because of the great development of these productive forces, in the individual subjective subsistence of mankind, "**world-historical**, empirically universal individuals [replace] local ones."¹³⁵ He further argues that "in history up to the present it is certainly an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them (a pressure which they have conceived of as a dirty trick on the part of the so-called universal spirit, etc.), a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the **world market**."¹³⁶ Therefore, "the liberation of each single individual will be accomplished in the measure in which history becomes transformed into world history." Only thus will individuals "be liberated from the various national and local barriers, be brought into practical connection with the material and intellectual production of the whole world and be put in a position to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth (the creations of man)."¹³⁷ Only thus will

All-round dependence, this natural form of the **world-historical** cooperation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which,

¹³²Marx and Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 30).

¹³³*ibid.*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 30).

¹³⁴*ibid.*, p. 35 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 33).

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 30).

¹³⁶*ibid.*, p. 26 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, pp. 33–34).

¹³⁷*ibid.*, p. 26 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 34).

born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them.¹³⁸

This is the premise of communism. It is evident that Marx's road to communism has already become a **real** path of historical development: "The proletariat can thus only exist **world-historically**, just as communism, its activity, can only have a 'world-historical' existence. **World-historical** existence of individuals means existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history."¹³⁹

6.3.3 A brief theoretical commentary

As we have already discussed above, the theoretical abstract of classical economics was induction based on social experience. Smith, Ricardo, and others had already abstracted various non-observable social relations and economic laws of bourgeois society's modes of production; these were the essential abstracts (general) of this society. I believe that in classical economics, there already had appeared a form of **essential** epistemology: behind "political prices" Petty found "natural prices;" behind "market value" Boisguillebert found "true value." Furthermore, the latent natural order discovered by the physiocrats was really an idealized bourgeois social order, while Smith's "invisible hand" was simply the natural order without its feudal façade. It first clearly pointed out that there existed objective laws independent of human will in the social history of mankind. The problem, however, lay in the fact that bourgeois political economists abstracted the historical "general" (a special "general" that applied to bourgeois society) — the modes of production of bourgeois society — into an ahistorical general, i. e., they mistakenly understood it to be man's nature, the natural essence of social history, and eternal natural laws. Although in Marx's process of transitioning to historical materialism from philosophical humanism, the basis of his theoretical logic was economics and not traditional, old philosophy, Marx was still able to scientifically surpass the limitations of bourgeois political economy, because historical materialism was a kind of **historical** scientific abstraction from the moment of its creation. The starting point of the philosophy of historical materialism was the historical nature of social essence ("general"). Of course, in the concrete expression of *The German Ideology*, "line of thought 1" was the result of purely historical abstraction, while "line of thought 2" was the actual criticism reduced to economic reality from this abstraction. However, although Marx had already shifted to the standpoint of historical materialism and conducted very basic philosophical overview, because he was unable to truly understand economics (especially because he had not yet developed his own independent economic scientific scope of observation) he could not have a true historical scope of study. Of particular importance, I have discovered that in "line of thought 2" in *The German Ideology*, Marx abandons the **phenomenologically critical** line of thought that he frequently used before 1844. This abandonment was not done consciously in terms of logic, but rather occurred

¹³⁸*ibid.*, pp. 26–27 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 34).

¹³⁹*ibid.*, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: *Fei'erbaha*, p. 31).

because at this time he was as yet unable to scientifically understand the relationship between the essence in bourgeois society's economic life and the phenomena from observing economic facts. More specifically, this is the **historical formation of relations of capital in a phylogenetic sense**.¹⁴⁰ *Only later in the scientific structure of his economical studies in 1857–1858 would Marx fully articulate this insight and accomplish the concrete and historically shaped abstraction of historical materialism on a more profound level and at the same time establish an internal critique of the historical phenomenology of science.*

Because of this, the “falsification” of bourgeois society's economic reality is not the inversion of the Idea, but is rather the gradual mutation and **falsification** of economic reality itself in the course of history. *Karel Kosík refers to this as the “world of the pseudoconcrete.”*¹⁴¹ In this sudden change in historical phylogeny, the essence of bourgeois society (the productive relations of capital) is veiled and relations of exchange seem to become the dominant things. Here, inter-human relations are historically inverted into relations between things, becoming facts themselves, continuously deified. Thus necessarily appears bourgeois society's ideology of **fetishisms**. Men in bourgeois society's economic reality can no longer see the truth, but are only able to obsess over external pseudo-phenomena. This obsession necessarily causes all of bourgeois political economy to halt its investigation of the world; where it stops, however, is where Marx must part the fog of confusion and push forward. We must point out here that at the time Marx wrote *The German Ideology*, because of the limitations of his study of economics, he was unable to attain a higher theoretical level. Therefore, in the manuscript of the first chapter that we have already seen, “line of thought 1” was Marx's abstract expression of general social existence and social essence; “line of thought 2” was the historical critique of real economic operation that he conducted using scientific epistemology as his critical standard. However, because this critical epistemology lacked the **phenomenological logic necessary** to truly understand social economics, it was obviously too simple. His simplistic understanding was based on the objective contradiction and antagonism economics and society derived from the division of labor caused by the development of productive forces; he believed that the development of productive forces would, on a higher level, abolish the division of labor and antagonism.

Marx would later point out that human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape. In this analogy, “human anatomy” refers to the most complex economic relations and mechanisms of operation (from the vantage point of big industry, today's “human anatomy” is the digital existence in our modern information society). More concretely, this “human body” was the abstraction of big industry's economic relations in a Ricardian sense, while the “anatomy of the ape”

¹⁴⁰Marx did not truly form an understanding of this point until his economic scientific construction in 1857–1858. At this point he was able to accomplish a deeper, more concrete, historically formed abstract of historical materialism, at the same time re-constructing his scientific, historically phenomenological internal critique.

¹⁴¹See Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World* (New York: Springer Publishing, 1976), pp. 1–8 (Chinese transl.: *Juti de bianzhengfa*, pp. 6–9).

referred to the social relations and movements of prior bourgeois society, i. e., ancient→mercantilism→physiocracy→Smith's economic abstraction. *Franz Mehring points out that historical materialism can only be understood once human history has reached a certain level of development.*¹⁴² *His appraisal here is precise and appropriate.* We can see that until Marx's level of economics research drew even with the historically high level of Ricardo's economics research, he would not be able to truly analyze the essence and laws of the historical development of pre-historic society ("ape anatomy") using modern big industry ("human anatomy"). Only then could the historical verification of scientific political economic theories and historical materialism itself be truly completed. *In Marx's philosophical revolution realized through his economic research between 1857 and 1858, he was finally able to break down this barrier.*

Thus surfaces an important question: what was the economic basis for Marx's *The German Ideology*? In fact, Bagaturija concisely pointed out that the level of Marx's understanding of classical economics influenced the formation of historical materialism. At the same time, he profoundly observes that in Marx's philosophical shift, there was a simultaneous, progressive shift from emphasis on Smith to emphasis on Ricardo. However, Bagaturija believes that the influence on Marx of Smith's views on the division of labor are only expressed in the *1844 Manuscript*, and that by *The German Ideology*, Marx had already shifted to standing with Ricardo's views on productive forces.¹⁴³ On this point I am inclined to agree with professors Yao Shunliang and Tang Zhengdong that Marx's economic basis in *The German Ideology* was still Smith; at this time, he still used **the scope of Smith's economics** to qualify his own philosophical view. Although Marx proceeded from the division of labor to observe production and from direct inter-human relations to observe social life, the reference point of these observations was still the productive characteristics of bourgeois society during the manufacturing period; these characteristics were only the special economic attributes of the "early stages" of bourgeois society. Although Marx at this time did discuss large-scale industrial production as well as the shift from social relations to "relations of money," he was unable to comprehend on a deep theoretical level the productive forces whose creation was assisted by technology and which was based on large-scale machine production. He was also unable to see the philosophical significance of the objectified social structure that formed as relations of exchange became universal, ruling forms. This significance was only encapsulated by **the scope of Ricardo's economics**, which existed in the period of bourgeois society's large-scale production. *This was a theoretical high point that Marx did not gradually attain until The Poverty of Philosophy in 1847. As for the starting point of Marx's critique of*

¹⁴²Franz Mehring, *Die Lessing-Legende: eine Rettung; nebst einem Anhang über den historischen Materialismus* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1893), p. 1.

¹⁴³See Georgi Bagaturija and Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky [Ge. A. Bajiatuliya, Weigeciji 格·阿·巴加图利亚、维戈茨基], *Makesi de jingjixue yichan*, 马克思的经济学遗产 [Marx's Economic Legacy], trans. Ma Jianxing 马健行 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe 贵州人民出版社 [Guizhou People's Press], 1981), p. 181 and Zhen, *Makesi Engesi zaoqi zhexue sixiang yanjiu*, p. 189.

*Ricardo's economics, it did not develop until Grundrisse.*¹⁴⁴ *This is an underlying relation of theoretical logic; it is a topic that we will visit in some detail later in this book.*

Based on this discussion, I believe the following points are important to correctly understand *The German Ideology*:

First, the general theory of historical materialism established by Marx in *The German Ideology* primarily revealed that material production was the general basis of human subsistence; this material production was eternal and necessary. However, modern economic activity (the totality of relationships and economic activity aimed at achieving exchange) is not eternal. The economic totality realized in social exchange by products in the form of commodities can only appear under certain historical conditions. The objective power of the market economy becomes the determining, dominant relationship. This process is also historical; for instance, the laws of value can only appear in the economic operation of commodities. Therefore, economic determinism is wrong in its mutation of phenomena and laws that appear in certain periods of bourgeois society into abstract, general laws. *This is a misunderstanding of Marx's special theory of historical materialism. This is because the special theory of historical materialism is an identification of the inverted way in which economic forces determine man and society in certain historical circumstances.* In *The German Ideology*, Marx still relies falsely on the division of labor in his critique of the social contradictions in bourgeois society. He was still unable to scientifically reach the scientific abstraction attained by classical economics (especially Ricardo's movement from exchange relations to productive relations); in other words, he was unable to peel back the façade of material to grasp the essence, to shift his thinking from the realm of circulation to the realm of production. In *The German Ideology*, Marx continues to frequently cite Hess' **theory of intercourse**. In fact, intercourse is not the same as exchange; relations of production always determine relations of exchange, and it is only in the modes of production of bourgeois society that exchange becomes the ruling relation. Exchange relations are the surface, productive relations are the essence. *It was not until his economics research in the 1850s that Marx gradually began to resolve this problem, elevating it to the level of philosophy.*

Second, the general expression (primarily "line of thought 1") of the general theory of historical materialism in Marx's *The German Ideology* was actually the logic of the abstract **essence** of social history. In a certain sense, it is "without phenomenon," i. e., it is impossible to immediately identify it in real life. Production, reproduction, productive forces, and social relations do not have visible, substantive existence. In particular, as the modes of production that lie at the essence of society, they cannot be sensuously, empirically, or directly verified. In the process of historical progression, this historical existence and its essence are both historically constructed. In the real bourgeois society that Marx faced at the time, however, all the essential relations of society were veiled. We cannot simply

¹⁴⁴Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 118 and Zhengdong Tang [唐正东], "Wuzhi shengchan: Xin weiwu zhuyi zhexue de jingji xue jichu bianhuan," 物质生产: 新唯物主义哲学的经济学基础变换 [Material production: The fundamental economical change in the philosophy of New Materialism], *Nanjing shehui kexue* 南京社会科学, no. 2 (1999).

use common sense to identify the general principles of the general theory of historical materialism, for if we do, we will incorrectly replace the essential explanation provided by historical materialism with descriptions of sensuous phenomena and substantive perception. At the same time, the general theory of historical materialism was not the same thing as what Marx established in *Grundrisse*, which was a **historical phenomenology** that unified essence and phenomenon, that was founded on the **special** theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology.

Chapter 7

The Final Outlook of Marx's Philosophical Revolution

In the writing and corrections of the fifth manuscript of *The German Ideology*, we saw that the construction of the new scope of Marx's philosophy was incomplete. On one hand, Marx had constructed a new historical discourse, still using philosophical logic; on the other hand, he immediately conducted fact-based critique of bourgeois society based on economics and its real developmental history. In reflecting on the scope of his philosophy, Marx became cognizant of an important problem: if he did not seriously deepen his understanding of economics, he could not truly find the real road leading to socialism, nor could he truly complete the construction of his philosophical worldview. Marx's thoughts on these matters were expressed in a letter he wrote to Pavel Annenkov. In the letter, we finally find the most important theoretical view of Marx's philosophical revolution. It was not until the *Poverty of Philosophy* (*Misère de la philosophie*), which Marx published later, that he would directly and consciously connect the construction of his new philosophical worldview with his political economic scientific discussion.

7.1 The New Starting Point of Marx's Scientific, Critical Theory

On December 28, 1846 Marx wrote a serious letter to the liberal Russian writer Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in response to Annenkov's letter of November 1 on the subject of Proudhon's economic and philosophical views.¹ We know that at this time, Marx and Engels had just realized their philosophical shift, and were in the process of completing the majority of the content of the first and second volumes of *The German Ideology*. This was a critical period in which Marx was engaged in the

¹At the time, Annenkov was a Paris correspondent for the Communications Committee for the Brussels Communist Party. After reading Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty*, he wrote to Marx on November 1, 1846, discussing his views on the book and asking for Marx's opinions. Because of a delay by his bookseller, Marx did not read Proudhon's book until late December. After perusing it over the course of two days, he wrote this letter in response to Annenkov. Karl Marx and Pavel Wassiljewitsch Annenkov in Paris, Brüssel, 28 December 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, III/2:70–80 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali).

laborious process of writing and revising the important first chapter. At the same time, Marx wholeheartedly immersed himself in the revolutionary study of political economy. It would be more precise to say that this was a transitional period, between the early realization of the “first great discovery” (the establishment of historical materialism) of Marx and Engels and the beginning of the second great scientific revolution (the construction of the theory of surplus value). I believe that as Marx completed his revision of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, he had already realized that although his new philosophical worldview allowed us a glimpse at scientific socialist criticism and theoretical construction, real scientific criticism and the realization of the proletariat revolution could only be reached through fact-based research of economics and history. I will confirm that Marx's letter to Annenkov represents another great theoretical leap, coming after his supersession of Hess' abstract practical materialism in 1845. Marx was finally able to ultimately overthrow **methodological, latent idealism** through critique of Proudhon's dual idealist conception of history and especially supersession of his idealist theory of economics (**which recognized on the surface that economic forces play a decisive role in social life, but in essence accorded preference to abstract ideas**). Where Marx established the principles of historical materialism in *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, here he concerned himself with how to scientifically derive a new critique of reality. The theoretical placement of this text can be described as “critical understanding derived from liberated material conditions.” This demonstrates Marx's true theoretical progression from philosophical critique to critical research in economics and historical phenomenology. I think that this text is the first important theoretical generalization in Marx's philosophical revolution of the years 1845–1846. It is regrettable that we have neglected to the point of ignorance a profounder theoretical research of this crucial text.

7.1.1 The context of “Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov”

In our textual analysis in the previous chapter, we explained that the two different logical lines of thought in the first manuscript of the first chapter in the first manuscript of *The German Ideology* (especially the basic connotations of the fourth and fifth manuscripts) were not, as Soviet scholar Georgi Bagaturija believed, merely copies of the same text. Rather, they were continuations of the two logical lines of thought that Marx and Engels planned to derive in the new introduction they planned to write. These two lines of thought real were 1. Theoretical explanation of a philosophical confirmation, and 2. Critical description of history based on economic development. However, neither of these lines of thought were completed. According to my deduction, in a certain sense Marx finally abandoned both merely viewing the world through the lens of any theoretical logical construct of philosophy, as well as merely criticizing bourgeois society using fact-based research of economic reality. This is first because any attempt to directly project history using philosophy, or any attempt to use philosophy to directly interpret politics, economics, or culture is ultimately doomed to fail. The only legitimate role of philosophy is to provide **methodological guidance** for the study of economics, politics, and culture; not meddling value critiques. *This is a latent supersession in*

terms of philosophical logic of the 1844 Manuscript. Second, objectively speaking, according to Marx and Engels' historical and economic knowledge at the time, their historical descriptions and economics views still carried elements of guessing in *The German Ideology* (for instance, the division of history into time periods based on ownership, as well as the philosophical discussion of the division of labor). Strictly speaking, they did not conduct scientific research. Furthermore, Marx at this time had not yet realized his scientific shift within economics. Therefore, the theoretical power formed by this critique of reality based on economics was extremely weak. Most importantly, the separation of these two lines of thought was unsuccessful in terms of their theoretical construction. At the very end of the fifth manuscript of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, Marx suddenly ends his writing. Perhaps indicating that he had already come to this realization himself. This is doubtful and impossible to decide. However, there is one point that can be affirmed, which is that by the end of 1846, Marx and Engels were no longer eager to publish *The German Ideology*, and in particular its first chapter. Why was this the case? It would be best for us to turn to concrete textual analysis to find the answer to this question.

On May 14, 1846, in Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, he wrote that the second volume of *The German Ideology* was nearly complete, and that as soon as the first manuscripts for the first volume arrived, it would be best to start printing.² On August 1, in Marx's letter to the publisher Julius Leske, he wrote that before beginning his "positive development," he wished to publish "a polemical piece against German philosophy and **German socialism** up till the present," and that it would be ready by the end of November.³ Marx goes on to suggest that "the philosophical portion first be published before publishing the rest."⁴ From Engels' letter to Marx on November 2, we can see that this "philosophical portion" (the first chapter of the first volume) was still in Marx's hands.⁵ We should point out that Proudhon's book *The System of Economic Contradictions or The Philosophy of Poverty*.⁶ According to my analysis, this book was the final catalyst in the breakthrough of Marx's philosophical revolution.

As we analyzed in the first chapter of this book, Proudhon was one of the few philosophers to maintain a close relationship with Marx around 1843–1844. Although Marx and Engels criticized many of Proudhon's basic theoretical mistakes from the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie, Proudhon did inherit the classical economic (and especially Saint-Simon) idea that economic forces are important bases of social development and that private ownership could be criticized from

²Karl Marx an Joseph Weydemeyer in Schildesche, Brüssel, 14 May 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 9 (Chinese transl.: zhi Yuesefu Weidemai, Bileifei'erde, p. 467).

³Karl Marx an Carl Friedrich Julius Leske in Darmstadt, Brüssel, 1 August 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 23 (Chinese transl.: zhi Ka'er Weilian Liesikai, Damusitade, pp. 473–475).

⁴Engels to Karl Marx, Brussels, p. 51 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er, p. 67).

⁵Karl Ludwig Bernais und Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Paris, 2 November 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 63 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai'er, p. 77).

⁶This book was published in June 1846, and Marx did not read it until December of that year. It is abbreviated as *Philosophy of Poverty* hereafter (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez Guillaumin et cie, 1846) (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*)).

the perspective of economics; these views received the full approbation of Marx and Engels. This was not clearly expressed until *The Holy Family*, published in October, 1844. However, after Marx and Engels established the scientific methodology of historical materialism, Proudhon proposed a political economic system built on a Hegelian philosophical framework within the realm of economics that they were about to enter. More importantly, this economics theory employed what appeared to be socialism to comprehensively critique the modes of production of bourgeois society; this made Proudhon's theory immediately attractive, as soon as it was proposed. For instance, in Annenkov's November letter to Marx, he writes that although Proudhon's thoughts on God, fate, and the opposition between material that does not in fact exist and spirit was extremely confused, the economic sections were written very well. Annenkov wrote that never before had a book so clearly told him that civilization cannot reject its dependency on the division of labor, machines, and competition, that men must always pursue these things.⁷ A "well-written" economics section is the part of Proudhon's book that is most likely to lead readers astray. Marx realized that in order to prepare the way for critical, materialist socialism that endeavored to elucidate the true historical development of social production, it would be necessary to decisively break ties with idealist political economy. He went on to identify Proudhon as the newest representative of this form of idealist political economy, though Proudhon did not realize it himself.⁸ In fact, not long before the publishing of his book, Proudhon had written to Marx, expecting his "strict critique;" Marx's formal reply would be *The Poverty of Philosophy*, published in 1847. Engels would later write:

Since the time in Paris when the two of them had often spent whole nights discussing economic questions, their paths had increasingly diverged: Proudhon's book proved that there was already an unbridgeable gulf between them. To ignore it was at that time impossible, and so Marx put on record the irreparable rupture in this reply of his.⁹

Marx received Annenkov's letter before he had made up his mind to criticize Proudhon's economics. Therefore Marx wrote this famous letter that we have today. *Neo-Marxist philosopher Predrag Vranicki from the former Yugoslavia called this letter the "introduction" to Marx's Poverty of Philosophy; such a view has a certain degree of validity.*¹⁰ *However, because Vranicki never seriously read Marx's Poverty of Philosophy, his statement here is empty and devoid of meaningful connotation.*

I believe that this letter of Marx is quite important. This is for two reasons: first, it appears at the last moment of Marx's process of writing and revising the

⁷Karl Marx, "[Über *Misère de la philosophie*]," in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 19, p. 229 (Chinese transl.: "Guanyu 'Zhaxue de pinkun'," p. 248).

⁸*ibid.*, p. 229 (Chinese transl.: "Guanyu 'Zhaxue de pinkun'," p. 248).

⁹Friedrich [Marx und Rodbertus] Engels, "Vorwort [zur ersten deutschen Ausgabe von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Das Elend der Philosophie']," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. I/30, p. 28 (Chinese transl.: "Ka. Makesi 'Zhaxue de pinkun' yi shu dewen diyiban xuyan," p. 205).

¹⁰The source is Vranicki, *Historija marksizma*. A German translation is available (Vranicki, *Geschichte des Marxismus*, and the Chinese translation quoted here is Vranicki, *Makesi zhuyi shi*, vol. 2, p. 150).

manuscripts of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*, and as such can **accurately reflect Marx's true thinking and context in this unfinished manuscript**. Second, from this letter we can see the final object from which he wished to separate his theoretical construction, i. e., the idealism in Proudhon's economics research. This was another logical separation from the latent idealist conception of history in all bourgeois political economic research after Marx's critique of the methodological idealism of Hess' abstract practical materialist philosophy. This new investigation represents the next and last establishment of Marx's new philosophical outlook. Third, unlike *The Poverty of Philosophy*, which was published soon thereafter, because this was a personal letter there were no external constraining elements or restraints, and it is most likely therefore to reflect Marx's true philosophical context. *Marx wrote the letter to Annenkov in French, and it was later translated by Annenkov into Russian in 1880, then published that same year.*

According to my understanding, the subject of *The German Ideology* is the establishment of the important principles of the [general] theory of historical materialism. Although Marx had constructed a critical line of thought based on real economic history that was distinct from the logic of humanist alienation, he was still unable to derive a critique of reality based on scientific logic. In other words, he was unable to ultimately connect the philosophical logic of "line of thought 1" and the economics logic of "line of thought 2." In this letter, Marx confirms a new basis of the theory of scientific critique through criticizing Proudhon's philosophical economics. At the same time, here was the first time that historical materialism and the historical dialectic were unified, thus finally completing the construction of the new outlook of Marxism. Because he had obtained a new scientific placement of philosophy, Marx was able to resolutely move towards his second great discovery: the theory of surplus value in the science of economics. Furthermore, the establishment of the theory of surplus value signaled the birth of a scientific critical discourse based on research of facts. Finally, Marx created his historical phenomenological theory in his scientific revolution of economics.

The reason that we refer to Marx's scientific critical theory as a kind of "discourse," is to show that after 1847, Marx no longer directly **used philosophical logic to criticize reality**, not even using a scientific philosophical worldview. Marx's new philosophical outlook was merely a form of historical materialism and the historical dialectic on a **methodological level**; its only legitimate role was in historical research, as a methodological guide to economics and political research, and as a latent, functional structure in the study of real facts. Therefore, Marx's scientific critical theory is merely a **methodological discourse**. *This is the meaning of Marx and Engels' frequent reference to the "end of philosophy."* The primary target of this methodological discourse was the latent idealist conception of history espoused by Hess and Proudhon. However, Proudhon differed from Hess in that his was a **dual idealist conception of history**: he advocated a **dominant theory of idea determinism**, and a **latent methodologically idealist conception of history**. This is because in Hess' basic theoretical logical analysis, he already maintained the standpoint of general social materialism when facing social historical life; however, this materialism of Hess' was still an abstract principle. Production, as well

as the operation of material intercourse between men was still a theoretical, logical proposition, an unchanging equation that penetrated all of history. *This reminds one of the interpretive framework of our traditional philosophy.* Marx, on the other hand, had discovered that this thing which appeared to be historical materialism, although it was based on socialist views, was still, in essence, the methodology of latent idealism. This was because it still used the logic **of ideas to reconstruct historical reality**, even if the content of these ideas may have been correct. Proudhon was even worse than Hess, because on the level of general theory, he still advocated idea determinism. In his opinion, the development of social history was the realization of the so-called “impersonal reason.” This was the speculative philosophical disguise he used to cover up his economic “brilliance;” he had not even realized the illegitimacy of Hegel’s idealism. *In the foreword to The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx wrote that Proudhon’s dual mistakes were: “In France, he has the right to be a bad economist, because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany, he has the right to be a bad philosopher, because he is reputed to be one of the ablest French economists. Being both German and economist at the same time, we desire to protest against this double error.”* In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx primarily criticizes Proudhon’s economics; in his letter to Annenkov, on the other hand, Marx focuses on criticizing Proudhon’s dual idealist conception of history. I have discovered that the focus of Marx’s critique was not Proudhon’s obvious Hegelian idea determinism, but rather the analysis of the underlying idealism in the methodology of his economics; this is, in fact, a kind of **abstract logical precursor**.

I believe that it was in his reflection on Proudhon’s abstract materialism that Marx finally abandoned the practice of using philosophy to directly face economic reality in the face of history. This allowed him to develop the most important definition of his new philosophical outlook: **the legitimate place of philosophical methodology**. Marx no longer focused on all-encompassing meta-conceptual systems (“metaphysics”) or, to use popular expression, “general laws.” Philosophy has its own place, its own tasks, its own boundaries; it cannot be used whimsically where it does not belong. Philosophy is a method, merely a premise to thought. It cannot replace reality, which is studied by economics, historical philosophy, and political philosophy. Marx was not a Hegel, neither would he repeat the mistakes of Hegel. He knew that he needed to bid farewell again to Proudhon, to draw a clear theoretical dividing line. This was the primary purpose of his letter to Annenkov. We will next discuss this important theoretical text of Marx’s.

7.1.2 Certain, historical, transitory historical circumstances

According to our analysis in the previous sub-section, what we must first focus on is the Marx’s view of the expression of the idealism in Proudhon’s economics research. As we read *The Philosophy of Poverty*, the object of Marx’s discussion in his letter to Annenkov, it is easy to see two basic surface-level theoretical points. First, Proudhon’s consistent critique of the exploitative essence of the bourgeois private system; second, Proudhon’s consistent concern with the laws and principles of economic life and development in social history. These were both elements

with which Marx and Engels would have fundamentally agreed in the past. At the same time, we can clearly see Proudhon's outdated, external Hegelian idea determinism. We say it is outdated because in the progressive German philosophical scene at the time and under the influence of Feuerbach, almost all the left-wing thinkers who separated themselves from the Young Hegelians had all realized the shift from idealism to general materialism. Most philosophers would no longer proudly employ Hegel's ridiculous theological, idea logic to directly serve their theoretical construction. However, in Proudhon's book on economics, we find countless references to "universal reason," the "assumption of God," and "eternal and unchanging essence," most often immediately expressed Hegel's external speculative form. In fact, this dominant idealism was something that the average German progressive thinker could have recognized. Marx did not know whether to laugh or cry as he read Proudhon's hackneyed words, because he believed that Proudhon had not truly understood Hegel's dialectic but was comically using it all over his text. Years later, in reflecting on his time with Proudhon in Paris, Marx regretfully wrote "In the course of lengthy debates often lasting all night, I infected him very much to his detriment with Hegelianism, which, owing to his lack of German, he could not study properly."¹¹ There is much to ponder here; on the one hand, Marx writes that Proudhon was infected with Hegelianism, while on the other hand he writes that Proudhon could not seriously study Hegelianism. At first glance this may appear contradictory, but it actually carries a deeper level of meaning: the first "Hegelianism" refers to the idealist speculative outer shell of Hegel's idea determinism — this appears again and again in Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*. The second "Hegelianism" refers to the historical dialectic, which was one element of Hegel's philosophy that was truly valuable — this was what Proudhon was never able to learn. Marx writes: "Proudhon had a natural inclination for dialectics. But as he never grasped really scientific dialectics he never got further than sophistry."¹² Marx uses "scientific dialectics" in reference to his "return" to the new philosophical outlook that Hegel obtained after 1845 — a truly profound historical dialectic on which was centered methodological historical materialism.

I have discovered that Proudhon's obvious external Hegelian idealist errors were not the focal point of this text of Marx's. Marx decided to focus more particularly on the other aspect of his dual idealism. Because Proudhon was unable to understand the essence of the scientific dialectic developed from Hegelian dialectics, he committed a deeper idealist mistake: in his discussion of economics, at the same time as he indignantly criticizes bourgeois society, he also **eternalizes the economic categories reflected by the social relations of the historically appearing modes of production of bourgeois society**. *This is, as a matter of fact, the ideological essence of the ahistorical nature of all of bourgeois political economy*. This meant that Proudhon actually grasped even more firmly that which he claimed to abandon. Let us return to Marx's text to discover why such a bizarre logical error would have appeared in Proudhon's book.

¹¹Marx, "Über P.-J. Proudhon. Brief an Johann Baptist von Schweitzer," p. 62 (Chinese transl.: "Lun Puludong," p. 31).

¹²*ibid.*, pp. 66–67 (Chinese transl.: "Lun Puludong," p. 36).

At the beginning of his letter to Annenkov, Marx points out that Proudhon's book is "poor" not because his economics research relies on "absurd" philosophy, but rather because "he has not understood present social conditions in their intermeshing (*engrènement*)."¹³ I believe that Marx's use of the word "intermeshing" here is ingenious. It does not broadly refer to any social relation or structure, but rather particularly refers to the **structuring of certain truly existing social circumstances** under certain conditions of history. *As written before, this is a reconstruction of Hegel's "setting" in historical materialism, from which Heidegger's Sein received a profound inspiration.* This was perhaps the last thing Marx realized when writing *The German Ideology*. A possible answer lies in Marx's own analysis.

Marx begins with an oft-used concept by thinkers who dissect all of social history: "society." In Marx's opinion, society is not, as Proudhon put it, "mankind's impersonal reason." Rather, "What is society, irrespective of its form? The product of man's interaction upon man."¹⁴ Marx's use of "product of interaction" refutes Proudhon's view of society as an *a priori* subject. Marx believes that society is a **dynamic, interactive** totality existing in a definite period of time, constructed by men in definite ways, and possessing a definite nature. We can see that the existence of human society is always historically constructed by the activity of definite human subjects in reality. This theoretical qualification reminds us of the explanation of the essence of man in the sixth article of *Theses on Feuerbach*, i. e., the essence of man in reality can only be the ensemble of all of man's social relations. At the same time, it also reminds us of the definition of the historical subsistence of the "ontological nature" of man in "line of thought 1" in the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. There is unity between these two texts. Where Marx's explanations in the past were principled, here he provides detailed confirmations of his views. Returning to the letter to Annenkov, Marx writes:

If you assume given stages of development in production, commerce or consumption, you will have a corresponding form of social constitution, a corresponding organization, whether of the family, of the estates or of the classes—in a word, a corresponding civil society. If you assume this or that civil society, you will have this or that political system.¹⁵

It should be understood that Marx is obviously not describing general historical laws, but is rather engaging in theoretical explanation of **modern** history. We know this because estates, classes, civil society, and political systems are not enduring elements of social history. We can see here that Marx's use of the word "given" (in reference to "certain" or "definite") is very prominent. *In the whole text, Marx uses the words "given" or "certain" more than 15 times.* I have discovered that the qualification "given" became the most important definition in the expression of his historical materialism and historical dialectic. The implication

¹³Marx to Annenkov in Paris, p. 70 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 476). Marx wrote this letter in French.

¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 477).

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 477).

of his discourse is **historical, real, concrete analysis of principles and qualification of essence**. Without any doubt, Marx emphasizes the principle of objectivity in historical materialism as well as the historical determinism aspect of the development of productive forces. However, relative to Marx's critique of Proudhon's dual idealist conception of history that we have already identified, Marx here is not generally criticizing Proudhon's Hegelian, dominant idea determinism (this point was basically completed in *The Holy Family*). Rather, he was explaining that historical materialism and the historical dialectic were the **methodological discourse of concrete research based on certain real circumstances of society**. He used this to criticize the latent idealist conception of history in Proudhon's methodology, i. e., Proudhon's abstract conception of social history, especially the development of social economy and politics. The methodological qualification of "definite" or "given" was the ontological qualification of historical subsistence identified by Marx in the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. This forms the background for the concrete "enmeshing" of which Marx writes in his letter to Annenkov. Here we can clearly see that when facing any thing or phenomenon, Marx **not only accords precedence to material, but also focuses on understanding the primacy of its material within certain historical "enmeshings."** The premise of historical materialism is not only that social existence determines social consciousness, but also that social existence defined by **enmeshings under certain conditions of time and space** determine **certain** social consciousness. This is where Marx finally surpasses all old materialism. At the same time, it is the fundamental context and true meaning of Marx's letter to Annenkov.

Why begin with this concept of "certain?" On the second level of logic in the text, Marx provides concrete analysis in answer to this question. Because men cannot freely choose a certain social form, even if they realize that a certain social system is "bad" (defined by "alienation," "slave labor," and evil division of labor), or that a certain social system is reasonable and good (socialism and communism), they cannot freely choose either one! Why? Because in the end, man cannot choose his own productive forces — this is a more fundamental view of the issue:

Every productive force is an acquired force, the product of previous activity. Thus the productive forces are the result of man's practical energy, but that energy is in turn circumscribed by the conditions in which man is placed by the productive forces already acquired, by the form of society which exists before him, which he does not create, which is the product of the preceding generation.¹⁶

Marx points out that material productive forces are the basis of all human social history. Here he uses the word "circumscribed" to emphasize the deeper fundamental role and of logical context and progression. He attempts to emphasize that history is truly created by the practical energies of the human subject. However, these practical energies of the human subject are not imaginary or contrived, but are rather circumscribed by the **certain historical conditions** in which **men find themselves**. These "conditions" are circumscribed by the **certain productive forces**

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, pp. 477–478).

already acquired, by the **certain social forms** “which exist before them.” The use of the word “circumscribe” here reflects the **certain historical nature** of the level of development of forces of production. The human subject creates history through practice, and this creation itself is constrained by the developmental situation of history. This important view of historical dialectics deserves the careful consideration of those of us theorists who are passionate about “practical humanism,” because it displays real, historical, concrete relations of dialectical materialism. In Marx’s scientific conception of history, practice as the basis of logic is not a historical “entity,” but is rather mutually constructed by the constraints of the historical conditions of the forces of production as well as the new reality. To borrow Marx’s later expression, the definite level of productive forces realized by certain material production and reproduction are the **first level** (this is not merely primacy) and **original** general basis of objective social life. Only on this basis can the second and third levels of society be formed under certain conditions of history.¹⁷ Therefore Marx believes that only on a certain period of history can man use existing productive forces in the service of new production; this forms a kind of historical connection, or “human history.” We can see that certain levels of development of real productive forces are the **only starting point** of Marx’s views on the historical life and ideas of mankind. Marx’s profound analysis was not directed towards Proudhon’s dominant idealist conception of history, but rather aimed to penetrate the dominant idealist false-speculative barriers that permeate his thinking and strike at the latent idealism in his methodology — the abstract methodology used to face the economic problems in social history. Proudhon did not realize that he unconsciously inherited the logic which faces economic reality abstractly from classical economics. This methodology which treats social life un-historically was the essence of the ideology of bourgeois society (civil society), and its key point was the false belief in the eternal nature of the modes of production of bourgeois society. The latent constraints of this methodology under which Proudhon operated appear all the more fundamental, all the more critical beneath the surface of his passionate, fervent rhetoric. Therefore, although he appears to criticize bourgeois society, on a deeper theoretical level he essentially proves the eternal nature of bourgeois society. This paradox was the dialectic that Proudhon was unable to understand or aspire to.

The third theoretical level of Marx’s letter to Annenkov, which is also its most important theoretical point, was Marx’s explanation of the necessity of historical advancement and derivation of the **true starting point of the theory of scientific critique** from the perspective of the development of social history. In the last part of the text, Marx primarily criticizes Proudhon’s discussion of so-called “eternal laws,” which lead him to erroneously imagine many historical economic categories as eternal and natural as he faces bourgeois modes of production. Marx writes:

Mr Proudhon does not directly assert that to him **bourgeois life** is an **eternal truth**; he says so indirectly, by deifying the categories which express bourgeois relations in the form of thought. He regards the

¹⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 43 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 47).

products of bourgeois society as spontaneous entities, endowed with a life of their own, eternal, the moment these present themselves to him in the shape of categories, of thought. Thus he fails to rise above the bourgeois horizon.¹⁸

In other words, Proudhon did not realize that although he was apparently criticizing bourgeois society, his latent logical premise actually proved that society's **super-historical nature**: "as though this creation of a given mode of production were to last till the end of time."¹⁹ Therefore, "he falls into the error of bourgeois economists who regard those economic categories as eternal laws and not as historical laws which are laws only for a given historical development, a specific development of the productive forces."²⁰ Marx goes on to point out that for Proudhon,

There [*Poverty of Philosophy*] I have shown, among other things, how little he [Proudhon] had penetrated into the secret of scientific dialectics and how, on the contrary, he shares the illusions of speculative philosophy, for instead of regarding **economic categories as the theoretical expression of historical relations of production, corresponding to a particular stage of development in material production**, he garbles them into pre-existing **eternal ideas**, and how in this roundabout way he arrives once more at the standpoint of bourgeois economy.²¹

On the contrary, according to Marx's view, "the economic forms in which man produces, consumes and exchanges are **transitory and historical**. With the acquisition of new productive faculties man changes his mode of production and with the mode of production he changes all the economic relations which were but the necessary relations of that particular mode of production."²² Of course Marx also criticizes the fact that Proudhon "confuses ideas and things" in his economics research, because Proudhon's idea of historical "evolution" and economic categories are still ordered only in his head. Although there is evidence here of the influence of Hegel's eternal reason ("tools used to develop themselves"), what Marx focuses on criticizing is Proudhon's view that the division of labor, machines, and ownership are abstract economic categories. Marx points out that the essence of this error is "his failure to grasp the bond linking all forms of **bourgeois** production, or to understand the **historical** and **transitory** nature of the forms of production in any one epoch".²³ In Marx's opinion, the progress of history (including socialism), is not determined by what people believe to be good or bad (the value theory of ethics), but rather "in developing his productive faculties, i. e. in living, man develops certain inter-relations, and that the nature of these relations necessarily

¹⁸Marx to Annenkov in Paris, p. 77 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 485).

¹⁹ibid., p. 73 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 480).

²⁰ibid., p. 75 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 482).

²¹Marx, "Über P.-J. Proudhon. Brief an Johann Baptist von Schweitzer," pp. 62-63 (Chinese transl.: "Lun Puludong," pp. 31-32).

²²Marx to Annenkov in Paris, p. 72 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, pp. 478-479).

²³ibid., p. 74 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 482).

changes with the modification and the growth of the said productive faculties.”²⁴ Using the good and evil of the system of slavery as an example, Marx explains the historical rationality and necessity of certain relations of production. This also implies that even if bourgeois society's modes of production are not reasonable (“evil”), they are necessarily caused by certain levels of development of productive forces. What is historically necessary is also historically transitory; only the further development of productive forces (creating the objective premise of socialism) can the necessity be abolished. Bourgeois society cannot be changed in the realm of ideas. Therefore, “those who produce social relations in conformity with their material productivity also produce the **idea and scope**, *i. e.* the ideal abstract expressions of those same social relations. Indeed, the categories are no more eternal than the relations they express.”²⁵ All social existence is historically relative and transitory; this is the revolutionary aspect of Hegel's dialectic. *As Zelený correctly points out, this concept of the historical, the relative, and the transitory became the fundamental element of Marx's concept of science through the transcendence and critique of Hegel's view of materialism.*²⁶

7.1.3 Possibility: The scientific connection between logic and reality

I have found that in the latter half of his letter to Annenkov, Marx uses the qualifying words “historical” and “transitory” in five places. It is evident that in this important context, he was attempting to develop a new real scientific critical logic. Here appears a theoretical point that must be historically defined.

In past social critique, especially in the conscious or unconscious use of humanist logical paradigms by the majority of bourgeois enlightenment thinkers, critical force was generated by the contradiction between what “should” and what “is.” What “should” was always qualified as the genuine, idealized state of human life; it was an essential value postulate and a transcendent guiding paradigm. In the theological framework of Christianity, this value postulate is confirmed as the original, that-sided heavenly paradise — the “city of God.” It is both the origin and the destination of man. In later bourgeois enlightenment thinking, this postulate is established as man's natural instincts, all things that “should” be. What “is” on the other hand is real life and man's worldly existence. Relative to man's idealized state, this “is” is invariably depraved and devolved, just like the this-sided misery of the present world in theology, or like the inhuman circumstances prevalent under medieval despotism criticized by enlightenment thinkers. Thorough guiding men in identifying the base desires and sins of the current world, Jesus allows them to escape this world and attain the that-sided “city of God.” In contrast, all the enlightenment thinkers use the idea of inherent human rights to allow men to see the self-contradictory nature of life in this world under the oppression of theology; they therefore advocate developing man's natural instincts in this world, creating what they believe is a “heaven on earth” — the reality of bourgeois society. Feuerbach goes on to prove that the theological “city of God”

²⁴Marx to Annenkov in Paris, p. 75 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 482).

²⁵*ibid.*, p. 77 (Chinese transl.: zhi Anniankefu, Bali, p. 484).

²⁶Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, p. 29.

is nothing but the alienation of man's essence; the Christian "should" can only be truly realized if it returns to the human world. From this we can see that **it was the logical contradiction between "should" and "is" that produced powerful critical force.** Similarly, in Marx's 1844 labor theory of value, although he had already started to criticize bourgeois society, his underlying logic still conformed to this old humanist line of thought. Marx proposed that labor is what "should" be the essence of man, while the actual private system of bourgeois society viewed by the bourgeoisie as "heaven on earth" still leads to the alienation of man from his own essence. For this reason bourgeois society must be overthrown, and communism is the true realization of humanism. Generally speaking, the essence of the six great contradictions that Marx proposes as the "riddles of history" is still the contradiction between "should" and "is." Because it was still driven by a **value postulate**, in essence this method that proceeds from a *a priori* essence was still a latently idealist conception of history.

Of course, Marx fundamentally differed from bourgeois enlightenment thinkers in that he already stood with the proletariat, as well as in the fact that he already accepted the general foundational nature of materialism. However, his philosophical logical method was still non-scientific. With the philosophical shift evidenced in *Theses on Feuerbach*, he finally surpassed this methodological idealism, truly establishing methodological historical materialism. However, another difficult question arose at this time: after confirming the principle that historical materialism proceeds from reality and refuting any abstract value postulates, **from where does the force necessary to criticize actual bourgeois society originate?** Because Marx at the time focused on establishing the principles of methodological materialism within philosophical logic, he did not provide significant explanation for the question of how to derive scientific criticism from reality. Although Marx refers to "liberation" as a historical activity in the first page of the first manuscript of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*, and uses the words "division of labor" to replace alienation as well as "sovereign activity" to replace "non-alienated genuine subsistence" in the third manuscript, this shift in discourse still signals his attempt to construct a critical line of thought independent from humanist logic.²⁷ Now it appears as though the moment was not yet ripe to establish this new critical line of thought. However, in *The German Ideology*, Marx had already acquired a new view, that **true materialism was necessarily revolutionary historical dialectics. Proceeding from certain concrete reality restricted to a particular period of time, Marx necessarily reached a scientific critical understanding of objective reality through discovering the historical, procedural, and transitory nature of the concrete existence of present human society.** Such a conclusion did not have to pass through any suppositions of philosophical theoretical logic.²⁸ **Revolutionary historical dialectics must be true historical materialism.** The most profound and penetrating critiques are necessarily reached through the operation of objective historical dialectics; this understanding is a deepening of the true implications of

²⁷See third chapter second section, fourth subsection of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

²⁸According to Schmidt's profound analysis, Marx's refutational critique touches on things limited in time. Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur*, p. 33 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi he jigou*, p. 30).

what Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*: “For the practical materialist, i. e. the communist, it is a question of revolutionising the existing world, of practically attacking and changing existing things.” Marx’s goal at this time in departing from the idealized “should” was not merely to materialistically reflect reality, but rather to truly change what “is.” At the same time, this change was not derived from a philosophical or ethical “should;” rather it was the derivation of a scientific “should” from an actual “is.” In other words, the new basis of the critical force in Marx’s theoretical line of thought can be summarized as a new theoretical point: what is “possible.” This “possible” is actually the **possibility for advancement** born in reality. *The idea of “possible” was influenced by my mentor Professor Yao Shun-liang’s speech in October, 1995 in a forum titled “The Marxist Theory of Practice and Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.”*

According to the results of my research, the most important essential shift in Marx’s 1845 philosophical revolution did not halt at the abstract qualification of practice of general philosophical materialism, but rather continued to establish historical materialism as a scientific methodology, through Marx’s deep understanding of Hegel’s historical dialectic and further critique of Feuerbach’s fundamental materialism and Hess’ abstract practical materialism. In Marx’s understanding, “Compared with Hegel, Feuerbach is extremely poor.”²⁹ This attitude was already different from that in the *1844 Manuscript*, because Marx had already discovered that the fundamental principles of old materialism were still latently idealist in terms of methodology. Because Feuerbach and Hess abstracted “nature” and “material,” then went on to unhistorically view “practice” and “production” as the eternally unchanging basis of history and thus derive their critique of reality, this line of thought still unconsciously accorded precedence to the idea. On the level of society, they had not yet surpassed the ideological standpoint of bourgeois society. Marx differed from their views in that he understood the revolutionary essence of Hegel’s philosophical logic, and was thus able to re-acquire the historical dialectic on the basis of historical materialism. By this time, Marx already clearly saw that the essence of Hegelianism’s historical dialectic was its identification of all ideas as particular expressions of historical necessity (the Absolute Idea). In the face of the movement of history, there are no eternal or unchanging things. When Marx re-inverted Hegel’s idea historical dialectic, placing it on the basis of historical materialism, he truly discovered that **materialism must be constructed from within itself, through the means of historical dialectics**. Historical materialism does not abstractly identify the **unchanging material basis of history**, but rather uses historical dialectics to truly face each **concrete, limited, objective circumstance** constructed by the subsistence-activities in human social history. This is done in order to discover particular, historical, and transitory human material life, as well as its particular, historical, and transitory idea reflection. On this point, historical materialism as a methodology is completely in conformity with historical dialectics. They **are not two different things!** I believe that Marx’s thinking here is already more profound than the philosophical confirmation he makes in the

²⁹Marx, “Über P.-J. Proudhon. Brief an Johann Baptist von Schweitzer,” p. 60 (Chinese transl.: “Lun Puludong,” p. 29).

first chapter of *The German Ideology*. Marx would later write that the essence of historical dialectics was revolution; in other words, because the historical dialectic recognizes the historical limitations of human social life, it criticizes all attempts to eternalize any particular historical structure (mode of production). **Historical dialectics is always critical.** More importantly, historical dialectics are not based on ideal value supersession, but rather on “liberating material conditions.” What was once the contradiction between “should” and “is” is unified in a historical, real possibility — “possible.” Critique is no longer externally pitted against reality, but rather derived from the real possibility of liberation. Therefore, in Marx’s concrete thinking at this time, the critique of bourgeois society cannot be derived from any good intentions or wishes, but rather only from the new, liberating material conditions presented by big industry. This is a deeper difference between Marx and Hess, Proudhon, and others. As Marx would later write: “He [Proudhon] and the utopians are hunting for a so-called ‘**science**’ by means of which a formula for the ‘solution of the social question’ is to be devised *a priori*, instead of deriving science from a critical knowledge of the historical movement, a movement which itself produces the **material conditions of emancipation.**”³⁰ I believe that Marx’s words “**deriving science from a critical knowledge of the historical movement which produces the material conditions of emancipation**” are especially critical. This is because here Marx constructs a bridge that spans the gap between “should” and “is,” i. e., **only from fact-based, actual scientific research can the new critical force of reality be derived.** I believe that this indicates the true establishment of Marx’s scientific critical discourse. Being built on this important theoretical view, scientific materialism was able to truly be endowed with the possibility of objective reality in actual historical development. Furthermore, this possibility was objective, based on mature material. On this point, Marx would later write:

If therefore the proletariat overthrows the political rule of the bourgeoisie, its victory will only be temporary, only an element in the service of the **bourgeois revolution** itself, as in the year 1794, as long as in the course of history, in its “movement,” the material conditions have not yet been created which make necessary the abolition of the bourgeois mode of production and therefore also the definitive overthrow of the political rule of the bourgeoisie.³¹

Marx’s important view here has been continually verified by the subsequent progression of history. This is also the most significant theoretical truth that Marx conveys in his letter to Annenkov.

Of course, Marx did not publicly express his new, important, and revolutionary views until *The Poverty of Philosophy*, published soon after his letter to Annenkov. To use Marx’s own words, “the salient points of our conception were first outlined

³⁰*ibid.*, p. 63 (Chinese transl.: “Lun Puludong,” p. 32).

³¹Karl Marx, “Die moralisierende Kritik und die kritisierende Moral. Beitrag zur deutschen Kulturgeschichte. Gegen Karl Heinzen,” in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 4, pp. 338–339 (Chinese transl.: “Daodehua de piping he pipinghua de daode. Lun deyizhi wenhua de lishi, bo Ka’er Haiyincen,” pp. 331–332).

in an academic, although polemical, form in my *The Poverty of Philosophy*, this book which was aimed at Proudhon appeared in 1847.”³² We will specifically discuss this text in the next section.

7.2 The Earliest Unity of Historical Materialism and Political Economy

Marx wrote and published *The Poverty of Philosophy* in 1847. This important work was the earliest published work among the classic texts that came after the establishment of Marxism. According to Marx, the “determining factors” of the new worldview of Marxism and the economic science of Marxism both appeared for the first time in this text. It is unfortunate that for many years we have not accorded this text enough theoretical attention or detailed textual interpretation.

7.2.1 Proudhon and *The Philosophy of Poverty*

In our discussion of the previous section, we began to understand from the text of “Marx to Annenkov” some of Marx’s basic thoughts at the time of the publishing of Proudhon’s *Philosophy of Poverty*. It is apparent that these thoughts were some of Marx’s direct understandings as he perused Proudhon’s work. Not long after, Marx used French to write and publish a comprehensive critique of Proudhon’s *Philosophy of Poverty* — *The Poverty of Philosophy*. It is not easy to place theoretically place this work of Marx’s. In 1990, I read a letter from Engels to Marx written on March 9, 1847 in which Engels wrote that if the publishing of *The German Ideology* would obstruct the publishing of *The Poverty of Philosophy*, then Marx should “chuck” *The German Ideology* into a corner, because it was “much more important” for Marx to publish *The Poverty of Philosophy*.³³ At the time, I was carefully reading the newly translated version of the manuscript of the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*, and I believed that I was reading the most important theoretical text of Marxist philosophy. Thus I could not understand why Engels would hold the only positive expression of his and Marx’s new philosophical worldview — *The German Ideology* — in such low esteem. This problem kept circling around in my head. Now, after reading “Marx to Annenkov” and re-reading *The Poverty of Philosophy*, I have truly discovered some of the secrets of the theory presented in this text; this allowed me to really understand the meaning of Engels’ words here. Now that my understanding is deeper, I am not surprised that Engels calls *The Poverty of Philosophy* the “program” of the party at the time.³⁴

According to my understanding at this time, Marx’s *The Poverty of Philosophy* is an extremely important metaphor of his new views. He believed that all systems

³²Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,” p. 10 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan,” p. 10).

³³Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Paris, 9 March 1847, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 87 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai’er, p. 92).

³⁴Friedrich Engels an Karl Marx in Brüssel, Paris, 25 October 1847, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, p. 111 (Chinese transl.: zhi Makesi, Bulusai’er, p. 109).

of philosophical logic that constructed abstractions and attempted to **project reality using philosophy** were doomed to fail. Marx's new philosophy, on the other hand, was generally speaking a scientific **methodology**, which was no longer metaphysics in the traditional sense. Departing from the concrete scientific research of historical reality, philosophy in Marx's scientific outlook was no longer legitimate in a scientific sense. At the time, this research of reality was primarily expressed as Marx's economic, fact-based critique of the modes of production of bourgeois society, as well as the historical, actual, concrete, reflection on all of human social history divided into different stages. Philosophy was further expressed as a rational understanding of the circumstances of human subsistence under certain conditions of history; this was the historical phenomenology of the special theory of historical materialism. *This latter expression was not completed until Marx's economic and philosophical research between 1857 and 1858.* In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx first began to apply his newly established historical materialism — developed from his economics research — to the scientific construction of political economy itself. Of course, this was still a **preliminary, unfinished theoretical linkage**.

Before beginning our discussion of Marx's important work, we must first conduct a simple appraisal of Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty*. Past research has, perhaps consciously, avoided this aspect.

In the first chapter of this book we already presented a preliminary analysis of Proudhon's philosophy and his relationship with Marx. I must emphasize that when Proudhon believed that he was the first to use philosophical views to provide an internal theoretical structure to economics, Marx was already conducting research in the second phase of his study of political economy. At the same time as his establishment of historical materialism, Marx began to face bourgeois political economy from a completely different perspective, entering the process of construction of the theory of Marxist political economic theory and scientific socialism. This was a critical transitional period: on one hand, Marx completely distanced himself from the philosophical framework of humanism and scientifically faced history using the real methods of historical materialism, while on the other hand, he correctly understood the scientific premise to the study of humanist philosophy. He fundamentally changed his basic attitude towards classical economics, but did not yet directly begin his independent research of political economic theory. The words of the famous Chinese author Lu Xun³⁵ are applicable here to Marx, whose thinking was certainly in a state of flux: "All things in flux have many intermediate forms."³⁶ As such, Marx's writings at this time naturally have a transitional feel: **the contradiction between Marx's scientific research premise/method and unsolved concrete theoretical economic problems** was still in force. Therefore, we can only conduct a historical identification of Marx's views on concrete economic and historical problems during this period in his life. We must not exaggerate the

³⁵Lu Xun (i. e. Zhou Shuren, 1881–1936) was a leading figure of modern Chinese literature whose oeuvre encompasses novels, essays, poetry and translations. Though he inspired the May Fourth Movement, he never joined the Communist Party.

³⁶Lu Xun, "Nachwort zu 'Das Totenmahl'," in *Das Totenmahl. Essays* (Zürich: Unionsverlag), p. 374 (Chinese transl.: "Xie zai 'Fen' hounian," p. 74).

significance of the context of his theoretical logic. This is a problem of which we must be very aware.

On May 5, 1846, Marx and Engels wrote to Proudhon, inviting him to join the international socialist correspondence organization, further asking him to be the Paris correspondent for the organization.³⁷ However, in Proudhon's response to Marx in that same month, he clearly expresses his opposition to the socialist use of revolutionary tactics to create a new social system. He advocated "returning to society the wealth that had been stolen from society by the economic structure."³⁸ In other words, he wanted to oppose property using the theory of property in political economy. Of course, he wanted to use moderate reforms to cure bourgeois society under the premises of actual society. At the same time, Proudhon clearly expresses his desire to discuss things over with Marx, to communicate their different views. In his response to Marx, Proudhon wrote that his *Philosophy of Poverty* was about to be published. In this book, Proudhon believed that he had truly saved political economy using philosophy, i. e., criticized both the "conservatives" of political economy as well as the "progressives" of socialism. In this sense, he was truly using a deified position to save the world.

As we have already seen, readers are often moved by Proudhon's daring and passionate rhetoric in reading *What is Property*. However, in Proudhon's new book, readers see a completely different side of his work. The unadorned advocate of the proletariat cause disappears, and instead readers are met with a comical "great thinker" who disguises himself using "God," and who calls for "reconciliation" with bourgeois society. Proudhon's weak image must have dealt a great blow to Marx, who had previously hoped that he might enter the socialist camp, leading Marx to not know whether to laugh or cry. This is also what led Marx to desire to "take an accounting" of his old friend.

In *The Philosophy of Poverty*, Proudhon's theoretical starting point is no longer justice based on men, but is rather "universal reason" that is the equivalent of God, i. e., an understanding of social laws.³⁹ It is my opinion that Proudhon understood some Hegelian philosophy from Karl Grün.⁴⁰ However, Proudhon, this tardy student, began thinking in a completely different direction from Marx, different even from the modern direction of the German Young Hegelians. Proudhon did not return to man from the theory of deity that lay behind Hegel's Absolute Idea, but rather proceeded from reality towards theology. The differences between the premises of the two perspectives are great, and they were necessarily oriented in opposite directions. Thus at the beginning of his work, Proudhon declares "the history of society is to us but a long determination of the idea of God, a progressive revelation of the destiny of man." However, unlike the classical under-

³⁷Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Philippe-Charles Gigot an Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in Lyon, Brüssel, 5 May 1846, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/2, pp. 7–8 (Chinese transl.: zhi Puludong, Bali, pp. 464–465).

³⁸A. M. Marx, Lyon, 17 May 1846, in *Correspondance de P.-J. Proudhon*, vol. 2, p. 200.

³⁹Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, vol. 1, pp. v–vi (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 5).

⁴⁰**Karl Grün** (1817–1887), was a German philosopher and journalist who was persecuted by Prussia for his leftist ideas. He was the editor of late Feuerbach's works.

standing, Proudhon uses “scientific reason” to confirm God, taking this theological assumption as the premise of his research on economics. If the labor of man is the continuation of God’s creation of the world, then Proudhon’s theory is “doing the work of heaven” in reality. It is obvious that Proudhon’s theoretical premise here shows his lack of understanding of European philosophy; it especially shows that he knew nothing about the critique of Christian culture.

Where Proudhon’s theoretical basis in *What is Property* was philosophy and some mediated political economic views (primarily an imprecise form of the labor theory of value), *The Philosophy of Poverty* was his first attempt to rid himself of economics theories. Proudhon’s placement of economics theory is also very interesting. He clearly points out that economics is a new philosophy. *At first glance, his tone is not unlike Sismondi, though his meaning is actually very different.* Proudhon believes that “economic science is to me the objective form and realization of metaphysics”; whoever studies the laws of labor and exchange is a true specialist in metaphysics. It is “a new proposition, which alters this science into logic or metaphysics in concreto, and radically changes the basis of ancient philosophy.”⁴¹ Proudhon immediately identifies classical economics as a philosophy, where Marx discovers the secret of all ancient philosophy from within classical economics. Such a declaration is obviously careless and muddled. In the scope of Hegel’s philosophy, the essence and laws of movement in the economic reality of civil society were actually the modern high point of the historical realization of the Absolute Idea. However, Proudhon was not clear on this point, he believed that “the history of social economy is to be found entire in the writings of the philosophers.”⁴² Thus:

[For] economists, facts are truth simply because they are facts, and material facts. To us, on the contrary, facts are not matter, — for we do not know what the word matter means, — but visible manifestations of invisible ideas.⁴³

Coming after Feuerbach, these extremely simplistic, crude, and obviously idealist words are enough to leave readers flabbergasted. They were, however, what Proudhon used to philosophically teach a lesson to the “impoverished” economists. Unfortunately, Proudhon did not learn the true internal importance of Hegel’s dialectics; he only learned some of the external concepts, such as the conflict and resolution between thesis and antithesis that produces the synthesis. It is not inaccurate to say that he accorded so much attention to details that he lost sight of the essential elements of Hegel’s philosophy.

In the first chapter of Proudhon’s *The Philosophy of Poverty*, Proudhon opposes political economy and socialism. He argues that labor and exchange in actual bourgeois society had already universally and spontaneously organized itself; political economy gives us the basic principles of this organization, then maintains

⁴¹Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, vol. 1, pp. 1–2 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 37).

⁴²*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 179 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 178).

⁴³*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 134 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 142).

the operation of this society through human rights. Socialism, on the other hand, believes that this organization engenders crime and oppression, and thus must only be “transitory.” According to Proudhon, these two schools of thought are either completely in favor of this social system, or completely oppose it; he advocates a middle road. Proudhon’s position is that political economy is founded on “social science,” which is based on social facts. This is because it explains social phenomena and the relationships between phenomena, or laws. This should be a research premise, because “socialism is nothing but a profound criticism and continual development of political economy.”⁴⁴ *His expression here obviously has some logical elements.* Proudhon goes so far as to say “**there is nothing in socialism which is not found in political economy.**”⁴⁵ For instance, political economy discovered that labor is the sole source of value, i. e., economists recognize that all value is created by labor. However, where the economists use this to affirm the present social reality, socialism sees the non-critical nature of this political economic conclusion, and demand the refutation of actual society using the labor theory of value. Thus socialism is necessarily in opposition to political economy. These two camps are expressed in economics as the antithesis between capital forces of production and labor forces of production. In Proudhon’s opinion, both political economy and socialism are extreme and one-sided. As one who is more intelligent than the socialists or economists, he advocates a third option: the harmonization or synthesis of the two schools of thought, the negation of the negation.⁴⁶ To accomplish this, we must recognize political economic facts while correcting its errors: in other words, “reconcile fact and right,” and thus attain “order.”⁴⁷

In the second chapter, Proudhon discusses the use of philosophy to “save” economics. Here we see that he develops his argument around the most important concept of political economy, the theory of value. Proudhon immediately points out that “value indicates an essentially social relation; and it is solely through exchange, reverting as it were from society to Nature, that we have acquired the idea of utility.”⁴⁸ This is basically correct. Value can be divided into value-in-use and value-in-exchange. Use is the necessary condition of exchange, for without use, there cannot be any exchange value. Proudhon discovers that this is an objective contradiction, and that “**antinomy** is the essential characteristic of political economy.”⁴⁹ Proudhon believes that all past economists were theoretically weak; they can only directly observe the thesis or antithesis in economics. This is because they do not understand philosophy, nor do they understand that the “character of value [...] is eminently harmonious and determinable.”⁵⁰ This line of thought reflects Hegel’s resolution of contradiction through the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Proudhon believes that up to this time, he was the only one to

⁴⁴Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, vol. 1, p. 18 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 48).

⁴⁵*ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 281–282 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 259).

⁴⁶*ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 20–21 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 50).

⁴⁷*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 31 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 61).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 33 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 63).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 43 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 70).

⁵⁰*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 46 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 73).

discover the “highest point” of political economy: constituted value. Proudhon believes that his constituted value realizes and reconciles the contradictory nature of value-in-use and value-in-exchange. Supply and demand lead to the contact and reconciliation of value-in-use and value-in-exchange, which are realized in the constitution of commerce. Proportional relationships are formed in exchange; value is the key to this constitution and realization. What is left after reconciliation is non-value.

The association which producers, by division of labor and by exchange, naturally form among themselves, is the **proportional relation of the products which constitute wealth**, and what we call the value of any special product is a formula which expresses, in terms of money, the proportion of this product to the general wealth.⁵¹

Constituted value is a synthesis, the close combination of use and exchange, becoming the totality of value or social value: true value. Value is an absolute economic law attained through the continual oscillation between **supply** and **demand**. Thus Proudhon believes that he has achieved the greatest revolution in the history of political economy. I believe that at this point in his reading, Marx must not have known whether to laugh or cry.

Beginning with chapter three and continuing through chapter seven, Proudhon describes the five periods of political evolution. The division of labor is the first stage; it is the antinomy of economics itself. Machinery is the second stage; it is the antithesis of the division of labor. The third stage is competition; it is the regulator of economics, necessary for the constitution of value. Here Proudhon criticizes communism for abolishing competition. He believes that the issue is not to eliminate competition, but to ensure that it is in equilibrium, that it has proper oversight. The fourth phase is monopoly; mankind appropriates the earth through monopoly. The fifth period is police, or taxation. This description is more or less pointless.

In the eighth chapter, Proudhon uses a frightening title: “Of the Responsibility of Man and Of God, Under the Law of Contradiction, Or a Solution of the Problem of Providence.” Proudhon proudly claims that “the task of society is to continually solve its antinomies.”⁵² For instance, society must solve the contradictions between man’s reason and his infinite God-like nature, as well as between labor and capital (the antinomies in social development).

Labor, in inventing processes and machines which infinitely multiply its power, and then in stimulating industrial genius by rivalry and assuring its conquests by means of the profits of capital and privileges of exploitation, has rendered the hierarchical constitution of society more profound and more inevitable.⁵³

⁵¹*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 62 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 85).

⁵²*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 370 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 327).

⁵³*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 379 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 334).

Proudhon writes that “no blame attaches to any one for this.” He is against all simple affirmations, because all in social economics is transitory; at the same time, he is against all radical refutations (he is against Sismondi's move into the opposite direction), but rather hopes that “society becomes perfect in proportion to the advances of science and economy.”⁵⁴ Proudhon himself is the root of this continual resolution of contradictions. Therefore he believes himself to be France's Hegel.

It is interesting that after Marx published *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Proudhon did not attempt to publicly engage him in debate. However, Proudhon wrote on the margin of one of his manuscripts: “Actually, Marx regrets deeply that my views are so similar to his, but that I proposed them first... Marx is jealous.”⁵⁵ Proudhon's conceit is truly astonishing. Let us move on and see if Marx's arguments are really “so similar” to Proudhon's.

7.2.2 Marx's critique of Proudhon's views on economics

Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* was written in French, in order to be directly accessible to French workers and liberate them from Proudhon's false influence. In the scope of traditional scholarship, *The Poverty of Philosophy* is generally identified as Marx's first work of economics. Actually, from the perspective of economics as the object of research, it was far from the first work (before this there was already the 1844 *Manuscript* and *Critique of Politics and Political Economy*). However, it can be thought of as the first published **Marxist** work, the first first published work of economics. More precisely, this was a work of philosophical economics, the result of Marx's use of the methods of the general theory of historical materialism to study economics.

As we have already discussed, it was the further establishment of historical materialism, as well as Marx's immediate study of Britain's “proletariat opposition based on Ricardo's theories” (Hodgskin, Thompson, Bray, Gray, and others) in *Manchester Notes* that he finally rid himself of the influence of Proudhon. This allowed him to begin the earliest shift of economic ideas. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx takes a “full accounting” of Proudhon. Through the two aspects of economics and philosophy, Marx reveals the non-scientific nature and petty bourgeois, reactionary characteristics of Proudhon's critique of bourgeois society. In this book, Marx separates his economic critique of Proudhon's theory of value from his methodological critique of Proudhon's conception of history. Meanwhile, he combines the critique of the naturalist conception of history and metaphysical methodology of bourgeois society with the affirmation of Ricardo's labor theory of value.

The *Poverty of Philosophy* is divided into two chapters with eight total sections. The first chapter is based on the economics research for *Critique of Politics and*

⁵⁴Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, vol. 1, p. 431 (Chinese transl.: *Pinkun de zhexue*, vol. 1, p. 377).

⁵⁵Refer to J. Hampden Jackson [Jiekexun 杰克逊], “Makesi tong Puludong de huijian,” 马克思同蒲鲁东的会见 [A Meeting of Marx and Proudhon], *Makesi zhuyi yanjiu cankao ziliao* 马克思主义研究参考资料 [Reference Materials for the Research of Marxism], no. 3 (1958): p. 25.

Political Economy that Marx was in the process of writing and revising. The second chapter is based on the general theory of historical materialism and historical dialectics found in *The German Ideology* and “Marx to Annenkov.”

The three sections of the first chapter, “A Scientific Discovery,” primarily analyze Proudhon’s theory of value. This is this book’s investigation of economics itself. Overall, this discussion is accurate in both basic views and methodology; however, because Marx at this time had not yet truly resolved the underlying problems of political economy, Marxism’s overall logic towards political economy was not formed. As such, many of Marx’s views still relied on classical economics, and especially Ricardo’s economic theories. *The true establishment of Marx’s own economics took place ten years later in Grundrisse*. In our discussion above, we saw that Proudhon’s economic categories were constantly mixed with false, theological Hegelian philosophy. To use Marx’s words, “the division of labor and the exchange it implies, are already at hand.”⁵⁶ As such, Proudhon did not know and could not understand the **historical** characteristics of the existence of human social life. For instance, “Exchange has a history of its own. It has passed through different phases.”⁵⁷ In the middle ages, all that was exchanged was excess, while later, “all products, all industrial existence, had passed into commerce, when the whole of production depended on exchange.”⁵⁸ Finally, “there came a time when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic.”⁵⁹ Exchange is always **particular** exchange that takes place in a **particular period of history**. We can see that this view comes from Marx’s recently-established context of historical materialism. Although Proudhon recognizes the primacy of the economy in his discussion of economic problems, his unhistorical, abstract methodology necessarily leads to an idealist conception of history at a deeper level. In Marx’s opinion, this is the mortal error committed by all bourgeois political economists. *On this point, Professor Sun Bokui correctly points out that when Marx applied the developmental principles of historical materialism to political economy, when he viewed all of society as an internally linked, systematic whole, this allowed his research methods to not only surpass Proudhon’s idealism, but also surpass all of political economy.*⁶⁰

To Proudhon’s claim that he used philosophical dialectics, Marx retorts:

What, then, does all M. Proudhon’s dialectic consist in? In the substitution for use value and exchange value, for supply and demand, of abstract and contradictory notions like scarcity and abundance, utility and estimation, **one** producer and **one** consumer, both of them **knights of free will**.⁶¹

⁵⁶Marx, “Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky,” p. 241 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 78).

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. 242 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 79).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 242 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 79).

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 242 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 79).

⁶⁰See Sun and Yao, “Makesi zhuyi zhaxue,” vol. 2, p. 272.

⁶¹Marx, “Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky,” p. 248 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” pp. 87–88).

This means that although Proudhon was correct in his identification of the contradiction between value-in-use and value-in-exchange, he arbitrarily and incorrectly derived from them the conclusion that value-in-use = abundance and supply, value-in-exchange = scarcity and demand. For Proudhon, this contradiction is resolved (constituted and realized) in the value determined by labor time. In Marx's opinion, Proudhon's creation of an economic theory that surpasses socialism centered on so-called "constituted value" was merely a twisted, utopian explanation of Ricardo's theory of value. This method which inverts Ricardo to create society was already used by the Ricardian English socialists.

We should point out that at this time, Marx no longer recognized the labor theory of value or affirmed the scientific nature of classical economics in a general way; rather, in most of his economics views, he had already shifted to the **standpoint of Ricardo**. We know that through Marx's second stage of economics research for *Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*, he had already considered the various schools of bourgeois political economic thought. *Marx directly cites the works of Babbage and Ure that he read in Brussels Notes in this book. Also in The Poverty of Philosophy, he cites Sismondi, Lauderdale, Boisguillebert, Smith, Ricardo, Storch, Atkinson, Hodgskin, Thompson, Edmonds, Bray, Senior, Mill, Tooke, Cooper, Sadler, Lemontey, Ferguson and others.* More importantly, Marx had already directly asserted Ricardo as a "historian of this epoch."⁶² Marx goes so far as to believe that Ricardo "expounded scientifically as the theory of present-day society, of bourgeois society."⁶³ This differentiation shows that Marx's level of economics research was already markedly higher than that of *The German Ideology*. From classical economics, he was able to see the differences between Smith and Ricardo, immediately viewing Ricardo as the pinnacle of classical economic theory. As a matter of fact, this pinnacle was the critical theoretical starting point for historical materialism and Marxist political economy.

It is in this sense that Marx conducts a comparative study of Ricardo and Proudhon. First, "Ricardo shows us the real movement of bourgeois production, which constitutes value"; Proudhon leaves reality and invents new formulae in his head. This so-called new formula is actually "no more than the theoretical expression of the real movement which exists and which is so well described by Ricardo."⁶⁴ Second, "Ricardo takes his starting point from present-day society to demonstrate to us how it constitutes value — M. Proudhon takes constituted value as his starting point to construct a new social world with the aid of this value."⁶⁵ Third, "The determination of value by labor time, is, for Ricardo, the law of exchange value; for M. Proudhon it is the synthesis of use value and exchange value."⁶⁶ Thus, "Ricardo's theory of values is the scientific interpretation of actual economic life; M. Proudhon's theory of values is the utopian interpre-

⁶²Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky," p. 300 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 156).

⁶³ibid., p. 249 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 89).

⁶⁴ibid., p. 252 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," pp. 92–93).

⁶⁵ibid., p. 252 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 93).

⁶⁶ibid., p. 252 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 93).

tation of Ricardo's theory."⁶⁷ Why is this the case? Because Ricardo derives his theoretical formula from actual economic relationships; this formula describes the essential abstraction of economic life. Ricardo uses this essence as the standard by which he evaluates bourgeois social economic phenomena, such as "ground rent, accumulation of capital and the relation of wages to profits, which at first sight seems to contradict it."⁶⁸ Proudhon, on the other hand, relies completely on arbitrary assumptions, which he supports by twisting a few isolated economic facts. Here I would like to give this brief evaluation: in terms of latent philosophical premise, Ricardo attained the highest level of social materialism, while Proudhon is completely idealist.

In response to Proudhon's critique of Ricardo, and especially to his belief that Ricardo's confusion of the production costs of hats with the cost of human life, Marx writes that while Ricardo's views truly "made men into hats," this was not caused by the "cynicism" of Ricardo's view, but rather because the facts themselves are cynical. Here Marx immediately opposes the attack of the French humanists against Ricardo's political economy.⁶⁹ Of course, Marx is certainly not affirming Ricardo's bourgeois political economic views; rather, he is trying to explain that Proudhon not only twisted Ricardo's scientific expression in economics, but also took bourgeois reality as the foundation for his establishment of justice. This is because Ricardo's correct "formula" is nothing but the "formula of the present enslavement of the worker." The law by which necessary labor time is used to determine value is a special historical law of bourgeois society under certain historical conditions. What is amusing is that although Ricardo accurately corrects Smith's mistakes in the labor theory of value, Proudhon recommitments the same mistakes. At the same time, Proudhon takes this confused mistake as the reconstructed basis of "equalitarian" society. Marx goes on to point out that even this equalitarian use of Ricardo's theory is not Proudhon's invention, because the English socialist economists such as Thompson, Hodgskin, Edmonds, and Bray had all written important works on the subject. To prove this point, Marx heavily cites Bray's *Labor's Wrongs and Labor's Remedy*.⁷⁰ *Here is the first time that Marx criticizes Bray from an economic perspective, because Bray takes bourgeois illusions as the ideal that he wishes to realize, but "it is totally impossible to reconstitute society on the basis of what is merely an embellished shadow of it."*⁷¹ In the end, Proudhon's "creation" is, at most, nothing more than a comical version of the "proletariat opposition based on Ricardo's theories" — "Bray's plan."

I believe that in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx's economic critique of Proudhon in the first chapter is correct. However, on a deeper theoretical level, there were still some problems. As the East German economist Tuchscheerer wrote, in terms of economics, Marx at this point still relied on Ricardo to a great degree; therefore on many individual issues, he adopted Ricardo's correct and incorrect

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 252 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 93).

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 252 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 93).

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 253 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 94).

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 265–269 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," pp. 110–115).

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 271 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 117).

theoretical views.⁷² The real subject of the first chapter is exchange value. Here Marx still principally focuses on a discussion of the qualification of quantity; the analysis of the character of value had not made it onto his agenda. *Marx wrote himself that Proudhonism was not completely eliminated until Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. In this book, Marx finally truly completes the analysis of the character of value, i. e., how labor forms value, what kinds of labor form value, and the fact that value necessarily develops into money.* At this time, Marx had not yet discussed the strict differences between value and exchange value, between exchange value and prices, between prices and market prices. Because of this, he was unable to deeply analyze the concrete productive state of bourgeois society, and therefore unable to reach further scientific economic conclusions. At the same time, he was unable to clearly understand the difference between value determined by labor time and its transformed expression — bourgeois society's production prices. Therefore, he uncritically accepts Ricardo's views. Marx's thinking here encapsulates both correct content and incorrect aspects. This mistake originates from his belief that value is determined by the lowest level of production cost or labor time; in other words, the "labor value" or "natural price of labor" that Marx accepts have incorrect elements on many individual cases (including Ricardo's quantity theory of money, theory of rent, and general profit rate).

However, with the guidance of correct historical materialist methodology, Marx's understanding of many issues already surpassed Ricardo's vision. Ricardo (and all of classical economics) affirmed the use of value laws to explain the mechanisms by which bourgeois society's modes of production operated; Proudhon and other petty bourgeois socialists, on the other hand, attempted to use so-called "truly realized" value to abolish all the problems caused by bourgeois society, thus recreating social equality. Marx scientifically proves that value is a **historical** category; it only leads to particular historical connections with the modes of production of bourgeois society, and it is the expression of social relations based on private exchange. Only through exchange can value be realized; thus, in bourgeois society based on individual exchange and labor exchange that are converted into commodities, if the modes of production themselves are not thoroughly changed, then the disease of the bourgeois social system can never be truly rooted out. At the same time, Marx more completely reveals for the first time the realization of the laws of value under conditions of the private system. Of course, at this time, though Marx had already started to affirm and uphold the labor theory of value, he did not historically explain the historical **formation and transformation** of value itself, nor did he completely prove his own political economic theories.

Even though the eagles of thought cause the first ripples to appear in a sea of silence, they do still wander in a boundless sea; they are still waiting for the breaking of giant waves to come, for freedom to come, a freedom which fights its way to the sky, dancing with the wind.

⁷²Tuchscheerer, *Bevor "Das Kapital" entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, p. 276 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 211).

7.2.3 Marx's methodological critique of all of political economy

Of the five sections of the second chapter of *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the first focuses on the critique of Proudhon's false Hegelian research methods. In fact, this is one of the most valuable portions of the entire book, discussing the issue of using philosophy to guide economics research. *To use the words of Soviet scholar Rosenberg, in The Poverty of Philosophy, the debate against Proudhon becomes the debate against all of all of political economy, and first against its methodology.*⁷³ The other four sections open concrete critique from the perspectives of division of labor and machinery, competition and monopoly, property or ground rent, as well as strikes and combinations of workers. At the beginning of this chapter, Marx clearly expresses his desire to explain the “metaphysics” of political economy; this seems to be another discussion of philosophy. Thus Marx sarcastically writes that this is a return to Germany, transforming from Englishmen (political economists) to Germans (philosophers). I have noticed that this is the first time that Marx draws a direct **connection between Ricardo and Hegel**: “If the Englishman transforms men into hats, the German transforms hats into ideas.”⁷⁴ According to the line of thought that we have already visited in the previous sections, Ricardo “turned men into hats;” this metaphor reveals the process by which inter-human relations are **mutated into things** in bourgeois political economy. Hegel was not satisfied with the objectified state of bourgeois society, so he transcended objectified man into the Absolute Idea. Proudhon neither understood Ricardo nor Hegel; as we have already seen, he used “quasi-Hegelian phrases” to destroy political economy.

In our analysis in the last sub-section, we saw that Marx came to many affirmative conclusions about Ricardo's economics theories. In the second chapter of his book, on the other hand, Marx uses historical materialism to surpass the methodology of bourgeois political economy (especially the social materialism that existed as a methodology); at the same time, Marx returns to Proudhon's superficiality in his discussion of the premise of the idealist conception of history in bourgeois political economics. *W. Tuchscheerer believes that in the Poverty of Philosophy, Marx realized that political economy is a historical science.*⁷⁵ *This conclusion is correct.* We can see that here Marx has already consciously begun with relations of production in solving the premise of political economic research. More specifically, he verifies the development of social modes of production as compatible with certain historical time periods; it can only be the **emergence, movement, and internal linkages of historical, transitory relations of production**. Therefore, political economy only studies the economic forms determined by human production, consumption, and exchange, as well as the particular laws that govern the

⁷³See Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 305–306 (Chinese transl.: *Shijiu shiji sishi niandai Makesi Engesi jingjixueshuo fazhan gailun*, p. 246).

⁷⁴Marx, “Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky,” p. 287 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 138).

⁷⁵Tuchscheerer, *Bevor “Das Kapital” entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, p. 263 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 202).

development of these economic relations, under certain historical conditions. This means that political economists study “how production takes place in the above-mentioned relations,” as well as “how these relations themselves are produced.”⁷⁶ As such, Marx was able to consider these questions from a much higher vantage point than the standard of theoretical logic of bourgeois political economy; at the same time, he was well-situated to perceive the fundamental errors of classical political economy.

Marx points out that in past political economic research: “Economists express the relations of bourgeois production, the division of labour, credit, money, etc., as fixed, immutable, eternal categories... 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.”⁷⁷ This is because in the historical materialism that Marx had already created, the most important qualification of “being” in human subsistence is not some eternal, immutable abstract essence, but is rather a particular historical existence. Bourgeois political economy had correctly seen the fundamental role of production in human life, and a few exceptional representative figures (such as Ricardo) had even grasped the economic relations in the operation of bourgeois society. *Earlier in this book, we summarized their important thoughts as social materialism.* In their treatment of past movements in social history, especially in their political economic refutation of feudal society, it can be said that these bourgeois scientists did have a certain historical perspective. However, when dealing with bourgeois social reality, these economists (just like all bourgeois thinkers since The Enlightenment) viewed the modes of production of bourgeois society as the natural state of human subsistence, as an eternal, immutable thing. Marx, on the other hand, observed that “Economists have a singular method of procedure. There are only two kinds of institutions for them, artificial and natural. The institutions of feudalism are artificial institutions, those of the bourgeoisie are natural institutions.”⁷⁸

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.⁷⁹

Marx's last sentence here is a very famous expression of his critique of bourgeois ideology. It is evident that for Marx, “there has been history, but there is no longer any” is a kind of fundamental veiling of the historical nature of bourgeois modes of production by bourgeois ideology. This **ahistorical, latent historical idealism**

⁷⁶Marx, “Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky,” p. 288 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 139).

⁷⁷*ibid.*, p. 288 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” pp. 139–140).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 299 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 153).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, p. 299 (Chinese transl.: “Zhaxue de pinkun,” p. 154).

can only be penetrated using the scientific standard of historical materialism and historical dialectics.

It is in this sense that we finally discover Proudhon's immature absurdity. Proudhon views the social relations that are described ahistorically by the bourgeois political economists as a self-evident truth; all he wanted to do was to use philosophy to re-arrange some of the order of these relations. Marx points out Proudhon's fallacious argument, writing:

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 a form of applied metaphysics. What Hegel has done for religion, law, etc., M. Proudhon seeks to do for political economy.⁸⁰

We can see that in using the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the historical logic of political economy, Proudhon's result was that he looked beyond the mark. With his theory, "you have the economic categories that everybody knows, translated into a little-known language."⁸¹

Marx points out that Proudhon was unable to understand that "economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production."⁸² Just like the political economists, Proudhon did not understand that men produce within certain relations of production. Thus he did not understand that:

These definite social relations (*rappports sociaux*) are just as much produced by men as linen, flax, etc. 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 hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist.⁸³

This is obviously an explanation of the viewpoints that Marx introduced in "Marx to Annenkov." *Tuchscheerer's view that "Marx to Annenkov" can be seen as an outline of the second chapter of The Poverty of Philosophy is pretty reasonable.*⁸⁴ Of course, Marx goes on to provide clearer and more powerful analysis:

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

⁸⁰*ibid.*, p. 289 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 142).

⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 290 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 143).

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 290 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 143).

⁸³*ibid.*, p. 291 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," pp. 143–144).

⁸⁴Tuchscheerer, *Bevor "Das Kapital" entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, p. 261 (Chinese transl.: *Makeji jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 199).

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?⁸⁵

What Marx expresses here is the first level of explanation. Marx wants to express again to Proudhon that all social relations and modes of production in bourgeois social existence are not immutable natural forms of existence, but rather social phenomena that change continuously according to the definite level of development of productive forces.

On the second level, Marx naturally desires to confirm that the views of Proudhon and all bourgeois political economists are nothing but the theoretical reflection of **definite** social economic relations. "The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with the material productivity, produce also principles, ideas, and categories, in conformity with their social relations."⁸⁶ This means that the philosophical ideas that appear in a certain society are always the subjective reflection of certain social relations. "Thus the ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are **historical and transitory products**."⁸⁷ This was an issue that Proudhon could not even comprehend. Marx profoundly points out that "each principle has had its own century in which to manifest itself. The principle of authority, for example, had the 11th century, just as the principle of individualism had the 18th century."⁸⁸

Why a particular principle was manifested in the 11th century or in the 18th century rather than in any other, we are necessarily forced to examine minutely what men were like in the 11th century, what they were like in the 18th, 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. 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 detour — at the real starting point, because you have abandoned those eternal principles of which you spoke at the outset.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie. Von Friedrich Engels redigierte Übersetzung von Eduard Bernstein und Karl Kautsky," pp. 299–300 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," pp. 154–155).

⁸⁶*ibid.*, p. 291 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 144).

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 291 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 144).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 295 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 148).

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 295 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," pp. 148–149).

At this point we discover that what Marx is in the process of elucidating are the views of historical materialism that he had established not long before. Here, Marx stands on a much higher logical level than Proudhon.

In response to Proudhon's dual critique of bourgeois political economy and communism, Marx critically observes that Proudhon wants to set himself above the bourgeois and proletariat, but the result is that he is merely the petty bourgeois: "continually tossed back and forth between capital and labor, political economy and communism."⁹⁰ Here Marx expounds on the three schools of economics that he understands himself; more importantly, Marx explains the new scientific socialism. These ideas are like arrows on the bowstring, they would form the subjective line of thought of Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* which would soon be published.

7.2.4 Division and unification: Philosophical discourse within the context of economics

From our prior discussion we can clearly see that in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, economics and philosophy fight their own battles, that Marx's two theoretical logics are still divided. This is to say, the two divergent theoretical lines of thought that had existed since *The German Ideology* had not been unified. *Generally speaking, "Marx to Annenkov" was a philosophical text.* Marx had not yet truly brought historical materialism to the deeper scientific analysis of economics. This was a particular time period in the development of Marx's philosophy in which Marx's own independent economics research had not yet truly begun, and in which the general theory of historical materialism was still unable to face the true progression of social history. Marx's theory was about to come into existence, but it was still mired in different scopes of logic; this is why a temporary pause and rupture appear in Marx's thinking at this time.

The bridging of this rupture would not take place until *Wage Labor and Capital* which Marx would write soon after *The Poverty of Philosophy*. *The prototype for this text was formed from the many speeches on capital and labor relations that Marx gave at the end of 1847 in Brussels. In February, 1848, Marx began revising this text. The following year, this text was published in Neue Rheinische Zeitung as an editorial. Wage Labor and Capital was published several times as an independent text, the last of which was by the Swiss Co-operative Printing Association, in Hottingen-Zürich, in 1884.* The appearance of this text meant that Marx had begun to independently resolve economics problems on a higher level than classical economics, also representing his first attempt to criticize bourgeois society from the perspective of economics. *To use Tuchscheerer's words, Wage Labor and Capital was "Marx's first published work that systematically and positively expounded his own economics views."*⁹¹ Here we see the direct connection between historical materialism and economics; philosophical discourse begins to be objectified into real economics analysis.

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 302 (Chinese transl.: "Zhaxue de pinkun," p. 158).

⁹¹Tuchscheerer, *Bevor "Das Kapital" entstand: Die Herausbildung und Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx in der Zeit von 1843–1858*, p. 296 (Chinese transl.: *Makeji jingji lilun de xingcheng he fazhan*, p. 242).

For now, we will continue to focus on the investigation of the relation between philosophy and economics. Without a doubt, what Marx emphasizes here is society and social relationships, because if he wants to explain the relation between wage labor and capital, he must first explain the general qualifications of social relationships. *In Marx's first speech, he declared that he would explain three issues: first, the relation between labor and capital; second, the ruin of the middle class and peasants in the development of bourgeois society; third, the unequal relations between the bourgeois classes of different countries in the world market. In fact, from the published material that we have available, Marx only discussed the first issue.*⁹² As such, the philosophical scope of *The German Ideology* once again appears before our eyes. Marx points out that material production is the basis of social economics: "In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate — i. e., does production take place."⁹³ Production is only production under certain conditions of social history; it is a material practical process composed of a certain form and operating under certain social relations. "These social relations between the producers, and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production."⁹⁴ This explains the constraining effect of tools. To bring this explanation one step further, this means that any social relation is determined by certain material levels of production, and that it changes according to the level of production. "Methods of production and the means of production are constantly enlarged, revolutionized... **division of labor necessarily draws after it greater division of labor, the employment of machinery greater employment of machinery, work upon a large scale work upon a still greater scale.**"⁹⁵ This is a gradual, progressive logic of social development. "The social relations within which individuals produce, the **social relations of production, are altered, transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production.**"⁹⁶

The **relations of production in their totality constitute** what is called the **social relations, society** (i. e. *gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse, die Gesellschaft*), and, moreover, a society at a **definite stage of historical development**, a society with peculiar, distinctive characteristics. Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois (or capitalist) society, are such totalities of relations of production, each of which denotes a particular stage of development in the history of mankind.⁹⁷

⁹²Karl Marx, "Lohnarbeit und Kapital," in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 6, p. 398 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 474).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 407 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 486).

⁹⁴*ibid.*, pp. 407–408 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," pp. 486–487).

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 418 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 501).

⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 408 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 487).

⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 408 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 487).

After reading “Marx to Annenkov” and *The Poverty of Philosophy*, we are already familiar with the special context created by Marx’s use of the word “definite” or “certain” in his philosophical discourse. Here, Marx devotes a great deal of space to a discussion of the principles of the general theory of historical materialism. Of course, there was only one purpose to this discussion, which was to derive a critique of actual economic relations in bourgeois society, especially of the **ideological veiling** — the assertion of the natural and eternal nature of these relations — of the essence of these economic relations by bourgeois economics. *Later we will see that this was the origin of the special theory of historical materialism.* Thus Marx repeatedly emphasizes:

A Negro is a negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a **slave**. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become **capital**. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as **gold** is itself **money**, or sugar is the **price** of sugar.⁹⁸

On the other hand, “Labor-power was not always a **commodity** (merchandise). Labor was not always wage-labor, i. e., free labor.”⁹⁹ Without discussing the imprecision of Marx’s discussion of economics here (labor is not a commodity; Marx did not develop the theoretical placement of labor-power commodities until *Grundrisse*), Marx attempts to explain the **historical** nature of bourgeois social relations. This is an extremely profound philosophical identification in the midst of economics analysis.

Here Marx begins to come to several important economics understandings. He points out:

Capital also is a social relation of production. It is a **bourgeois relation of production**, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labour, the raw materials, of which capital consists — have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite special relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given special conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just the definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as **capital**?¹⁰⁰

This “definite” qualification, which originates from the discourse of historical materialism immediately incited a certain level of deepening in Marx’s understanding of economics. In Marx’s opinion, capital “as an independent social power — i. e., as the **power of a part of society** — it preserves itself and multiplies by **exchange with direct, living labor-power.**”¹⁰¹ Therefore, in modes of production **guided** by capital, the necessary premise of capital is the existence of a class for which there

⁹⁸*ibid.*, p. 407 (Chinese transl.: “Guyong laodong yu ziben,” p. 486).

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 401 (Chinese transl.: “Guyong laodong yu ziben,” p. 478).

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, p. 408 (Chinese transl.: “Guyong laodong yu ziben,” p. 487).

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, p. 409 (Chinese transl.: “Guyong laodong yu ziben,” p. 488).

is nothing besides labor-power. Even more tragic, if workers are not hired by capitalists, they will be destroyed. This is a definite mode of production and relation of domination. Marx analyzes: "It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialized labour over immediate living labour that stamps the accumulated labour with the character of capital."¹⁰² Thus, capital "consists in the fact that living labour serves accumulated labor as the means of preserving and multiplying its exchange value."¹⁰³ This is the relation between the "slavery" of the worker and the "rule" of the capitalist.¹⁰⁴ This is, in fact, the mode of production of **capitalism**.

Here I would like to explain an important textual fact — my avoidance of the word "capitalism," used so often by traditional researchers in reference to Marx's pre-1857 work. This is because Marx himself never used this word (*Kapitalismus*) before he wrote *Grundrisse* in 1857; rather, he used bourgeois society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*). After Marx scientifically confirmed capital — a relation in social life — as actually the **essential** mode of existence of "the bourgeois society," he clearly established the central concepts of **capitalist** society and "capitalist modes of production." In the text of *Wage Labor and Capital*, Marx had already begun to realize this problem, but it was not truly resolved until *Grundrisse*.¹⁰⁵

Of course, Marx's speech notes prepared for the working class of his day was written, overall, in the theoretical logical line of thought of economics. It did not achieve any great breakthrough beyond the labor theory of value. Furthermore, from the perspective of the relationship between capital and wage labor it still reflected the **non-phenomenological** views of theoretical logic that Marx had maintained since *The German Ideology*. Although philosophical thought was beginning to seep into economics analysis, this analysis was unable to face the actual economic relations characterized by multiple inversions of "bourgeois society." This is an important point for readers to remember. This was an important theoretical effort that took place before Marx's third systematic study of economics.

¹⁰²Marx, "Lohnarbeit und Kapital," p. 409 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 488).

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p. 409 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," pp. 488–489).

¹⁰⁴*ibid.*, p. 398 (Chinese transl.: "Guyong laodong yu ziben," p. 474).

¹⁰⁵See Yibing Zhang and Haobin Wang [张一兵、王浩斌], "Makesi zhendi meiyou shiyong guo 'ziben zhuyi' yi ci ma?," 马克思真的没有使用过“资本主义”一词吗? [Did Marx really not use the word "capitalism?"], *Nanjing shehui kexue* 南京社会科学, no. 4 (1999) as well as Yibing Zhang and Jiayi Zhou [张一兵、周嘉昕], *Ziben zhuyi lijie shi*, 资本主义理解史, vol. 1 (Nanjing: 江苏人民出版社, 2008). (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

Chapter 8

Grundrisse and Historical Materialism

I have already discussed how it is impossible to truly understand Marxist philosophy without understanding Marx's political economy. Here I would like to also point out that Marx was able to make his second great discovery — the founding of Marxist political economy — not only because of his efforts in the study of economics, but also because he carried out a complete revolution in terms of philosophical methodology. It was precisely the “definite” or “certain” historical philosophical context that allowed him to fundamentally surpass classical economics. Classical economics is natural, empirical social materialism, but only Marx's historical materialism truly lays a scientific path; this allowed him to experience a profound shift in all the realms of his thought. At the same time, only in Marx's great political economic revolution was his historical materialism first truly able to become a real science. This was a two-sided process of construction. More importantly, in Marx's process of facing the economic development of social history, he was able to combine the critical reason of philosophy with fact-based research of real economics; this formed his most unique scientific, critical, historical phenomenology. This is the the most fascinating theoretical heritage that Marx leaves to us in *Grundrisse* (the “research achievements of the golden age of his life”¹).

8.1 *London Notes and Grundrisse*

In the 1850s, in Marx's third foray into the study of political economy, he comprehensively opened a new stage in the construction of the Marxist economic science. This was also the period in which Marx made his second great discovery. The newest information available in *MEGA 2* shows that before the writing of *Grundrisse*, there was still an important research process by which Marx directly appropriated primary information: this was his comprehensive research of tradi-

¹Karl Marx an Ferdinand Lassalle in Berlin, London, 12 November 1858, in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. III/9, p. 238 (Chinese transl.: zhi Lasa'er, p. 137).

tional political economy in *London Notes*. In our study of this immense body of theoretical information, we can begin to see the immediate point of origin and original line of thought of Marx's later scientific thought experiment.

8.1.1 *London Notes* and Marx's third foray into economics research

In August, 1849, just after Marx and Engels were exiled to London, they were still engaged in the attempt to summarize their experiences with the worker's movement in the European revolution of 1848–1849. Later they noticed that in 1850, there was a period of prosperity for “bourgeois society,” which necessarily hindered the worker's movement. Furthermore, after experiencing an actual struggle, Marx realized that his economics theories were not yet mature enough, to the point that he over-simplified the relation between the crisis facing bourgeois society and revolution. Therefore, beginning in September, 1850, Marx opened a new “battleground” in the reading room of the British Museum, once again launching himself into a systematic study of political economy. This was the early stage of his third and final foray into economics research. Later, in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx would write:

The publication of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848 and 1849 and subsequent events cut short my economic studies, which I could only resume in London in 1850. The enormous amount of material relating to the history of political economy assembled in the British Museum, the fact that London is a convenient vantage point for the observation of bourgeois society, and finally the new stage of development which this society seemed to have entered with the discovery of gold in California and Australia, induced me to start again from the very beginning and to work carefully through the new material.²

In the reading room of the British Museum, Marx was able to collect and utilize perhaps the most comprehensive collection of materials on political economy, history, culture, and other fields in Europe at the time, comprising over 1500 documents. He was able to use these in widening the horizons of his new economics research.

Between September, 1850 and August, 1853, Marx wrote a prodigious amount of notes and a few manuscripts, all of which were primarily made up of excerpted material. These are organized in 24 numbered notebooks, comprising approximately 1250 pages. These are the famous *London Notes*. *The majority of these notes are still in existence, held at the Amsterdam International Institute of Social History in Holland.*³ This was the original body of material that Marx would use in his second great discovery, the establishment of his own scientific theory of political economy. As such, this was the immediate thinking premise to *Grundrisse*, the earliest theoretical construct of Marxist political economy. In these notes, the

²Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,” pp. 10–11 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan,” p. 10).

³When visiting the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam in August 2008, I had the opportunity to see the original manuscript, which was quite an exciting moment. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)



Figure 8.1: The reading room of the British Museum, where Marx engaged in the work of research

selection and organization of the documents themselves previewed the basic line of thought of the thought experiment that Marx was about to begin. From the commentary on some of the excerpts as well as some of the manuscripts that are included within and between Marx's notes, we can even more clearly and immediately see the earliest outline of Marx's next thought experiment. *The London Notes in its entirety will be published in volumes 7 through 11 of the fourth part of MEGA 2. What has already been published includes volume 7 (notebooks 1 through 6 of London Notes, published in Berlin in 1983), volume 8 (notebooks 7 through 10 of London Notes, published in Berlin in 1986), and volume 9 (notebooks 11 through 14 of London Notes, published in Berlin in 1991). Volume 10 (comprising notebooks 15 through 18 of London Notes) and volume 11 (comprising notebooks 19 through 24 of London Notes) are in the process of editing. The first Chinese edition of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels contains the Ricardo Notes as part of the London Notes (notably pages 44–61 of notebook 4 and pages 19–65 of notebook 8), an index to these notes and a separate manuscript with the title Reflections (notebook 7, pages 48–52).*⁴ Marx numbered the 24 notebooks containing differing lengths of excerpts, also numbering the pages consecutively, i. e.,

⁴Marx's notes on Ricardo, which are merged into one continuous text in the Chinese edition ("Ricardo Notes (Chinese)") can be found in: Marx, "Notes on Ricardo (P)" and Karl Marx, "Ricardo (David): On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation. 3 ed. London 1821," in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/8:326–331, 381–395, 381–395.

the pages of the second notebook begin where the first ends. The primary content of these notes were the notes he took in 1851.⁵

In the first 7 notebooks, which Marx wrote between 1850 and 1851, he primarily studied the theory of money, focusing primarily on the discussion of the principles of currency and banking theory. Generally speaking, Marx's excerpts in this section are primarily directed at discovering the reasons behind the 1847 economic crisis using the national currency theory and credit policies of bourgeois economics. Marx already knew that the causes of capitalist economic crises did not lie in the realm of circulation, but were rather rooted in the contradictions inherent to the social production of the bourgeois class. However, facing the error committed by some of the critics of bourgeois society — such as Proudhon and Gray — who based their hopes of the abolition of bourgeois social crises on the “reform” of money and credit, Marx was compelled to begin his theoretical analysis at this level as well. Of course, we can also see that from the thinking points and subjects that Marx focuses on in his notes, he was actually more interested in basic theoretical research and discussion based on Ricardo's quantity theory of money. This is because in refuting Ricardo here, Marx would **have to construct his own labor theory of value**. This is an important step that Marx takes in surpassing *The Poverty of Philosophy* in the realm of economics. The proof of this is that in this period of notes, specifically in March, 1851, Marx wrote a section of independent, refined notes: *Reflections on Money*.⁶ In these notes, taken in two separate notebooks, Marx moves topically, systematically organizing the economics views on money of the over 80 scholars from whom Marx had taken excerpts in *Paris Notes*, *Brussels Notes*, and *Manchester Notes*. *There are almost 12 pages missing from this manuscript*. From the line of thought revealed by the organization of Marx's excerpts as well as the clues provided by the notes he added, we can already identify the theoretical starting point of *Grundrisse* — this was the critique of the petty bourgeois reformists, such as Proudhon and Gray. *We can see this point clearly from the “Reflections” written in the seventh volume of London Notes*.

At the very end of the seventh volume of notes in *London Notes*, Marx once again excerpts from Smith's primary work, still focusing on the issues of money and money-capital. In the eighth volume of notes Marx continues the research he had begun in the fourth notebook on Ricardo's primary work. Also beginning with the eighth volume, Marx begins to turn towards a general commentary on economics theory, taking excerpts from material on value, profit, wages, and rent. In addition to Ricardo, Marx also cites from Stuart, Tooke, Ramsay, De Quincy, Carey, and Jones. However, the central axis of Marx's thinking is still Ricardo. This is the third time that Marx seriously faces Ricardo; from these three attempts we can see the logical precursor to the scientific labor theory of value and theory of surplus value that Marx necessarily established after he fundamentally overthrew

⁵Of the 24 notebooks in *London Notes*, 4 were written in 1850 (notebooks 1 through 4), 14 were written in 1851 (notebooks 5 through 18), and 4 were written in 1853 (notebooks 21 through 24).

⁶Karl Marx, “Bullion. Das vollendete Geldsystem” [Bullion. A Complete System of Money], in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/8:3–118.

Ricardo. Furthermore, we can see the signs of this shift in philosophical logic from the index that Marx wrote for his notes on Ricardo.⁷

In the eleventh notebook, Marx primarily focuses on the subsistence of workers; topics include wages, manufacturing, and the factory system, employment, health and hygiene, unions, and the use of machines, etc. Here Marx excerpted from the works of Hodgskin, Owen, Senior, Robert Torrens, A. M. Brereton, Fielden, S. Laing, P. Gaskell, and others.

In notebooks 12 and 13, Marx focuses on collecting excerpts on the topic of agriculture. From notebook 14 on, Marx takes excerpts on the topic of the colonial system (notebook 14, and 21–23); natural science and technology, especially research on the history of technology and invention (notebook 15); history and economic history (notebooks 14, 17–18, 20–22, and 24); banking (notebook 14); literary history (notebook 18); cultural history (notebooks 19, 20–21, and 24); women (notebook 19); ethical history (notebooks 20–21); contemporary foreign policy (notebook 14). These excerpts show that the scope of Marx’s scientific research was not only limited to economics in a narrow sense, but also covered almost all cultural science in western society at the time. It could be said that all of Marx’s later important scientific progress was the result of his true understanding of real history and culture.

8.1.2 Marx’s early theoretical achievements at the time of *London Notes*

As we have already discussed, Marx’s economics research in *London Notes* represented the early stages of his third foray into the study of economics. This was also the earliest process by which he came to fully grasp the material; *Grundrisse*, on the other hand, was the important, revolutionary thought experiment conducted on the foundation established by *London Notes*. However, from the fragments of manuscript and excerpted notes in *London Notes*, we can also discover the overall line of thought and direction in Marx’s later theoretical research. I believe that this is primarily manifested in the first 10 notebooks of Marx’s *London Notes*, as well as a few of the manuscripts which he wrote during that time. At this point we will conduct a preliminary logical discussion of this material.

Marx’s *Reflections on Money* represents a topical reflection on the notes that he took in the first seven notebooks. In this manuscript, we can see that Marx was pondering his academic sources and endeavoring to refine his thoughts. In *Reflections on Money*, Marx conducts a comparative study of 63 works written by 52 authors, summarizing similar topics at the same time. He also makes mention of 24 other authors in this text. In this important comparative study, Marx wrote only a few of his own commentaries. From the content of the manuscript, we can see on one hand the important theoretical views that Marx believed could be used as references in the research of money, an organization that follows the historical line of scientific thought on money; on the other hand, we have content that Marx

⁷Karl Marx, “[4. Umschlagseite] [Problemübersicht],” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, IV/8:118 (Chinese transl.: “Lijiatu zhuzuo mingmu suoyin caogao”).

Part II.
On the Process of Production other than Corn.

The depression in England north of 1839. - 10 years and with 2/3 of England of
 the 1840s - 1/2 of England of the 1850s. - 1/2 of England of the 1860s. - 1/2 of
 the 1870s. - 1/2 of the 1880s. - 1/2 of the 1890s. - 1/2 of the 1900s. - 1/2 of
 the 1910s. - 1/2 of the 1920s. - 1/2 of the 1930s. - 1/2 of the 1940s. - 1/2 of
 the 1950s. - 1/2 of the 1960s. - 1/2 of the 1970s. - 1/2 of the 1980s. - 1/2 of
 the 1990s. - 1/2 of the 2000s. - 1/2 of the 2010s. - 1/2 of the 2020s.

The depression in England north of 1839. - 10 years and with 2/3 of England of
 the 1840s - 1/2 of England of the 1850s. - 1/2 of England of the 1860s. - 1/2 of
 the 1870s. - 1/2 of the 1880s. - 1/2 of the 1890s. - 1/2 of the 1900s. - 1/2 of
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 the 1950s. - 1/2 of the 1960s. - 1/2 of the 1970s. - 1/2 of the 1980s. - 1/2 of
 the 1990s. - 1/2 of the 2000s. - 1/2 of the 2010s. - 1/2 of the 2020s.

Figure 8.2: A facsimile of a page from the second notebook of London Notes

clearly identifies as erroneous views. This material was obviously prepared by Marx himself for use in future critical research. Overall, this manuscript demonstrates that Marx had already made important progress in the area of economics theory. Marx had already reached the conclusion that money was a **historical** qualification. Although the emergence of money came before the appearance of bourgeois society, money itself did not become a universal thing until it came under the domination of the productive relations of bourgeois society. Essentially speaking, money was nothing but a **social relation veiled under the shell of material**. Man is immediately enslaved by a product that he creates himself; money, in the form of a thing, is diametrically opposed to man. This opposition **hides the essential exploitation that actually takes place in the process of production with surface level equality**. This means that Marx was already conscious of the essence of bourgeois society's money fetishism, because circulation and money were only surface level phenomena that operated in the economy of bourgeois society; furthermore, they were **inverted** phenomena.⁸ This also allowed him to criticize Proudhon and Gray, scholars who attempted to reform the money system in order to bring about a kind of false socialism. *Marx added a sarcastic sub-title: "A Complete System of Money."* The thinking in this manuscript links directly to the beginning of the theories in *Grundrisse*.

We can see that the *Reflections*, which Marx wrote on pages 48–52 of the seventh notebook,⁹ began with a critique of Proudhon and Gray's idea of a fool. I have discovered that this manuscript is not only the developmental exposition of "Bullion. Das vollendete Geldsystem," but also in another sense, it is a continuation of the unfinished line of thought in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Marx concisely points out that the substance of the reformism of Proudhon and Gray was still based on the illusion that bourgeois society's modes of production could be preserved. "Proudhon, Gray and others want to retain money but in such a way that it should no longer have the properties of money."¹⁰ They could not understand that the contradictions of "bourgeois" society are "due to the existence of the monetary system, just as the latter is based on the present mode of production."¹¹ Marx believed that this was a reform that preserved the basis of bourgeois society. For Proudhon and Gray, it was impossible to see through the fog of bourgeois social relations; as such, they could not see the inversion of social relations themselves. Therefore, they always observed a false phenomenon: "the straightforward exchange of values, in which the freedom of each individual receives its supreme practical confirmation."¹² In reality, it was the current system of monetary exchange that destroyed the true realization of freedom and equality; therefore, all of their attempts at reform were directed at abolishing the contradictions in the realm of circulation, at realizing freedom through an idealized "money system." Thus their ideal of equality became, in reality, the realization of the bourgeois

⁸Marx, "Bullion. Das vollendete Geldsystem," p. 37.

⁹First published in January 1977 in Russian in the soviet journal *Kommunist*.

¹⁰Karl Marx, [*Die Unterscheidung des Handels*], vol. IV/8 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, 1986), p. 231 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 159).

¹¹*ibid.*, p. 230 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 158).

¹²*ibid.*, p. 231 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 159).

ideal of freedom and equality. This was necessary tragedy which left them mired at the **phenomenological level** of social economics.

Here we can see that Marx had already formed a definite, historical, scientific understanding of money. On the one hand, Marx recognizes that the monetary system of bourgeois society was truly different from the estate system that existed in ancient society: “In a society with a completely developed monetary system, there is actually real civil equality of individuals insofar as they have money... as distinct from ancient society where only the privileged strata could exchange certain things, everything is available to any person, any kind of material exchange can be carried out by everybody, in accordance with the amount of money into which his income can be converted.”¹³ On the other hand, Marx observes:

In the case of the estate system, the consumption of the individual, his material exchange, depends on the particular division of labour to which he is subordinated. In the class system it depends only on the universal medium of exchange which he is able to acquire. In the first case, he as a socially circumscribed person takes part in exchange operations which are circumscribed by his social position. In the second case he as an owner of the universal medium of exchange is able to obtain everything that society can offer in exchange for this token of everything.¹⁴

In the past, the character of one’s income still depended on the character of the means by which the income was obtained; this is different from the modern system in which the character of one’s income depends simply on the general quantity of the medium of exchange. Therefore, “the ways in which the individual can enter into relations with society and appropriate it are extremely limited, and the social organization for the interchange of the material and intellectual products of society is from the outset restricted to a definite method and a particular content.”¹⁵ In modern bourgeois society, all has been completely destroyed. In present-day exchange, “the qualitative class differences are transformed into the **quantitative** difference of a larger or smaller amount of money at the disposal of the buyer.”¹⁶ In other words, the quantity of money destroyed the qualitative differences between the classes: “Money, which is the supreme expression of class contradiction, therefore also obscures religious, social, intellectual and individual differences.”¹⁷ This is because,

The specific nature of the income which has been transformed into money disappears in this exchange and the class characteristics of all individuals are blurred and merge in the category of buyer, who in this transaction faces the seller. Hence the illusion of seeing not an

¹³Marx, *Reflection*, p. 233 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 161).

¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 233 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, pp. 161–162).

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 234 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, pp. 162–163).

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 234 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 163).

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 234 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 163).

individual member of a class in this act of buying and selling, but the purchasing individual as such without class characteristics.¹⁸

On the surface, it appears as though freedom and equality have truly been realized.

However, on a deeper level, Marx discovered that the root evil of “bourgeois society” was hidden beneath the phenomenon of “surface level equality.” Simple exchange could not change the objective social relations, the fundamental antagonism between workers and capitalists. Marx goes on to observe that this exchange itself “presupposes the existence of these specific social relations,” which give wealth “the form of capital.”¹⁹ Capital is thus a kind of social relationship. It is capital that causes a **fundamental change to the productive process itself**, which is the basis of social existence. The secret of the subsistence of “bourgeois society” lies not in the exchange relations in **circulation**, but rather in the **productive** process. The unfinished “Reflections” does not expand on the thinking on this point.

As a matter of fact, in Marx’s excerpts from Ricardo’s *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* in the eighth notebook, he points out that profit is not produced from exchange and distribution, but can only be created in production. In order to engage in distribution, there must be something to distribute; only with the existence of profit itself can there be inequality of profits. Although individual, special profits can be explained by commerce, “commerce cannot explain surplus itself.” This surplus only appears in exchange, but is not created in exchange: “The income of all propertied classes necessarily originates in production.”²⁰ The exchange between capitalists and workers only takes place when the exchange of the product of the worker’s labor will bring a profit.²¹ Therefore, as Ricardo differentiates between natural prices and market prices, he points out that the element of chance affects market prices; at the same time, he also explains that he focuses on the essence and laws of these phenomena — “natural prices, natural wages, and natural profits.” To this, Marx makes the following appraisal of Ricardo’s views:

Ricardo abstracts away that which he believes to be **subject to chance**. However, it is another thing to narrate the **actual process**, because in this process, whether it be things which he attributes to chance but are really stable and real, or their **laws**, i. e., equal relations, both are essential things.²²

By this time Marx had already realized that he could not simply refute phenomena, but that he must also explain how **phenomena had veiled essence in a twisted and inveted form**. Thus phenomenological critique again became necessary.

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 233 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 162).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 232 (Chinese transl.: *Fansi*, p. 161).

²⁰Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (London VIII),” p. 414 (Chinese transl.: Karl Marx [Ka’er Makesi 卡尔·马克思], “Guanyu Da. Lijiayu ‘Zhengzhi jingjixue he fushui yuanli’ (zhailu, pingzhu, biji),” 关于大·李嘉图《政治经济学和赋税原理》(摘录、评注、笔记), in Marx and Engels, *Makesi Engesi quanji*, vol. 44, p. 140).

²¹Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (London VIII),” p. 414 (Chinese transl.: Marx, “Ricardo Notes (Chinese),” p. 143).

²²Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (London VIII),” p. 362 (Chinese transl.: Marx, “Ricardo Notes (Chinese),” p. 108).

The overall line of thought of the next stage of Marx's research in political economy begins to appear here. The movement from *London Notes* to *Grundrisse* was necessary to its theoretical logical development.

8.2 The Textual Structure of *Grundrisse*

After completing *London Notes*, Marx began his own independent theoretical research of political economy, resulting in the well-known *Grundrisse*. I believe that this was the earliest laboratory of thought in which Marx engaged in political economic research; it was also where both the general and special theories of historical materialism were formed and deepened. Most importantly, in this book Marx established a scientific historical epistemology and a critical historical phenomenology. In this subsection we will take a look at the textual and logical structure of *Grundrisse*.

Marx wrote this manuscript between July of 1857 and October of 1858. Altogether, the work is composed of four manuscripts written on eight different notebooks. The actual layout is as follows:

1. In what was later labeled notebook "III," Marx wrote seven pages of manuscript on Bastiat's "Economic Harmonies" (later, in Marx's "Outline of My Own Notebooks," he gave this text the title of "Bastiat and Carey"). On the cover of this notebook is the date, written in Marx's own hand: "London, July 1857." *This text was first published in March 1904 by Karl Kautsky under the title "Carey and Bastiat," in the 27th issue of the second volume of his magazine New Age.*

2. In the notebook that Marx titled "M," he wrote 23 pages (the page numbers run from 1 to 22, with two pages numbered 9) of an "Introduction." On the cover of this notebook, Marx wrote "London, August 23, 1857." This was the date at which Marx began to write his "Introduction." There is no title on the cover of this notebook. *Engels did not notice this manuscript while he was alive; it was not discovered until 1902, when Karl Kautsky noticed it as he was organizing Marx's manuscripts. It was published the following year in issues 23–25 of his magazine New Age.*

3. Marx wrote seven notebooks numbered "I–VII," which constitute the manuscript of the *Critique of Political Economy*. Originally there were 278 numbered pages. There are 48 pages in the first notebook, 29 pages in the second notebook (the last page here is missing), 45 pages in the third notebook, 53 pages in the fourth notebook, 33 pages in the fifth notebook, 44 pages in the sixth notebook, and 63 pages in the seventh notebook. The writing of this portion of text took place between October 1857 and May 1858. On the cover of notebook I, Marx did not write a title; it was not until the seventh notebook that he wrote "Critique of Political Economy (Continued)." *This is also the title of this portion of the manuscript. Later, Soviet and East German scholars gave this manuscript the title Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy (Draft), 1857–1858.*

4. In June 1858, on pages 23–33 of notebook "M," Marx wrote an index for the seven later notebooks: "Index of Seven Notebooks." From the actual layout of the text, this manuscript of Marx's did not have a clear theoretical structure.

This also shows that Marx did not write according to a developed plan. More precisely put, the current layout of the text gradually formed in Marx's process of writing. In the primary manuscript of the seventh notebook, Marx originally did not include a title, merely writing "Chapter on Money (Continued)" on the first page of the second notebook. On page 8, Marx begins to refer to the "Chapter on Capital" as "Chapter on Money as Capital." On page 8 of the third notebook (after the manuscript of "Bastiat's Economic Harmonies") Marx re-titles it "Chapter on Capital (Continuation of Notebook II)."

According to my understanding, the writing of Marx's manuscript here took place in the following manner:

First, in July 1857, Marx first wrote "Bastiat's Economic Harmonies." At this time, he was not yet prepared to comprehensively consider the **overall line of thought** in his own political economic research. Therefore, this text was only a post-*London Notes* discussion in the form of a premise. In a certain sense, it can be considered as a continuation and deepening of the economics critique in the *Poverty of Philosophy*. According to the line of thought in this book, this actually continued the line of thought that proceeded from a **philosophical conception of history** to criticize bourgeois political economy. However, this was of course not the focus of the economics research that Marx was about to engage in himself; therefore, he quickly abandoned the writing of this text. The most significant theoretical point here was that Marx clearly pointed out the fundamental differences between bourgeois classical economics and vulgar political economy.

Second, in August 1857, Marx wrote his "Introduction." I believe that this "Introduction" was not one of Marx's mature texts, but was rather his own investigation of the earliest basis of his political economic research at this point, as well as a reflection on the research methods of political economy. Furthermore, it includes Marx's basic ideas for how to organize his writing and early political economic research into sections. This outline was later basically abandoned.

Third, from October 1857 to May 1858, Marx wrote notebooks "I–VII," which form the main body of text of this manuscript. In the "Chapter on Money," Marx begins with a discussion of "money," because it is the greatest falsehood in capitalist social reality. Using the standard of economics, Marx analyzes the dual elements²³ of commodities, confirming for the first time the dual nature of the production of commodities.²⁴ Marx here goes on to reveal the contradiction between social labor and individual labor in the production of commodities.²⁵ Later, in the "Chapter on Capital," Marx focuses on explaining the relations of capital, which are the **essence** of bourgeois social existence, and which dominate all bourgeois social relations. This is the "general illumination" and "ether" that truly dominates everything in bourgeois social life. In the development of economics, Marx first differentiates between "labor" and "labor-force."²⁶ He also differentiates between

²³Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 76–80 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 85–89).

²⁴*ibid.*, p. 99 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 115).

²⁵*ibid.*, pp. 89–97 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 102–111).

²⁶*ibid.*, pp. 204–205 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 240).

“invariable capital” and “variable capital.”²⁷ After completing the main text of the manuscript in June 1858, Marx went on to write a third section of this chapter, there confirming that commodities are the first category in the manifestation of bourgeois wealth.²⁸

It is my opinion that this manuscript does not belong to the completed logical system of Marxist political economy, but was rather the **experimental process** of a great philosophical revolution. This was a draft, an enormous body of texts that still required further refinement. It was in this revolutionary thought experiment that the general theory of historical materialism and the historical dialectics were further deepened. In addition, here the special theory of historical materialism, historical epistemology, and historical phenomenology were formed and the scientific basis of political economy was established. However, past research has only focused on the third great achievement of this text.

This important manuscript was not published during the lives of Marx and Engels. In 1939, the manuscript was published for the first time in German by the Central Marxist-Leninist Research Institute in the former Soviet Union. At the time, the manuscript was published under the title *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*. In 1968–1969, as Soviet scholars edited the Russian edition of volume 46 of *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels*, they shortened the name to *Economic Manuscripts 1857–1858, a name that was later used in the Chinese version as well*. When the first volume of part 2 of MEGA 2 was published in 1976, the name of this text was reverted to *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*. This is the reason that scholars both in China and abroad often refer to the text as *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy. Between 1962 and 1964, the first Chinese translation of Volumes 2–4 (i. e. Chapter on Capital and Chapter on Value) of the Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy appeared, translated and arranged by Liu Xiaoran in complete accordance with the edition published by Dietz in Berlin, 1939. In 1975, Volume 1 appeared in China. In 1979–1980, this manuscript was then again completely reproduced in volumes 46a and 46b of the Chinese edition of the The Complete Works of Marx and Engels. The arrangement of the text followed volume 46 of the Russian edition.*

It is worth mentioning that the publishing of this manuscript in 1939 brought a “second wave” of interest in research on Marx, coming after the “first wave” that came with the 1932 publishing of the *1844 Manuscript*. Even after the emergence of Althusser’s famous “Rupture Theory,” there were still scholars who referred to *Grundrisse* as the “missing link” in the development of Marx’s thought, trying to bridge the gap between the *1844 Manuscript* and *Capital*. For these scholars, *Grundrisse* became the “pinnacle” of Marx’s philosophical creation, and its publishing revealed to the world an “unknown Marx.”²⁹ It is obvious here that there is an intention to set *Grundrisse* and *Capital* in opposition to each other; I am

²⁷The sectional heading referred to here does not appear in the MEGA 2 reproduction of the *Grundrisse*. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 266 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 322).

²⁸Again, in MEGA 2 this chapter is reproduced without heading. *ibid.*, p. 336 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 411).

²⁹Martin Nicolaus, “The Unknown Marx,” *New Left Review* (London) 48 (1968): 41–64, Karl Marx, *Marx’s Grundrisse*, ed. David McLellan (London: McMillan, 1972).

staunchly opposed to this. However, I believe that in the developmental progression of Marx's philosophical logic, *Grundrisse* really does represent a peak in his philosophical thinking, because in Marx's later, purely economical texts (including *Capital*), he did not discuss again important philosophical issues. *In this sense, Gerald Cohen's remark that to understand Grundrisse, one must first read Capital, is a bad suggestion.*³⁰

8.3 The Placement of the Philosophical Logic of *Grundrisse*

In our past study of Marx's *Grundrisse*, this work has most often been interpreted as an economics text.³¹ Since its first publishing in 1939, it has been identified as the primary economics manuscript of the nascent stage of Marx's economic revolution (the draft or rough draft of *Capital*). It is primarily economists who read this text at a deep level. Although there are a few philosophers who continually find such concepts as "the three great social forms" and "alienation" within this work, the economists and philosophers did not realize that this manuscript in its totality immediately possesses a **dual emphasis on philosophy and economics**. More precisely, this manuscript should have been titled *Philosophical-Economic Manuscripts, 1857–1858*.³² Furthermore, this dual emphasis does not mean that economics and philosophy are diametrically opposed, but rather that they are synthesized into one whole. Marx's economic discoveries were also the most important and ultimate completion of theoretical logic in the construction of his historical materialism. *Hooke makes an oversimplification when he writes that Marx's economics theories are the product of the application of historical materialism to the "mysterious things" that are value, price, and profit. In fact, this was a two-way process of construction: the principles and methods of historical materialism became the central axis of Marx's revolutionary economics discourse, while the concrete deepening of economics allowed historical materialism to take a great leap forward.*³³ This is primarily expressed as Marx's construction of historical phenomenology on the basis of the special theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology. In order to allow these points to become subsidiary consciousness in our concrete interpretation below, it is necessary for us to first provide a basic explanation of Marx's theoretical logic.

8.3.1 The deepening of political economy and historical materialism

As we have already discussed in chapter five, Marx's historical materialism did not abstractly face natural existence, but rather faced social historical existence

³⁰Gerald Allan Cohen, "Thoughts on the *Grundrisse*," *Marxism Today* (London) 12 (1972): p. 373.

³¹Some of the more important writings are Rosdolsky's *The Making of Marx's 'Capital'* (Chinese transl.: *Makesi Ziben lun de xingcheng*), *Auf dem Wege zum "Kapital": zur Entwicklung des Kapitalbegriffs von Marx in den Jahren 1857–1863* (Chinese transl.: *Tongwang Ziben lun de daolu*), and the Chinese book Hailiang Gu [顾海良], *Makesi "bu you zhi nian" de sikao*, 马克思“不惑之年”的思考 [Marx's Thought during His 40s] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe 中国人民大学出版社 [People's University Press], 1993).

³²See Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2, p. 125.

³³See Hook, *Dui Ka'er Makesi de lijie*, p. 154.

and the nature in social history. The “entity” of this social historical existence was not primarily general material substance, but rather the **active process** of human society, i.e., material practice. We should note that as the cornerstone of Marx’s new worldview, practice itself was both **constructed and deconstructed historically**. In the developmental progression of human social history, the quality of practice in every age has been different, experiencing the development change from simple to complex. More precisely, practice is the material activity by which man reshapes the external world and social life under certain historical conditions. On one hand, practice is the creative activity of man’s relation with nature, experiencing the change and developmental process that moved from manpower to natural power to industrial power, and finally to scientific experience (the particular manipulation of substantive activity). *In the modern information age, the most important creation is construction in a virtual world.* On the other hand, practice is a new, ordered, objective practice by which the structure of interhuman social relations are changed. The creativity of these two aspects mutually form the subject characteristics of the practice that Marx discusses in *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*.

In *The German Ideology*, social practice is further concretely returned to material productive activity. Production is defined as a historical subsistence qualification of man and society. Thus, the form of this kind of activity — **how to produce** — is confirmed as the essence of definite social existence. Marx had already revealed that the fundamental relation of social existence, of man’s relation with nature — definite productive forces — was a kind of foundation. The social essence formed on top of this foundation were the relations of social intercourse between men. In historical materialism, the reality of social life does not primarily refer to material things, but is rather confirmed as a kind of objective social activity. Social existence only takes place in man’s social interactive activity. It is historical constructed and de-constructed in objective material practice. If one day man were to stop producing and stop engaging in intercourse, then that **man’s** social historical existence **exists no longer**. In this sense, the **material** in social life identified by historical materialism is extremely difficult to grasp. This “material” of social existence is primarily **composed of the useful social relations and structures formed in human activity**. These relations and structures, as well as the laws in social process, are constructed and de-constructed by man’s activity at every moment. Therefore, none of the social phenomena in social life are substantive, but are rather useful. They can be objectified, but the replacement material of this material must exist in the particular use of the activity, or else it will lose its given **social systematic nature**. *Later, the concept of “substance” in Polyani’s economic anthropology would refer to the interactive process of man’s relation with nature and with other men in social activity. For instance, he qualifies the economy as the non-substantive conversions that man makes with the object and his social environment.*³⁴

As such, the secret of Marx’s historical materialism is definite, materialist, historical, scientific abstraction. This is a **relational** essential reflection, not a di-

³⁴Refer to Karl Polanyi, *The livelihood of man* (Academic Press, 1977).

rect reflection of the material object. The relations in historical materialism look through, they do not directly face material substance through definite perception. As we have already identified, modes of production, relations of production, and productive forces are all scientific abstractions. They are not objectified things, but rather essential, objective social relations. The elements of the structure built on this foundation are also the same. We can see that the characteristics of the historical materialism that Marx confirms as the basis of social historical existence are also this was. This basis cannot be reached using sensory perception, but can only be realized using the concrete abstraction of science. The “material” in historical materialism refers to **social, relational existence on the basis of natural material**. Japanese scholar Kurimoto Shinichirō commented on this point, writing that relations of production are not surface-level, visible, physical, simple associations. This is assuredly correct. Therefore, as a science, Marxism attempts to “grasp true existence from apparently illusory social relations.”³⁵ It is also in this sense that Lukacs makes a good point when he asserts that historical materialism is the ontology of social existence. But this does not mean that Marx simply focused on social existence; “natural materialism” was still Marx’s practical materialist internal premise. Marx’s new worldview no longer had the old ontology. The “ontology” here only acknowledges, under the premise of the foundational nature of natural material, a historical perspective of man’s relation to the objective world. It certainly **does not imply viewing social existence as the source of the world**. Without a doubt, this point is very important, because it is the key that opens the door to Marx’s **social historical epistemology**. We will encounter a large quantity of economic phenomena in *Grundrisse*; in dealing with these economic phenomena, Marx repeatedly stressed that they were a kind of social relation, an attribute of society. They expressed a completely distinct standpoint from classical bourgeois economics. If we were unable to differentiate the two, if we were to confuse the important differences between the two, then we would tend towards fetishism and be lost in error.

It should be pointed out that in the economics research and philosophical construction that took place between 1845 and 1847, Marx immediately derived such abstract philosophical qualifications as productive forces, relations of production, means of production, and social structure from the abstractions that already existed in bourgeois political economy (primarily classical economics). This formed the basic framework for the general theory of historical materialism. We can also see that in *The German Ideology*, Marx’s philosophical construction (line of thought 1) was not organically linked to his historical critique based on social economic development (line of thought 2). The philosophical abstraction of the essence of social history by the general theory of historical materialism had not yet returned to real history; in other words, it had not yet been unified with the **complex reality** of social life. To put it bluntly, Marx had not yet penetrated the complex level of modern social life through economics. More especially, in not

³⁵Shinichiro Kurimoto [栗本慎一郎], *Jingji renleixue*, 经济人类学 [Economic Anthropology], trans. Wang Ming 王名等 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [Commercial Press], 1997), p. 24.

comprehending the inverted reification of social essence in the economic operation of “bourgeois society,” the philosophical abstractions of his historical materialism had not yet been completely, historically confirmed. I believe that in Marx’s third foray into economics research, in *Grundrisse*, he finally completed this theoretical leap.

After Marx truly entered concrete economics research, he began to encounter with greater frequency the complex economic activity of modern society, such as circulation, distribution, and consumption systems on the basis of big industrial production. This specific economic activity and complex structure was not a simple relation between man and nature, but rather primarily tended to be the economic basis of social reality (“civil society”), a new basis that becomes continually more complex and that is constructed from the modes of production ruled by the **specific** power structures of capital. Marx discovered at this time that these **narrowly defined economic activities and structures were, themselves, historical and transitory**. *This was the theoretical achievement of “Marx to Annenkov” and The Poverty of Philosophy*. General material production is the basis of all social existence and development; this is an eternal, natural necessity. At the same time, after the form of material production develops into the modern means of the commodity economy, a large portion of economic activity is the mediating process of circulation and distribution, formed and constructed from the exchange system of market competition. This activity is a great **mediating structure**; the relations between man and nature, as well as between men, are reified and inverted. The things once formed on the basis of production in capitalist modes of production become dominant and decisive. Simply put, what appears on the surface of modern commodity economic activity does not appear to be production, but rather the **realization of value**. All must be realized as money. Therefore, what was created by men to be a **mediating tool** in economic activity actually becomes **God**, existing far above us. The divine qualities of capital lie in the fact that when it can bring more money, it appears as **God**. Here, through abstracting the life relations of capital (“general illumination”), Marx is able to scientifically confirm the new mode of social life that is “**capitalism**” for the first time. *Only later and occasionally, Marx began to use the terms “capitalist production”, “capitalist way of life” etc. in his research while continuing to mix his terminology with terms like “bourgeois society.”* It is in capitalism, this complex social existence, that productive forces and relations of production are not expressed in an **immediate form**, and **the essence of society is veiled by twisted pseudo-phenomena and inverted economic reality**. In this sense we obviously cannot simply use the general theory of historical materialism to immediately face the economic reality of capitalism.

We know that classical economics viewed the certain social historical existence of **capitalism** as eternal, natural material existence, and that when Marx began his research of political economy for *Grundrisse*, his goal was to criticize and refute this ideological fallacy. Marx’s intention was to explain the historical and transitory aspects of capitalist social existence, revealing that it was itself a historically changing reality. It was precisely this historical reality that produced the great **multiple-inversion** complex structure in the capitalist commodity production and the market economy. Here, essence is veiled by pseudo-phenomena: the true

becomes false and the false true, the ephemeral becomes substantive and the substantive ephemeral, the subject is objectified as the object and the object is turned upside down, becoming the subject. It is within these objectified economic phenomena that political economy forms its unique **ideological fetishism**, i. e., directly positing the social historical existence unique to capitalist modes of production as natural, objective attributes of economic operation itself. Therefore, relative to the essential inversion of human subsistence, capitalist economic operation was immediately identified as the normal form (“natural order”) ordained by heaven of man’s natural nature (“natural laws”) and social existence (production). As such, the three great fetishisms were the necessary result of the development of this logic.³⁶ Therefore, at the same time that Marx criticizes bourgeois political economy as well as constructs and realizes his own political economic revolution, he found it necessary to seek a new path, one that would surpass the objectified consciousness of bourgeois classical economics and form a **scientific epistemology** that more approached social historical essence from the starting point of scientific critique. This scientific epistemology was expressed as a philosophical logic that continually deepened historical materialism, i. e., critical historical phenomenology that took the special theory of historical materialism and **historical epistemology** as its premise.

8.3.2 Historical epistemology and scientific abstraction

We have already discussed the fact that the general theory of historical materialism was a theory on the general laws of social historical development. This was primarily manifested as the basis of social historical subsistence being production and reproduction in material life, and as certain modes of production deciding the essence of human social life. The special theory of historical materialism, on the other hand, was a theory on the specific laws of **economic** social subsistence and development in Marx’s research on narrowly defined political economy, i. e., capitalist economic life. This was primarily manifested as the transformation of economic relations into the dominant aspect of social life, the enslavement of man to the material forces that he creates for himself. The former was the important theoretical view that Marx confirmed in *The German Ideology*, while the latter was the new understanding that he gradually formed in *Grundrisse*. I have further discovered that a scientific historical epistemology developed at the same time as the special theory of historical materialism, its **central component was the scientific abstraction that faced social life**.

As we have already discussed, as Marx began to transition to the standpoint of general materialism, at the early stages of his contact with political economy in 1844, he directly opposed and criticized the economic abstraction of bourgeois social life made by Smith and Ricardo. It was not until 1845–1847 that he realized the logical connection between the scientific abstraction of classical economics and historical materialism. We have also already explained that historical material-

³⁶See the third chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Historical Dialectic*. (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

ism was an abstraction of social existence and social relations; it was completely different from sensuous natural materialism. Of course, the abstractions of historical materialism were not simple subjective abstractions, but rather objective abstractions of social life itself. For instance, the concept of practice suggested in *Theses on Feuerbach* was a scientific objective abstraction, because practical activity always takes place **in the moment**, and even the modes of production and social relations confirmed in *The German Ideology* always exist usefully in social activity. They cannot be reached through static, direct perception, much less through the direct perception of individuals.

Therefore, here we have a problem of social historical epistemology. First is the **heterogeneity of epistemological objects**. In Marx's new worldview, as men come into contact with natural phenomena, natural objects always exist in definite historical practice; they are **historically** projected to men in practical ways and degrees. Man's understanding of their essence and laws is closely related to the historical nature of practice. Man does not simply observe nature from the sidelines, but rather intervenes in nature through the medium of practice; whether it be the "summer flowers" or "autumn leaves" (mentioned in Rabindranath Tagore's *Stray Birds*) are intimately related to the degree of historical perspicuity of man's intervention in nature. Though material may be the premise, it is not the determining factor in deciding the essence of understanding. In his economics research Marx profoundly realized that the view of old materialism, established on the basis of traditional natural economics, that natural material directly determines consciousness was incorrect. Natural material is primary, but only historical practice can directly determine the nature and means, orientation and degree of one's understanding of natural objects.³⁷ In this sense, **the understanding of all natural objects belongs to general social historical epistemology**. Of course, from the perspective of narrowly defined categories, understanding that directly confronts social reality is different from understanding of natural objects; social understanding itself is understanding of **practical structures**, i. e., man's understanding of his own activity and life. Man himself is the cognitive object that forms social historical understanding. This is, as Marx said, the fact that men are both the actors and the audience in historical activity. *As Heidegger later comprehended, the Dasein*³⁸ (*individuals in real historical time*) *is Being-in-the-world*. God commanded to "know thyself," but man's understanding of himself is doubtless the most difficult, because man himself is not an external object. Reflecting on an **activity process in which we find ourselves** is much more difficult than understanding static material. This abstraction is difficult to experience and observe, because it is not established on the static reflection of general objects, but is rather the abstraction of a few useful behavioral experiences, especially the abstraction of the activities and structures of the non-individual social totality. According to the views of modern scientific epistemology, this abstraction itself is naturally constrained by its conceptual framework, while understanding social history is more influenced

³⁷Schmidt had correctly observed this point. See Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, p. 115 (Chinese transl.: *Makesi de ziran gainian*, pp. 111-112).

³⁸The German word *Dasein*, lit. "being there" or "presence," refers to the "existence" or the experience of "being" in Heidegger's existential philosophy.. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

by ideology. Of course, it is also constrained by the degree of practical usefulness. In social epistemology, the epistemological structure is the same entity and framework as the practical structure; in the same way, the complexity of social practice and social life necessarily lead to complexity of social epistemology. We can see that there is a great difference between understanding of social objects and understanding of natural objects.

Second is the **non-individual nature of historical epistemology**. In our later discussion we will see that Marx directly criticized Smith and other classical economists for their “Robinson Crusoe”-esque view of individual cognition. Why were they wrong in this view? Because it follows the Locke’s line of thought in emphasizing empirical, individual perception. However, in real social life, as individuals are cultivated into men, they do not always directly face the objective outside world. For individuals facing the world, indirect experience and indirect knowledge are invariably decisive. *This is the logical reason behind Hegel’s view of ideas as the beginning of the world.* As men grow from youths into adults, most of their time is spent accepting the sensuous experiences approved by millions of other men. On one hand, there is the fact that directly perceiving men possess habits, common knowledge, emotions, thoughts, and cultural traditions that are all a certain way; on the other hand, ideas themselves are the result of the practice and experience of millions of men over millions of generations; we often **use concepts** to “see” (Popper’s idea that “notions precede observation,” and Hansen’s “theoretical load” in the discovery model). If man is not at the forefront of science, production, and social reform, then he will not be in the process of creative practice. This means that the separate perceptual experiences of individuals are formed from the projections of the complex lens that is the form of social consciousness grasped by individuals and influenced by the external world. The theoretical refinement of perceptual material is not always seen by individuals with their own eyes, but refers rather to the sum of perceptual experience, socially completed observation; in other words, all that individuals know from all other men about a certain object. Furthermore, language is an important medium of understanding; it is more accurate to say that individuals use millions of eyes to view the world than to believe that individuals see it with their own eyes. This becomes especially apparent as men come into contact with social phenomena. Marx often discusses the fact that social life determines ideas; here he does not merely stay at the level of the perceptual reflection of material in individual memory, but rather refers the reflection of social phenomena in our minds. “My relationship to my environment is my consciousness.” Essence and phenomena in social existence are different from natural material objective phenomena (internal and external), i. e., **the surface-level, dispositional nature of relative subjects**. What appears in social existence is the essence of the phenomena and relationships (laws) of the constructing activity of the social historical subject. Although social phenomena are objective, they are not essential, and within them there are many pseudo-phenomena that may conceal the essence. This is an extremely complex problem.³⁹

³⁹In the 1990s, the issue of epistemology was severely marginalized in the research of Chinese philoso-

Third is the **scientific abstraction** in Marx's historical epistemology. In historical materialism, Marx discusses things that exist in society but that individuals cannot directly see with their own eyes with materialist philosophers that base their logic on empirical perception. We have already seen that Marx's social existence does not only refer to material, but primarily to perceptual activity, the relationships in that activity, and useful attributes. To use today's complex scientific discourse, this refers to the **systemic nature** and **systemic structure** in the activity process. These objects cannot be observed by microscopes and magnifying glasses; they can only be seen through the intermediary of scientific abstraction. In establishing the general theory of historical materialism, Marx had already fully understood this truth.

Abstraction itself is also an extremely complex theoretical problem. There has already been a great deal of different levels of discussion and debate on the issue of abstraction throughout human history. For instance, there is idea abstraction (empirical abstraction) and subjective abstraction (introspective abstraction); abstraction of objective reality (industry and exchange) and the scientific abstraction of economics. The types of abstraction also vary. For example, Plato's abstract idea was not based on industry, but rather on the rational abstraction of perceptual, empirical direct observation. Furthermore, there is the Eastern method of abstraction, such as is found in the Chinese *Book of Changes*.⁴⁰ In fact, as I have already hinted at many times, the abstract understanding nearest to Marx's historical materialism was the scientific abstraction of capitalist economic reality by bourgeois political economists from Petty to Ricardo. This abstraction (including social materialism) is the important foundation of the methodology of historical materialism.

Analyzing this issue at a deeper level, we see that thinking on the issue of abstraction brings up the relation between "the Many" and "the One," i. e., the relation between phenomena and essence. Generally speaking, abstraction derives commonality (essence) from phenomena. It can be said that the development of abstract ideas moves from "the Many" (empirical phenomena) to "the One" (rational concepts). Concepts are species of things, the subjective identification of commonality and laws. The movement from "the Many" to "the One" is the beginning of philosophy itself, represented, for instance, by the first existence beneath all things, the immutable in the midst of continuous change identified by the Eleatic School in ancient Greece. This movement is also the gradual deepening and logical unfolding from Plato's theory of ideas (phenomena) to the monotheism ("absolute essence") of the middle ages, to Hegel's Absolute Idea. However, as human society entered the capitalist economic process, past abstraction of ideas

phers. Actually, epistemology is the most lively aspect at the very forefront of the structural logics of the theory of philosophy. Once I have the opportunity I will return to this important matter. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

⁴⁰The *Book of Changes*, also known as *I Ching*, *Yijing* or *Zhou Yi*, is part of the canon of oldest Chinese classic texts and may have originated 1000 BC or earlier. The oldest fragmentary manuscripts date back to the Warring States period (475–221 BC). Originally a book of divination (and still being widely used for this purpose today throughout East Asia), it was soon also interpreted in terms of philosophy. (Editor's note for the English edition.)

began to appear directly in the objective reality of social life, becoming the objective “abstraction” of reality. It was not until *Grundrisse* that Marx discovered that capitalist modes of production appeared to continually realize a kind of objective, abstract transformation from “Many” to “One” in socialized mass production as well as in the market competition and exchange of the commodity economy. First came production **in general** based on industry (the first appearance of standardization and synchronization) and undifferentiated labor **in general** (the basis of abstract labor), and then came value **in general**, the necessary result of market exchange. The exchange (identity) of value (equally valuable things) is the true “species” (labor) relationship of men in social life. The emergence of value (the expression through exchange-value) was the true beginning of the movement of human society towards an abstract totality. Within the movement from labor to value, to money, and then to capital, exists a complete **historical logic of objective abstraction**. Only in capitalist modes of production does capital become the “general illumination” of modern social existence. This “One” that once appeared in the “City of God” of theological illusions is now created in industrial history. However, here we no longer have the world history of the Absolute Idea, but rather the **true, actual world history** opened by capital. *Today, this “One” is the hard currency such as the American dollar and European Euro that have conquered the world. Through this currency is constructed the true identity of human social reality. What Adorno later opposed this vice of identity, while Heidegger and others did not fully realize its existence.* This objective abstraction that appears in the reality of capitalist economic life is the basis of classical bourgeois economics, especially of Ricardo’s scientific abstraction. It was also the basis of Hegel’s speculative philosophy and Marx’s 1845–1847 philosophical abstraction.

After Marx directly entered the study of bourgeois political economy, he became conscious of a new problem: he needed to clearly delineate the fundamental differences between his own theoretical abstraction and that of Ricardo. Marx had already begun to understand that Ricardo was able to stand at the pinnacle of all of economics because his economics theories were based on the highest form of human social historical existence attained by capitalist big industry in reality. In fact, Ricardo’s abstraction was essentially different from the “arbitrary” or “formal” abstraction of other bourgeois economists. The reason that Marx identified Ricardo’s abstraction as a kind of **scientific abstraction** was because he was able to directly seek out the essence from the myriad complex phenomena in the economic activity of big industry. In the eighth notebook of *London Notes*, Marx writes:

What is important with Ricardo is that although Adam Smith and Say still view the **certain product** of labor as the mediator [of value], he views labor and activity (production itself), that is to say, not products but rather production (creative behavior) as the mediator of value. What emerges from this is the whole epoch of bourgeois production. For Adam Smith, activity has not yet been liberated, is not yet free, has not yet escaped the confines of nature, of material.⁴¹

⁴¹Marx, “Notes on Ricardo (London VIII),” p. 368 (Chinese transl.: Marx, “Ricardo Notes (Chinese),” p. 115).

Marx goes on to point out that for Ricardo, man everywhere must relate to his own rate of production; for Adam Smith, man still worships his own creation, what he discusses is still a kind of definite material, a thing outside his activity.⁴² According to Marx's understanding, the progress made by bourgeois political economy through Ricardo was first the result of the development of capitalist production, the leap from the **objectified labor** from which manufactures were unable to escape to the abstract, **social labor** in large-scale machine production. This leap formed the basis for the difference between Ricardo's scientific abstraction and the abstract theories of past economists. However, having come under the constraints of bourgeois ideology, Ricardo identifies the objectified social structure of capitalist modes of production as a kind of eternally unchanging natural state. Ricardo's abstraction is "the One" from "the Many" of real capitalist economic phenomena; however, it is still permeated by a false natural and eternal nature. Marx's newly reconstructed scientific abstraction, on the other hand, observes the essence of productive relations after critically penetrating social economic phenomena. Marx observes and reveals the historical nature of reality. Marx not only recognizes Ricardo's economic abstraction, but also more importantly makes this abstraction a kind of scientific **historical abstraction**, endowing it throughout with the critical spirit of historical dialectics.

It was in the economics for *Grundrisse* that Marx, based on the "human body" provided by capitalist big industry, pushes onward past the point where Ricardo stopped. Marx criticizes bourgeois economists for only knowing material qualifications, for only knowing tangible things but not being able to comprehend that social relations do not have substantive existence, even if they have the objective characteristics of material. The perception of old materialism could not observe these laws; where the social materialism of classical economics improves on this is in its ability to observe the scientific, abstract essence of labor and value. However, even they could not truly scientifically form a **historical** scientific abstraction. In his economics research, Marx discovered that the linear, simple things identified by the old philosophy does not really exist in actual social life, especially in the modern social economic life created by capitalist big industry. All past simple qualifications of social existence here possess complex relations and forms of expression. No longer is there simply existing man, only man mediated by various economic and political relations; natural objects and labor activity is this way, democracy, freedom, and philanthropy are also this way. Marx realized that the social relations in the kingdom of capitalist economics were not fact-based objects, but rather objective "metaphysical" things. *Besides the classical school, the majority of bourgeois economics would later become a fact-based science, a "pre-physical"*⁴³ *science*. In the economics research for *Grundrisse*, Marx discovered that the historical formation of abstract labor could only be the objective characteristics of production and economic forms obtained by human labor in capitalist

⁴²Marx, "Notes on Ricardo (London VIII)," p. 368–369 (Chinese transl.: Marx, "Ricardo Notes (Chinese)," p. 115).

⁴³Or rather, "sub-physical," if translated literally. Here, the author builds his thought on the literal sense of the Chinese translation of "metaphysics:" *xing er shang xue* 形而上学。(Editor's note for the English edition.)

developed commodity production; in other words, the every-day operation of the productive process in modern capitalist society. It is evident that **material objects themselves have not been abstracted, only the practice of human history can be objectively abstracted.** This is another view of historical, practical materialism. For instance, value is a “metaphysical” concept, an abstraction. It is not a value postulate, **it exists but is not directly manifested.** Value is not readily formed; it appears to merely be a simple relation of labor exchange, but historically speaking, there is a process of historical formation that moves from value, to forms of value, to money (prices). In the actual capitalist economy, value is mediated by the deepest antagonisms: for instance, free competition is the earliest form of its existence and development. The more value moves towards the modern age, the more complex become its exchange relations. In the modern financial system, we can no longer see its true face. We will discover that the substantiation and objectification become a kind of **material that dominates material;** this is the most profound **social entity** of the special theory of historical materialism. This is also the most easily misunderstood philosophical level of Marx’s theory. Value substances (commodities and capital) are actually existing things, but these are also the most difficult to understand elements of historical materialism. This is because this material possesses a dual paradox: it possesses the useful existence of value-in-use, but this is not the social essence of capitalist economic relations, which is actually man’s general abstract social labor, or value. However, value itself in market competition and exchange is not directly expressed in its own state, but must be realized through the objectified form of the exchange of goods of equal value, i. e., money prices. This is not substantive material, but rather a reified relationship, an **inverted, relational material.** Therefore, direct empirical descriptions are useless, because description only touches the level of phenomena, it is unable to penetrate to that which is behind the phenomena, i. e., the inverted essential (“species”) relations of man that lie behind material. These relations can only be grasped using indirect scientific abstraction.⁴⁴ To cite another example, let us look at capital in general and actual capital. Capital in general is the abstract “One,” while real capital is the concrete “Many.” The former is unchanging capital, while the latter is the expression of change in competition. The former is “genuine,” while the latter is inversion (later in *Capital*, Marx transcended the limited concept of “capital in general”).

Therefore, in a certain sense, Marx staunchly opposes all non-historical abstraction. As such, Marx’s abstraction here is not the “One” of Hegel’s Idea (and other philosophers since Plato), the “One” of Feuerbach’s human essence, or the “One” that is value in classical economics; rather, it is the **historical formation, historical development, historical reign, and historical disappearance** of all of these “One”s. Through Marx’s own theory of surplus value in his political economy, he easily resolves this issue. *The post-modern school of thought in today’s Western*

⁴⁴Young Lukacs called this the “indirect method,” in order to differentiate against the “direct method” of the bourgeoisie, and his discussion is based on solid reasoning. However, when Lukacs directly thought this “indirect method” to be the essence of Marx’s scientific criticism, his judgment was not really correct.

See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, pp. 236–237).

society also criticizes this “One,” but because it is built on the weak foundation of the capitalist industrial economy, it is reactionary. This is because the real foundation of the identity of the modern world is the internationalization of capital. Fredric Jameson’s analysis of this point is correct.⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, only after the research of “world history” in *The German Ideology* clarified the cosmopolitan nature of surplus value and capital (ethereal “One”) could the philosophical essence of “One” be truly understood. However, Marx did not realize at the time that for the world, this ether was the colonial nature of **Western-centricism**. Later historical progression would prove that Marx’s understanding here had a great deal of foresight, that capital could not obstruct the movement from local to global. This is the true meaning of today’s “globalization.” This is a question that we will discuss further on.

8.3.3 Scientific, critical, historical phenomenology

I believe that the economic revolution realized by Marx in the 1850s, and especially in *Grundrisse*, was based on the internal, driving framework of the philosophical revolution of historical materialism. Without the internal discourse of historical dialectics and the liberation of the proletariat, Marx could never have attained this goal of scientific criticism. I have already explained that Marx, after realizing a shift in scientific worldview, consistently focused on the substance and developmental situation of the human subject. The emancipation of the human race, as well as the development of freedom everywhere were the ultimate goals of his communism. Neither the historical materialist study of productive forces and relations of production, nor the political economic study of economic relations were the purpose; the purpose was not either an **objective reflection, a simple bystander’s perspective** on external social laws. Marx’s scientific theories first intended to explain the laws and eternal, objective progress of human social historical development. Though capitalist modes of production were an improvement over all prior modes of production, it was in the internal contradictions of the objective operation of these modes of production that Marx again tried to confirm the objective necessity of a proletariat revolution. This point should not be forgotten, because it is the root of the critical nature of Marx’s philosophy and economics. The social materialism of bourgeois political economists (including classical economists) actually could not eliminate the fetishism ideology unique to the bourgeois class; therefore, they could not consciously realize that the phenomena and essence of capitalist social economic life were contradictory. Because social relations were inverted into material relations, the economic process was primarily manifested as an inverted, surface-level phenomenon, and social structures were manifested with logic opposite that of the true order of historical development. This was not the inversion and alienation of the subjective value postulate “should” from humanism, but rather the **objective self-inversion of the essential structure of social history itself**. In political economy, the phenomena

⁴⁵Refer to Fredric Jameson [Zhanmingxin 詹明信], *Wanqi ziben zhuyi de wenhua luoji*, 晚期资本主义的文化逻辑, trans. Zhang Xudong 张旭东等 (Beijing 北京: Sanlian shudian 三联书店 [Joint Publishing], 1997), p. 17.

seen as normal and objective by political economists was seen by Marx as abnormal, alienated, and inverted. With great perspicuity, Marx allowed no hiding place for chameleon-like pseudo-phenomena. The formation of such an understanding also implies a complex questioning process; it was not a direct formation of ideas on the basis of experience. To use the words of Ben Fine and others, Marx had already comprehended that the phenomena (or the notions of these phenomena) beneath the surface do not simply wait to be discovered.⁴⁶ Here Marx once again realized the profundity of the critical logic of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.

As we have already discussed, the hard currency of capitalist value that appears in the progression of human social history is the true non-idea "One," the true historical realization of Plato's ideal and fictitious divinity, while the base of Hegel's Absolute Idea was the "One" of this capital (value substance). In capitalist production, human society created for the first time a comprehensive and rich system of labor relations. With the universality that comes as man's "species-essence" broke free from regional constraints in the exchange of value, emerges true comprehensive intercourse. However, this essential relation of the human subject is not directly expressed in its own form, but rather emerges as a reified economic form. It is only expressed as an **objectified form separating** subjects (individuals). In fact, Hegel profoundly sees the necessity that this essence "sink" to the level of material, and therefore **objectification is necessarily alienation**. *In the 1844 Manuscript, Young Marx obviously did not understand this.* We have also already discussed the fact that Hegel's Absolute Idea is an abstraction of the species (essence) of man, that the inverted world that necessarily appears in the historical formation of the Absolute Idea is an analogy, even a true description, of the comprehensive inversion of capitalist social relations. Hegel interpreted the true implications of classical economics and especially Ricardo, when he discovered that only in the operation of capitalism could the natural world become an object. *Heidegger would later echo this point.* This is an important theoretical high point (Marx's analogy of the "human body"). The objectified devil becomes God himself, while man, through objectification, painfully develops himself. This is an inverted history. In fact, this is first not the inversion of the idea, but rather the **objective inversion of real history itself within capitalist economics**. However, Feuerbach was not the only one to not realize this point; before 1845, young Marx was also unable to understand it. As we have already seen, in the philosophical revolution that took place in Marx between 1845 and 1847, Marx not only completed the general construction of historical materialism, he also proceeded from the perspective of general economic development and the division of labor to critically reveal the various objective contradictions in capitalist production. However, on the objective dimension of the movement towards historical materialism, Marx abandons **phenomenological critique**. Thus the reified inversion unique to capitalist economic life, as well as the non-unity between social phenomena and essence are consciously or unconsciously weakened in fact-based research. This

⁴⁶Ben Fine and Lawrence Harris [Ben Fayin, Laolinsi Halisi 本·法因、劳伦斯·哈里斯], *Chongdu Ziben lun*, 重读《资本论》, trans. Wei Xun e. a. 魏埏 (Jinan 济南: Shandong renmin chubanshe 山东人民出版社 [Shandong People's Press], 1993), p. 6.

state of affairs continued until *The Poverty of Philosophy*. *That was the point of divergence of philosophy and economics.*

In Marx's *Grundrisse*, as he began concrete construction of economics theoretical logic, he came to a more profound understanding of the relation between Ricardo and Hegel. We should all remember that in the *1844 Manuscript*, Marx simultaneously criticized Hegel, Smith, and Ricardo. At that time, based on humanist phenomenology and proceeding from the subjective dimension, Marx used humanism to peel back the layers of evil phenomena affirmed by political economy, thus returning to man's labor essence. After 1845 when Marx established the science of historical materialism, at the same time as his abandonment of the humanist alienation conception of history, he abandoned phenomenological critique. Marx's focal awareness was primarily centered on the objective contradictions within capitalist historical development, not on the **expressed form or real image** of this social historical law. Therefore, objectified ("alienated") and inverted economic phenomena were not the subject of the objective dimension of the general theory of historical materialism. In Marx's third foray into the research of economics after 1847 and particularly in the 1850s, in his study of many of the concrete expressions of capitalist modes of production, he again began with the subject (labor), **once again** focusing on the issues of objectification and inversion in economic relations. He again discovered in the study of economics that capitalist productive relations proceed from labor to value, to money, and then to capital; this is the secondary aspect of the objectification and inversion of labor and the result of labor itself, the "alienation of alienation." The inversion and objectification that proceeds here from the subject is no longer relative to the "should" of the humanist species-essence, but is rather relative to the "past" (the economic relations of feudal society and pre-feudal society) and "future" (communism's objective possibility of man's idealized subsistence). This "first" and "next" both represent a kind of objective existence; the **latter is an objective, actual possibility**. This objectification is an objective advancement over the capitalist "past," and it is also man's advancement. The objectification of the "future" is the historical form of enslavement and antagonism. In pointing out the differences between the objectifications of "past" and "future," Marx's historical logic of this time represented an important difference from his past humanist alienation conception of history.

Specifically speaking, in *Grundrisse* Marx uses economics to clarify the following important philosophical questions. First, the qualifications of the value-in-use, natural characteristics, and material of the commodities that we easily observe are merely material premises. In the economic operation of capitalism, this objective existence becomes something of secondary importance; it does not not exist, but rather becomes subsidiary to certain relations of social economics. These are things that can be seen and touched in social life, much like what Hegel referred to as unimportant material. Second, Marx was cognizant of the social relations and economic forms veiled by commodities and money; this was the unique product of capitalist modes of production. Labor exchange between men was invertedly expressed as relations between material. These objectified relations actually become the pseudo-phenomena that veil true social relations. Hegel believed that these objectified relations were equivalent to the descent of ideas (essence and laws) to

natural material, as well as the later alienation of labor in objectification. Third, Marx discovered the dual theory of labor, and was the first to use this theory to demonstrate the cause of the inversion of capitalist economic relations. On the basis of capitalist division of labor, labor (individuals) no longer possess an immediate social nature; only through exchange are they confirmed as elements of general production. This collective labor (abstract labor) forms value substance in the market, forms a special social relation. It causes all products of labor to share a common character (the character of commodities cannot be directly compared). Value substance is not special labor, but is rather social labor in general. The contradiction between value-in-use (natural differences) and value (economic value equality) necessarily leads to the direct antagonism between commodities and money. Thus relations of value acquire an independent, purely economic existence, one that coexists with the natural existence of commodities: money (general equivalence). Money is actually the root that forms the comprehensive interdependence of commodity producers — **the dependence of material**. Fourth, actual economic structures directly invert social historical structures in a sense of historical phylogeny. The historical sequence of social relations, “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.”⁴⁷

Therefore, in the operational process of economics, objectified social relations historically become the primary determining constraining force. Furthermore, these relations create a new external force that does not depend on their own wills in the material practice — economic activity — of mankind itself. Man becomes his own economic product, a slave to material tool relations. What was once a medium in the beginning now becomes the subject. The essence of things is expressed as non-essence, while the phenomena of things is inverted into the essence. As money produces interest and capital acquires profits, the pseudo-phenomena of the bourgeoisie becomes a new myth. Thus emerge economic (commodity, money’s capital) **fetishisms**, which unconsciously become the all-permeating common understanding that men are unable to critically analyze. The whole of bourgeois ideology is founded on this enchanting myth. *Later, Weber’s value neutrality and overthrow are directly linked to Marx’s theoretical construction at this point. Weber proceeds from production, from technological structures, or in other words from the first level of objectification; he consciously eliminates the objectified and inverted social relations on which Marx focuses on a deeper level. A new ideology was formed as surpassing social relations and then returning to the level of material. Weber’s line of thought represents the empirical theory of technological phenomena; it inevitably led to ideologies of technology, instrumental rationality, and science.*

After penetrating the haze of pseudo-phenomena and myths, Marx was able to further confirm that the experiential, common sense vision of individuals and men in general was unable to analyze the essence of such economic phenomena as capital, money, value, and commodities in capitalist economics. This was because these were all inverted and twisted social phenomena. The relation between

⁴⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 42 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 45).

things in capitalist society “always appears in inverted form, always standing on its head.”⁴⁸ In other words, even if “labor in general” were abstracted, the form of its existence in reality is objectified and inverted multiple times; even if “capital in general” could be comprehended, because of markets and competition, all qualifications — when compared with their circumstances within capital in general — appear in inverted form. However, bourgeois political economy (including its social materialism) takes this pseudo-phenomenon as the affirmative premise of all of its theory. It is apparent that what Marx focuses on here are no longer the principles of the general theory of historical materialism; rather, he uses the special theory of historical materialism to penetrate these inverted pseudo-phenomena. In other words, **he peels back layer after layer of phenomena and pseudo-phenomena in order to reach the truly existing essence and laws.** This is because the multiple inversions and complexities that objectively take place in the nature (unrestrained state) of capitalist economic reality must be analyzed using **non-perceptual and un-ready critical phenomenology**, i. e., eliminating ideology and unearthing the authenticity of the essential relations of economic reality. This is the basic content of Marx’s **historical phenomenology**. *Here, young Lukacs’ identification of Marx’s critical phenomenology as merely a “mediating method” is not precise enough.* Historical phenomenology was not the subjective phenomenological world that Hegel’s spiritual phenomenology dealt with, nor was it the humanist social phenomenology that Feuerbach, Hess, and even young Marx used to refute actual economic phenomena. The difference was that the critical object of Marx’s historical phenomenology was the objective inversion of social relations. The abolition of this inversion could not be realized on the level of ideas; it could only be achieved through material revolution. Scientific social historical phenomenology explained how the inversions in capitalist economic phenomena were historically formed. It aimed to penetrate the objectively inverted social relations in capitalist modes of production, in order to ultimately discover the secret of capitalist economic exploitation. *On this point, Maurice Godelier’s description was accurate when he said that Marx was great because he was able to truly analyze the facts that appear in man’s daily life and ideas in their inverted forms using commodities, money, capital, etc. Godelier goes on to point out that Marx elucidated the illusory nature of social relations.*⁴⁹ *Lukacs’ also pointed out that Marx used historical dialectics “to penetrate social pseudo-phenomena, permitting us to see the essence beneath the phenomenon.”*⁵⁰

Concretely speaking, Marx had to deal with the complexities of material, external relations, inverted relations, objectified relations, and non-dominant relations (such as the vestiges of feudalism) in the capitalist economic process. **He had to discover original relations (simple relations) from the midst of scientific historical abstraction before gradually reflecting the truly complex relations and inverted**

⁴⁸Karl Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert (Vierter Band des “Kapitals”)*, Zweiter Teil. Achtes bis achtzehntes Kapitel, vol. 26-2 of *Marx-Engels-Werke* (1967), p. 215 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun* (Ziben lun di si juan), p. 241).

⁴⁹Maurice Godelier, *Horizon, trajets marxistes en anthropologie* (Paris: Maspéro, 1973) (quoted after Kurimoto, *Jingji renleixue*, p. 23).

⁵⁰See Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 312 (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, p. 311).

social structures of today. This is not a sensuous or abstract reflection, but rather a **reconstructed** reflection. At this point, Marx had to gradually break down the barriers caused by inversion in social relations and thus obtain the simple social relations that existed in the prehistoric social collectivity. He also needed to gradually return to the various inverted, complex economic phenomena from these abstract relations. More importantly, Marx needed to profoundly reveal the objective significance of the inversion of these relations in capitalist society, i. e., provide a value identification on both the objective and subjective dimensions. Such a value identification moves from human labor, to relations of exchange, to value substantiation, to value forms, to money, to capital, and finally to credit. Marx's critique of capital was actually a scientific description and critique of inverted human essence. As such, capital is not material, but rather man's inverted social relations. On the one hand, it is precisely because of the existence of the commodity/market economy that there is the economic world created by man himself; on the other hand, it is because there is exchange value that human social subsistence attains a high level. The logic of capital is human world history that unfolds in time and space; however, this is an **inverted** human history, because human development took on the developmental form of material, or **capitalist world history**. *It is in this sense that China did not enter the world history of man's actual development until very recently. It is only now that China possesses global human subsistence: circulation. This is the realized "species" and human historical development.* In this special context, Marx's historical phenomenology was the internal logical premise of his political economic revolution, because only through the confirmation of the life relations of capital could he construct the objects of Marxist economic research and the revolutionary objects of scientific socialism. This is an aspect that our traditional research has not remarked. *I have noticed that Helmich's "Verkehrte Welt" als Grundgedanke des Marxschen Werkes. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Zusammenhangs des Marxschen Denkens. is a book that does address this aspect of research.*⁵¹ Mill identifies the "riddle of pseudo-phenomena" brought on by the mutual inversion of the "natural sequence" and actual sequence.⁵² In Karel Kosik's *Dialectics of the Concrete*, he criticizes the "world of the pseudo-concrete;" however, he obstinately maintains a kind of humanist logic modeled after early Heidegger.⁵³

I believe that *Grundrisse* represents the historical phenomenology of Marx's critique of capitalism. In this work Marx peels back layer upon layer of phenomenological disguise, revealing the underlying essence. *Grundrisse* was the true thought laboratory in Marx's economic philosophical research. *With the emergence*

⁵¹Hans-Joachim Helmich, "Verkehrte Welt" als Grundgedanke des Marxschen Werkes. *Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Zusammenhangs des Marxschen Denkens.*, Reihe 20, Philosophie. Bd 50 (Frankfurt/M., 1980).

⁵²See Manfred Müller, *Auf dem Wege zum "Kapital": zur Entwicklung des Kapitalbegriffs von Marx in den Jahren 1857-1863* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978) (Chinese translation: Manfred Müller [Manfuleide Miule 曼弗雷德·缪勒], *Tongwang Ziben lun de daolu*, 通往《资本论》的道路, trans. Qian Xuemin 钱学敏等 (Jinan 济南: Shandong renminchubanshe 山东人民出版社 [Shandong People's Press], 1992), p. 20).

⁵³Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World* (Chinese transl.: *Juti de bianzhengfa*).

of the special qualities of Marx's economics manuscripts in the 1860s, he began to move towards economics research in a true sense; *Capital*, on the other hand, signified the establishment of the "logic" of Marx's economics theories. Though his discourse did not change, the form of his expression did change. However, because the historical phenomenology that Marx constructed on the basis of the special theory of historical materialism and historical epistemology consistently developed along with his economic, scientific, creative thought experiments, he never directly expressed historical materialism outside the realm of economics with purely philosophical discourse. This is why it is impossible for us to extract this underlying level of theoretical discourse from the research process of economics. When we improperly rigidify the scholarly boundaries of Marxism, it is easy for us to develop confusion in the interpretation of Marx's theories.

8.4 "Abstract to Concrete" Methodology and Historical Materialism

The introduction of *Grundrisse* (abbreviated below as *Introduction*) is an extremely important text. This text was not, as has been suggested by past economists, merely Marx's discussion of the general principles of political economy. In fact, it is first a **thought experiment** in which historical materialism is **internalized** in the process of economic research. In this text, Marx primarily studies how to confirm the starting point of general economics, how to begin the scientific research of economic phenomena, and how to place the historical reference system of this research. In this text, Marx successively discusses production, individuals, the totality of production, the foundational place of production, and the methodology of political economy. At the end of the text, Marx includes a brief chapter outline of the rest of the work. I believe that this may not be the introduction of *Capital*, but is rather the investigatory introduction to a greater, unfinished political economic theoretical system. *Capital* was only the primary portion of this work's scientific realization. Furthermore, there are no absolutely confirmatory elements in this text; most of Marx's theoretical points leave room for further discussion and research. Nonetheless, stepping away from the scope of narrow economics, it is still possible for us to see many fascinating theoretical points in this text.

8.4.1 The projection of historical materialism to economics research

Marx's *Introduction* begins the whole of its discussion from production in general. He did this because *Introduction* was simply the theoretical transition from general philosophical methods — historical materialism — to economics. This can be seen in the fact that in *The German Ideology*, the historical subsistence of human society is determined by material production, where the first line of *Introduction* states, "The object before us, to begin with, **material production.**"⁵⁴

⁵⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 18).

We know that this material production is the starting point of the general theory of historical materialism, as well as the starting point of general political economy as the basis of historical materialism. Marx's later *Capital* is narrow political economy, i. e., political economic critique of capitalism; therefore, it begins with the **productive relations unique to capitalism**. This is the first aspect. The second aspect has already been addressed in our previous discussion: capitalist classical economics proceeds from material production, therefore the three apparently equivalent inputs (labor, capital, and land) in the productive process form three corresponding outputs (wages, profits, and rent). Furthermore, the research objects of bourgeois political economy proceed from the four links in the total process of material production: production, consumption, distribution, and exchange (circulation). To use Marx's expression, "It is the fashion to preface a work of economics with a general part — and precisely this part figures under the title 'production' (see for example J. St. Mill) — treating of the **general preconditions** of all production."⁵⁵ Please note that Marx did not simply affirm the economics logic that began with production. I believe that after Marx considered bourgeois political economy from the perspective of historical science, he did not consider economic phenomena from the **objective dimension — production, the relation between man and nature**. The primary object of Marx's narrow political economy was the subjective dimension of the economic relations **between men** (this object was confirmed later). This **did not directly conform** to the study of the starting point of social history in the overall logic of historical materialism. We must pay special attention to this point. I have discovered that in terms of Marx's own political economic construction, the logic at the beginning of *Introduction* was the establishment of a refutational, empirical theoretical logic to be used against bourgeois political economy.

First, Marx refutes the pseudo-phenomenon of independent individuals (the isolated hunters and fishers discussed by Smith and Ricardo) as subjective designations in bourgeois political economy. Marx writes that production must proceed from individuals in reality: "Individuals producing in Society — hence socially determined individual production — is, of course, the point of departure."⁵⁶ This was an issue that Marx discussed in the fourth manuscript of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. After his thinking in *London Notes*, Marx was able to further point out that independent individuals were a historical **result**, not a premise. *This reminds one of Foucault's post-modern declaration: "Man is a recent invention."* In Marx's opinion the abstract individuals of Smith and Ricardo are only an "aesthetic semblance," an unimaginative prophecy of the circumstances of human subsistence in bourgeois society in the 18th century. This is because only in the naturally competitive society of capitalism are individual men given expression detached from natural bonds, while in the past historical periods of the natural economy, "natural bonds make [man] the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate." Therefore, these independent individuals in "civil society" are merely the result of historical development: "The product on one side

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 23).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 18).

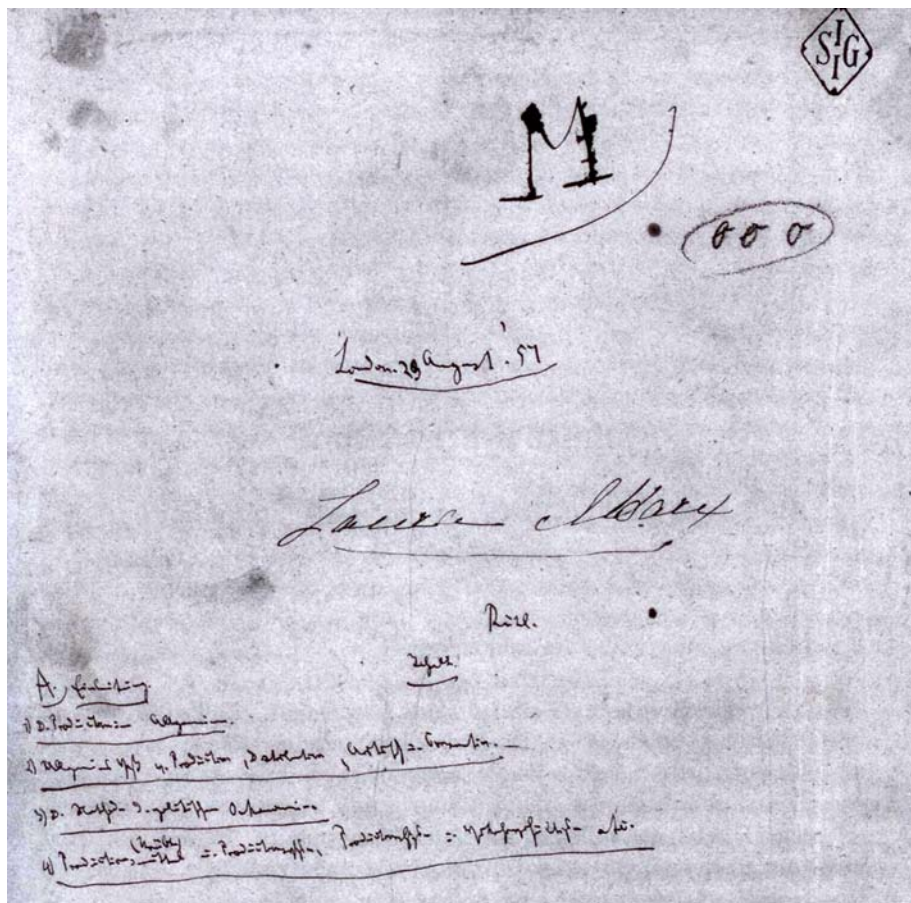


Figure 8.3: Facsimile of a page from the “Introduction to *Grundrisse*”

of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century.”⁵⁷ However, bourgeois political economy (including all unscientific ideologies) **falsely express these historically generated individuals as natural men**, making them the starting point of history. *In economics, perhaps only Steuart is an exception to this rule.*

As Marx reviews history, he discovers that the more deeply we move back in history, the more does the individual, and hence also the producing individual, appear as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole:

in a still quite natural way in the family and in the family expanded into the clan [*Stamm*]; then later in the various forms of communal society arising out of the antitheses and fusions of the clan. Only in

⁵⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 21 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 18).

the eighteenth century, in “civil society,” do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity. But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is also precisely that of the hitherto most developed social (from this standpoint, general) relations.⁵⁸

This means that individuals possessing truly independent subsistence are not eternal; rather, they are the products of certain conditions of history. In *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, Marx only explained that the essence of man is the sum of real social relations, that the subsistence of man was only a definite historical qualification (these were only philosophical qualifications); thus in the economic scope of historical reality, the subsistence and essence of man are both historical qualifications in terms of **phylogeny**. In Marx’s opinion, the subsistence and essence of man are the sum of definite social relations. In the beginning, man’s essence was in his natural relation to nature and to other men. It was not possible for individuals to subsist apart from their species, and individuals were only accessories to their families and clans. Only in later bourgeois civil society, through the mediation of the division of labor and exchange and the one-sided nature of social labor did individuals lose the “essence” that once was one with them: this essence was composed of natural species relationships, which, after re-forming into species (social economic relations), formed relationships between material that departed from individuals. Here individuals exist individually, and market exchange again spontaneously unites one-sided individuals with material connections. Individual independence is actually the result of the economic development of bourgeois society. This was the law that Hegel profoundly understood. *It was in this sense that Marx truly refuted Stirner*. However, this historical qualification of actual individuals was misunderstood by political economists as the premise to human society’s subjective state of subsistence. This is the first item of sensuous “common knowledge” that Marx desires to refute. In Marx’s later economics research, he returned to this issue:

“**Man?**” If the category “man” is meant here, then he has “no” needs at all; if man in isolated juxtaposition with nature, then each individual must be considered a nongregarious animal; if a man already existing in some kind of society—and this is what Mr. Wagner implies, since his “man” does have a language, even though he lacks a university education—then as a starting-point the specific character of this social man must be presented, i. e. the specific character of the community in which he lives, since in that case production, i. e. the process by which he makes his living, already has some kind of social character.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 21).

⁵⁹ Karl Marx, “[Randglossen zu Adolph Wagners *Lehrbuch der politischen Ökonomie* (Zweite Auflage), Band I, 1879,” in Marx and Engels, *MEW*, vol. 19, p. 362 (Chinese transl.: “Ping A. Wagena,” pp. 404–405).

Second, I have seen that Marx also disapproved of **general production** as the premise of the bourgeois political economic object. Marx believed that “Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development — production by social individuals.”⁶⁰ According to historical materialism, production can only be production under definite historical conditions: one must study the process of historical development in its various stages. For instance, in discussing production in modern bourgeois society, Marx writes that this is the issue that he wishes to study at this point. However, this does not mean that production cannot be abstracted, “all epochs of production have certain common traits, common characteristics.” This is production in general. Production in general is not the same thing as general production. “Production in general” refers to the abstraction of production, while the latter “general production” refers to “a **particular** branch of production — e.g. agriculture, cattle-raising, manufacture etc. — or it is a **totality**, a certain social body, a social subject, which is active in a greater or sparser totality of branches of production.”⁶¹ Marx discovered that even if production in general itself is composed of common elements extracted from different historical 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.”⁶² The first kind refers to the subjects (men) and objects (nature) that must exist in all social productive processes; the second refers to the elements of social production that exist uniquely under conditions of private property (ownership, market exchange, etc.); the third refers to elements common to primitive society and communist society (public ownership). Marx goes on to point out that it is important to not forget the “essential differences” of the historical existence of production. However, the mistake of political economists lay in the fact that proceeding from this production in general, they eliminated the **historical differences** in social production, transforming capital, this social relation under definite conditions of history into “a general, eternal relation of nature,” thus affirming “the eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relations.”⁶³

Here the philosophical theoretical significance of Marx’s thought context is to provide a definite **ad hoc explanation** to make scientific the explanation of production and reproduction in the first chapter of the first volume of *The German Ideology*. Because Marx and Engels did not have a concrete understanding of the economic progression of social history, they declared at the time that “civil society” was the basis of all of society. Actually, civil society is merely the developmental result of certain historical conditions, especially modern capitalism. Even if we directly metaphorically take Marx’s civil society as an economic foundation, this developed state of the structure of economic relations can only appear in a definite stage of material production. *This is one of the reasons why we identify The German Ideology as a work that was not completely mature.*

Because of this, Marx could not agree with the practice of bourgeois economists in proudly adding a “general theoretical section” at the beginning of their theo-

⁶⁰Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 22).

⁶¹*ibid.*, p. 23 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 23).

⁶²*ibid.*, p. 23 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 22).

⁶³*ibid.*, p. 23 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 22).

retical systems, using the title “Production” and using it to discuss all the general preconditions of production. It is evident that Marx is critical of this practice. For bourgeois political economy, this general part includes two aspects: first, “the conditions without which production is not possible”; second, “the conditions which promote production to a greater or lesser degree.” Marx finds that under the hat of these so-called general preconditions of production, concrete social movements and particular laws that have social historical natures, such as production and distribution, are presented “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.”⁶⁴ For instance, with regards to the question of distribution, bourgeois political economy does not analyze the particular, real relationship of relations of production and distribution in social historical existence; rather, it views distribution as a toy that can be manipulated arbitrarily. This makes it possible for political economy to “to confound or to extinguish all historic differences under **general human** laws.”⁶⁵ Therefore, bourgeois economists continually bring up abstract concepts of property and law, as well as the protection of property by the police. Marx retorts, “All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society.” Proceeding from true history, we will discover that the differences between the implications of the public property of primitive communes are completely different from the implications property under conditions of private property. Furthermore, “every form of production creates its own legal relations, form of government, etc.”⁶⁶ Marx concludes: “To summarize: There are characteristics which all stages of production have in common, and which are established as general ones by the mind; but the so-called **general preconditions** of all production are nothing more than these abstract moments with which no real historical stage of production can be grasped.”⁶⁷

Third, Marx next considers positively explaining the internal structure of the productive process itself in the operation of modern economics, i.e., the view of the special theory of historical materialism towards the relation of distribution, exchange, and consumption, all elements determined and constrained by production. However, for the bourgeois political economists, the relation of these elements are “lined up together.” Marx writes that these are the “various categories” that he must focus on before “going further in the analysis of production.” Thus we can see that his views still revolve around the refutation of bourgeois political economy. I do not believe that the theories that Marx expresses here represent the scientific construction of his own economics, because these expressions are the implementation in economics of the historical materialist views that we have already seen previously. Here, Marx’s general opposition to the object of bourgeois political economy merely implies that he was unable to confirm his own unique object of economic research. After his discussion here, Marx writes:

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 24 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 24).

⁶⁵*ibid.*, pp. 24–25 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 24).

⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 25 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 24).

⁶⁷*ibid.*, pp. 25–26 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 25).

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. Production predominates not only over itself, in the antithetical definition of production, but over the other moments as well... A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as **definite relations between these different moments.**⁶⁸

I have already mentioned that this definite historical qualification was the important starting point of Marx's supersession of all past political economists. We will see the manifestation of this in each specific economic micro-research viewpoint.

8.4.2 Marx's first discussion of the context of economic scientific research methods

After commenting on the relation between production and several other economic links, he suddenly shifts the emphasis of his appraisal to the "methods of political economy." The vast majority of past research views Marx's discussion of methodology at this point to be a direct identification of the construction of his own political economic methods. I, on the other hand, believe that here Marx was still in the process of conducting a kind of thought experiment, that in the progression of his analysis, he was only beginning to confirm the basic direction of his own research methods. I say merely a basic direction because it was still expressed as simply a critical affirmation of Hegel's philosophy as well as the political economic methods of Smith and Ricardo.

Marx first lists two research methods that already existed in political economy. The first was the logical path that **begin with the concrete and moved towards the abstract.** Marx writes that in economic research, "to begin with the real and the concrete, with the real precondition... this would be a chaotic conception of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards ever more simple concepts, from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations."⁶⁹ This method begins with the "full conception," the "living whole," such as population, nations, and states, before "evaporating" a few "determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, money, value, etc."⁷⁰ Marx believed that this research method was the path that economics had tread during its nascent period. He also believed that in terms of his research at the time, such a path was not one that he could follow. *Of course, this research method does not exclude the concrete appropriation and subsequent abstraction of large amounts of material in the early period of theoretical research. This is "concrete to abstract" in another sense. For instance, the research process from London Notes to Grundrisse is the manifestation of this method.*

⁶⁸Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 35 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 36-37).

⁶⁹*ibid.*, pp. 35-36 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 37).

⁷⁰*ibid.*, p. 36 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 38).

The second research method was one that Marx affirmed, the “scientifically correct method,” i. e., the path of theoretical logic from **abstract to concrete**. Here, economics research begins with abstract determinations, then returns to “a rich totality of many determinations and relations.” This is the means by which “the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought.”⁷¹ In fact, this is scientific research that began with classical English economics, i. e., with the simple, abstract, fundamental concepts of labor, the division of labor, demand, and exchange value, before rising to nations, international exchange, and world markets, and finally forming the various modern economic systems.

It is especially important for us to realize that Marx’s understanding and judgment of classical economic methods at this time was already clearly different from his views as he barely began economics research in the 1844 *Paris Notes*. At that time, Marx refuted the “inhuman” abstract methods of Smith and Ricardo, but here, the situation is fundamentally inversed: Marx the historical materialist begins to move towards the point of view that he originally opposed.

At this time, Marx provides an extremely concrete expression of this scientific abstraction:

The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation and conception.⁷²

I have found that Marx’s view here is very similar to the description of the logical movement of ideas in Hegel’s *Logic*. As such, Marx immediately differentiates the method of abstraction that he confirms from Hegel’s abstract to concrete method. Marx points out that the secret of Hegel’s philosophy lay in the fact that he solidifies the structure of the thinking method into a logical being, thus creating a kind of objective idealism that proceeds from abstract ideas and denigrates concrete material existence. For Hegel, “the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being.” This causes Hegel to “[fall] into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself.”⁷³ It is evident that Marx’s view at this time was quite profound. *His insights here are obviously superior when compared to young Marx’s Feuerbachian, general materialist understanding of inverting the subject and predicate in Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*. In fact, Hegel’s method of abstract to concrete is directly based on the self-deepening process of individual indirect knowledge. In other words, each individual begins with abstract concepts, and after experiencing concrete, diverse sensuous life, attains a kind of conceptual concrete abstraction. Here, Marx only

⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 36 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 38).

⁷²*ibid.*, p. 36 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 38).

⁷³*ibid.*, p. 36 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 38).

chooses a small portion of the Hegel's logical whole. From our earlier discussion we have already seen that in terms of the developmental progression of Hegel's philosophy, he first focuses on studying concrete social history, and especially economics research (Jena period); it was not until later that he gradually formed a mature philosophical abstraction. In Hegel's philosophical system, the logical line of thought in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* proceeds from the refutation of the observational concrete and ascends to the abstract. However, this is the process of disproving inverted, objective "phenomena." In this book, Hegel leads us to begin from objective confirmation, but he points out that facing the object must begin from the framework conception. This must be based on self-consciousness, and self-consciousness must be based on ideas when effacing the world. Therefore, ideas are the true point of origin for everything. *Logic* begins with abstract ideas to derive concrete concepts, and the whole of *Logic* is the abstract point of origin of world history. Hegel's philosophy moves through sensuous nature and the human social historical concrete, again returning to concrete abstraction: the Absolute Spirit. This developmental process can be expressed using the following diagram:

The Jena System 1804–5: Logic and Metaphysics: The actual concrete of economics in social history → objective abstraction (labor and money)

The Phenomenology of Spirit: Refutation of individual sensuous concrete → rational abstraction.

Science of Logic: Abstract concepts → concrete concepts

Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: Abstract logic → sensuous concrete of history
→ concrete Absolute Spirit (abstract)

We can see that here Marx only picks out **one** of the links from Hegel's logic: abstract to concrete. Importantly, this link was also the basic research method of classical economics. I believe that Marx's economic method of abstract-concrete was not the same things as his historical dialectics, but was rather a particular link in dialectical analysis. *Professor Sun Bokui clearly and penetratingly pointed out that "the method of Capital was a limited application of historical dialectics."*⁷⁴ This means that **this method cannot be independently confirmed or exaggerated.** The premise to this method is the formation of objective historical abstraction — if not, it can only lead to confusion. *As we have already seen, in contrast to the context at this point, London Notes went through the process of "concrete to abstract."* More importantly, from the perspective of Marx's historical phenomenology, the **linear** abstract-concrete line of thought cannot truly elucidate Marx's complex analytical process. *As Zelený wrote, Marx's scientific system is not a linear line "from phenomena to essence" or "from essence to phenomena." Quite the contrary, it oscillates between phenomena and essence, thus forming a comprehensive, total comprehension of things.*⁷⁵

⁷⁴See Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhaxue," vol. 2, p. 340.

⁷⁵Zelený, *The Logic of Marx*, p. 121.

Furthermore, a more important characteristic of Marx's discussion of research methods was his profound understanding of the internal connection between Hegel's dialectic and classical economics, i. e., why Smith and Ricardo would proceed from abstract economic determinations, why beginning with the abstract was the correct method for modern political economic research; through this thinking, Marx developed the outline of a book especially on Hegel's dialectical method. *Georgi Bagaturija wrote that it was Marx's "accidental" encounter with Hegel's work in 1857 that led him to desire to write his book. Although Bagaturija provides extensive and complicated textual proof, it is unfortunate that he uses it to prove a subjective hypothesis that is far removed from Marx's thought progression.*⁷⁶ Marx explains his new understanding using the historical abstraction of labor in general.

8.4.3 Actual historical abstraction qualified by scientific labor

I am certain that my readers are not unfamiliar with the concept of labor, because in the *1844 Manuscript*, we already encountered "labor" as the species-essence of man. However, at this time, in the historical scope of economics, Marx understood that the "labor in general" that had taken for a logical premise was actually a "modern category." *To borrow the words of a post-modern thinker, this "labor" is a modern invention.* In terms of philosophical methodology, this was a problem that Marx had already resolved in *Marx to Annenkov* and *The Poverty of Philosophy*. This time, however, it was also the most recent research results of *London Notes*, the results of comprehensive, systematic historical research of bourgeois classical economics.

At first glance, labor appears to be an extremely simple, commonly discussed concept; as a general qualification of human subsistence, its conception has existed since ancient times. However, Marx had already discovered that in economics research, "'labor' is as modern a category as are the relations which create this simple abstraction."⁷⁷ *As we have already discussed in the first chapter of this book, the thought context and methodology of political economy were the historical preconditions to Marx's scientific methodology.* At this time, Marx clearly reproduces the **process of historical abstraction** in bourgeois economics of the category of "labor in general:" first, in the early monetary system, wealth was still an objective thing, something that could be seen and touched, "an external thing, in money." In contrast, the commercial or manufacture system began to pierce the level of material phenomena, "by locating the source of wealth not in the object but in a subjective activity — in commercial and manufacturing activity — even though it still always conceives this activity within narrow boundaries, as moneymaking."⁷⁸ This represents a "great step forward" for **historical abstraction**. Second, the physiocrats (the true beginning of bourgeois classical economics) first "posits a certain kind of labor — agriculture — as the creator of wealth, and the object itself no longer appears in a monetary disguise, but as the product in general, as

⁷⁶See Bagaturija and Vygotsky, *Makesi de jingjixue yichan*, p. 158–159.

⁷⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 38 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 41).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, pp. 38–39 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 41).

the general result of labor”; although this labor is still restricted to a “certain kind of labor — agriculture,” the essence of this wealth has already been abstracted from the material shell of money. Last is Smith. Marx refers to Smith’s theories as an “immense step forward,” because he “threw out every limiting specification of wealth-creating activity — not only manufacturing, or commercial or agricultural labour, but one as well as the others, labour in general.” Thus “the abstract universality of wealth-creating activity we now have the universality of the object defined as wealth, the product as such or again labor as such, but labour as past, objectified labor.”⁷⁹ This is the historical process by which labor in general came into being in the development of the modern industrial economy.

There are two points here that require additional explanation: first, Marx was simply describing the abstract process of labor in general in an economics sense, ignoring the progression of actual history as the **subjective logical abstract basis**, i. e., the real progression of the French physiocrats and English capitalist manufactures. Second, the highest point of the important abstraction of labor in general was obviously Ricardo, who based his theories on England’s big industrial production after Smith. This important distinction was made by Marx in his later research.

It must be pointed out that in past research, scholars approached Marx’s theoretical thinking from the perspective of economics, but Marx’s important discussion here contains important philosophical connotations, because until now, Marx’s historical materialist science did not begin to be actually confirmed until this point. Social existence determines social consciousness; it does not mean idea observational material, but rather that ideas are determined by the historical, certain material nature of activity of men. The extremely abstract philosophical assumptions of *The German Ideology* are clearly made apparent here through economics.

Marx goes on to summarize: “the most general abstractions arise only in the midst of the richest possible concrete development, where one thing appears as common to many, to all.”⁸⁰ Though Marx’s expression here appears to be very abstract, he is actually explaining the **historical constraining** relationship between scientific abstraction and the development of actual capitalist material production.

Although the simpler category may have existed historically before the more concrete, it can achieve its full (intensive and extensive) development precisely in a combined form of society, while the more concrete category was more fully developed in a less developed form of society.⁸¹

Therefore, for labor in general to be realized in theory, in the historical subsistence of man, it must first “presuppose a very developed totality of real kinds of labour, of which no single one is any longer predominant.” Thus labor will not be conceived as any specific form of labor (such as the agricultural labor emphasized by the physiocrats). Second, under these circumstances, all forms of labor are seen

⁷⁹Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 41).

⁸⁰*ibid.*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 42).

⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 38 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 41).

as equal, because “individuals can with ease transfer from one labor to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference.”⁸² We can see that this kind of labor is the material productive labor of capitalist **big industry**. This is because only here can labor in capitalist material production “become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked with particular individuals in any specific form.”⁸³ This labor in general is obviously not the **total** labor between one individual and another in the time of manufactures during Smith’s day; it is expressed only in the objective labor **in general** of the big industrial production in Ricardo’s economics. This is the true basis of Marx’s later scientific abstraction. However, Marx did not directly identify this point at this time.

Marx believed that American society at the time was the most modern existential form of capitalist society, and so labor in general is most fully in its most developed industrial material production. Marx writes:

Here, then, for the first time, the point of departure of modern economics, namely the abstraction of the category “labor,” “labor in general,” labor pure and simple, becomes true in practice. The simplest abstraction, then, which modern economics places at the head of its discussions, and which expresses an immeasurably ancient relation valid in all forms of society, nevertheless achieves practical truth as an abstraction only as a category of the most modern society.⁸⁴

This means that the concept of labor always presupposes its real role in the overall process of human life. Only in capitalist large-scale production does labor become the universal substance of all phenomena in social life, does it become the substantive essence of human matter, does it become the actual source of all of man’s character. These characteristics of labor establish the actual basis of the primary qualification of bourgeois political economy. Here labor truly becomes man’s real, abstract “species-essence” in big productive exchange.

Please note that this labor was the abstract starting point for Marx’s “abstract to concrete” logic at this time. I would also like to point out here that the movement from concrete to abstract and back to concrete may not be merely a method of expressing theoretical logic; at the same time, it more profoundly indicates the historical structure of the development of human social history to capitalism itself. I believe this because as the actual generality of modern capitalist social historical existence, this labor is actually expressed in inverted form; at the same time, it is an objectification and “alienation” of actual relationships. As soon as we speak of the issue of alienation, we must first focus on the difference between the labor of which Marx speaks here, and the labor in the *1844 Manuscript*. The labor in the *1844 Manuscript* (species-essence) was not a form of real existence, but was rather a value postulate — “should.” The labor of which Marx speaks in *Grundrisse* was

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 42).

⁸³*ibid.*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 42).

⁸⁴*ibid.*, pp. 39–40 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 42).

a generality in the reality of capitalist big industrial production, i. e., undifferentiated labor. This form of labor only appears in capitalist big industrial production. This generality is not the subjective abstraction of repeated phenomena, but rather **concrete, real relationships** in human historical subsistence. More importantly, in capitalist economic reality, this labor in general is not expressed directly in sensuous form, but rather through a myriad of economic media. This is a new form of social existence for human labor. In the system of capitalist division of labor and exchange, as well as the contradiction between the division of labor and exchange, the colorful richness of human subsistence is exploited and stolen, leaving only a one-sided historical subsistence. In past societies, the labor of individuals was comprehensive; on the social level, labor did not form an integrated whole. Capitalist division of labor causes individuals to lose their comprehensiveness, giving them one-sided historical subsistence; however, through this specialized division of labor and exchange, society becomes an integrated system of economic operation for the first time. It is this one-sidedness of labor that interconnects mutually dependent groups of individuals, allows them to compensate for one another, and forms the modern “civil society.” This objective wholeness is a kind of new oppression and slavery, because the labor of each individual is broken up into innumerable fragments by the division of labor. It becomes one-sided, and thus cannot be directly realized. Individual labor is only realized through the medium of the demands of society (others) in market exchange. Therefore, labor is divided in two: first is **concrete labor**, formed from material content, possessing a specific purpose and form. This labor creates the value-in-use of things. **Abstract labor of general labor consumption**, on the other hand, as a new integral social form unrelated to the concrete form of society, forms value used in exchange. Thus the natural and social attributes of labor are historically divided. In exchange, the development of the form of value moves through the following process: From exchange of material to simple value forms, then to expanded value forms, and finally to general value form: money. In market competition, the value of things realizes a transformation into prices. At this point, the labor of man acquires, in exchange, a particular form of social existence; where once it was the **direct** relation of the inter-human exchange labor results, here it is expressed as the exchange relation of one material for another material, **mediated by the market**. Thus for individuals, the social historical attributes of material are often confused with its natural attributes. For instance, the unification of “the material elements of capital and the social form of capital” into one makes the **temporary social historical attributes** of material and men eternal. This means that in bourgeois civil society, man’s observation cannot allow him to see the truth of social essence; material and men are both enshrouded in a fog of fetishisms. Bourgeois political economics cannot escape this fog.⁸⁵

I would like to point out that Marx is no longer merely studying economics, but also explaining the scientific method that he uses to study economics, i. e., the general theory of historical materialism. This distinct path of thought is completely different from all bourgeois economists. Marx finds that using the example of labor, he could explain the following:

⁸⁵Young Lukacs profoundly expressed his understanding of this point in Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Chinese transl.: *Lishi yu jieji yishi*, pp. 148–149).

Even the most abstract categories, despite their validity — precisely because of their abstractness — for all epochs, are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations, and possess their full validity only for and within these relations.⁸⁶

It is here that Marx first confirms the true point of origin of his narrow political economic research, i. e., the historical reality of capitalist society, especially the **particular** productive relations in the reality of this economic operation. This is a high point: only proceeding from this point can one's vision be expanded beyond the scientific abstract starting point of the scope of political economy. Only at this point can one penetrate the essence of past social historical subsistence. This is because "bourgeois society is the most developed and the most complex historic organization 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."⁸⁷ Here, with a flash of inspiration, Marx writes his famous analogy: "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."⁸⁸ The "human anatomy" at Marx's time was the material productive force of capitalist big-industry. *The "human anatomy" today, on the other hand, is the "digitalized subsistence" in our information society.*

Marx points out that "bourgeois economics arrived at an understanding of feudal, ancient, oriental economics only after the self-criticism of bourgeois society had begun."⁸⁹ At the same time, "In the succession of the economic categories, as in any other historical, social science, it must not be forgotten that their subject — here, modern bourgeois society — is always what is given, in the head as well as in reality, and that these categories therefore express the forms of being, the characteristics of existence, and often only individual sides of this specific society, this subject, and that therefore this society by no means begins only at the point where one can speak of it **as such**; this holds **for science as well**." This declaration also implies historical materialist logic. It is also here that Marx writes his next famous warning:

In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.⁹⁰

⁸⁶Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 43).

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 43).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 43).

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 41 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 44).

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 41 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 44).

This “ether” refers to the mode of production that occupies a ruling position. Facing the reality of bourgeois society at the time, Marx writes, “capital is the all-dominating economic power of bourgeois society. It must form the starting-point as well as the finishing-point.”⁹¹ The formation of this viewpoint was the first scientific identification by Marx of the mode of production under the doctrine of **capital**.

Now we can say that the basic scientific **paradigm of capital**, forming the starting point and ending point of Marx’s political economy in a narrow sense, finally begins to appear at this point. Its appearance was the most important achievement of the thought experiment that was *Introduction*.

Along this vein, I will attempt to separate several important historical threads in the developmental logic of Marx’s philosophy after he came into contact with political economy. Between 1844 and 1857, Marx engaged in three distinct, systematic studies of political economy: first, the main text of Marx’s early critical research was *Paris Notes*; second, Marx’s first scientific research between 1845 and 1847, of which the main text included *Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*; third, the research aimed at economic theoretical construction in the 1850s, of which the main text was *London Notes*. In terms of overall philosophical logic, Marx’s line of thought experienced a shift from the **labor qualification of humanism to practice, through production**, and then **finally back to the scientific qualification of labor**. In other words, this was the logical shift from the **value subject**, to the **historical object**, and then back to the **historical subject**. This logic is expressed in the following diagram:

1. Labor (species-essence) alienation → return: ethical **value** critique based on the humanist alienation conception of history and the subject.
2. Practice → man’s historical essence → reality: revolutionary **actual** critique based on sensuous activity and practical materialism.
3. Production → definite social historical subsistence → modes of production: Economic, **fact-based** critique based on real individuals, the general theory of historical materialism, and historical dialectics.
4. Labor (the essence of certain social relations) → value (“species-essence”) → money (objectified relationships) → capital: the **historical phenomenological** critique based on the special theory of historical materialism, economics, and history.

At this point, allow me to give some brief additional explanation of the logical transformation that took place in the progression of Marx’s thought. In 1844, as he first began to research economics, Marx basically maintained a simple refutational attitude towards bourgeois political economy. His critical logic was primarily realized through the subjective value postulate (“should”) of humanist social phenomenology (the labor alienation conception of history). Here he declared the

⁹¹Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 42 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 45).

illegitimacy of the objective economic reality (“is”) of bourgeois society. Although Marx already stood with the proletariat at this time, he did not surpass “the German ideology.” In the second stage of his economics research between 1845 and 1847, Marx had already perceived the true basis of social historical existence; as such, he began with social material practice (as distinct from all old materialism and all idealism) in order to confirm the logical starting point of his new worldview. He gave this logical foundation the limitation of “certain” social historical conditions; for the first time, human essence descends from an idealized subjective value postulate to the sum of real social relations. It was in the course of this important economics research that Marx clearly perceived that the true qualification of human social subsistence was the production and reproduction of material life. In the general theory of historical materialism that he established, modes of production under “certain” conditions of history became the essence of social history. At the same time, it was on this basis that Marx transformed his past value critique based on the subject into a fact-based scientific critique proceeding from the objective reality of economics. In the course of this third foray into political economic research that Marx undertook in the 1850s, he discovered that merely proceeding from production in the general theory of historical materialism (the objective dimension), rendered him unable to truly surpass bourgeois political economy, neither did it allow him to profoundly expose the essence of the modes of production of capitalist society. Therefore, Marx once again proceeds from the **real, subjective essence (subjective dimension)** of the historically formed labor of capitalist society’s big industry (the proletariat position) in further establishing his historical phenomenology based on economic and historical critique. This historical phenomenology begins with the economic phenomenon of money and derives use value through the exposition of the internal contradictions of the dual nature of labor. The form of value moves from general equivalence to money, then to prices caused by market competition, and finally penetrates money that brings “profits” — the secret that capital exploits surplus value. In Marx’s economics research at this point, the objectified phenomena of the economy of capitalist society is peeled back one layer at a time, and the essence of the three great fetishisms that invert man’s vision is revealed. This is the most important content of Marx’s special theory of historical materialism.

After Marx made this point clear, he begins to outline a new research blueprint, proposing the early structure of political economic research. This was the first research line of thought in which Marx pondered how to divide his work into sections. Furthermore, in the last subsection, Marx once again lists several issues on which to focus. Without a single exception, these issues are the basic principles of the general theory of historical materialism.

Chapter 9

Historical Phenomenology in the Context of Economics

We know that bourgeois classical economics viewed the particular historical existence of capitalist society as the eternal, natural material existence of mankind; one of Marx's purposes in his third foray into the study of economics in *Grundrisse* was to scientifically criticize and refute this ideological fallacy. In *Grundrisse*, Marx attempted to explain the historical and transient aspects of capitalist social existence, using a scientific explanation to demonstrate that this existence was a historical, changing social reality. Marx discovered that it was precisely the reality of this historical capitalist social existence that produced, in commodity production and the market economy, an enormous, complex structure characterized by multiple inversions. However, capital relations of production as social essence are veiled by economic pseudo-phenomena: the real becomes false and the false real; the illusory becomes substantive and the substantive illusory; the subject is objectified into the object, and the object is reversed into the subject. Bourgeois political economy unconsciously naturalizes and eternalizes capitalist social modes of production into a given ideology of material phenomena in these objectified economic phenomena. Thus the three great fetishisms become the necessary result of this process. Moreover, as Marx criticizes bourgeois political economy and constructs/realizes his own political economic revolution, he was forced to discover a new philosophical way to surpass the objectified consciousness of bourgeois classical economics. He needed to form, on the starting point of scientific critique, a critical **historical phenomenology** that continually penetrated objectified phenomena and inverted pseudo-phenomena, that gradually approached the essence of social history.

9.1 The Logic and Historical Analysis of the Essence of the Capitalist Economy and Phenomenological Inversion

The construction of Marx's historical phenomenology began by disproving the illusion of circulation as the central dominant phenomenon in capitalist economic

“fact.” Here, all the illusions of the material ideology of bourgeois economics and Proudhon-style revisionism were first scientifically rebutted and completely overthrown. Behind the illusion of the “kingdom” of circulation appears the essence of the exploitive, enslaving economic relations created by capitalist production processes. Money, as the true form of the objectification of certain social relations, is clarified for the first time in terms of theoretical logic and in the true progression of history. Following the resolution to the important question of how the abstract comes to rule real existence, the modern basis of historical idealism is explained scientifically for the first time. This is the first important theoretical level of Marx’s historical phenomenology.

9.1.1 Labor money and “using a sieve to catch the milk of a he-goat”

Marx’s *Grundrisse* begins with “The Chapter on Money.” Traditional economic research generally believes that Marx began by considering money in order to “begin explaining with simple relations, i. e., with relations that are more general than relations of capital and hired labor.”¹ From the philosophical line of thought that we will employ here, I believe that the sequence and organization of Marx’s work here was primarily because money was the most important objectified phenomenon in the process of capitalist social history; this is the most fundamental layer of bourgeois fetishisms. *This reminded me that Marx begins his Excerpts from Mill with a discussion of money, before ascending his theories. Of course, Marx’s thinking in Grundrisse represents a deeper level of theoretical construction.*

Making our analysis a little more concrete, “The Chapter on Money” begins with the critique of the Proudhonist Darimon’s concept of “labor money.” As we have already seen, beginning in 1845, Marx had already begun to focus on expounding socialism on the basis of economics. *The progenitors of this theoretical critique were the Ricardian English socialists, such as Gray, Bray, Thompson, and Hodgskin. These scholars, and especially the first two, were the founders of the theory of labor money; as for Proudhon and his followers, they simply acted under the influence of Gray and others.* After writing *Brussels Notes* and *Manchester Notes*, Marx realized that it was insufficient to merely rely on materialist philosophy and socialist critique; at the same time, he also understood that **non-scientific** economics plus economics was not sufficient either. Only through the real scientific research of such sciences as economics and history could the foundation of scientific socialism be constructed. Only thus could a scientific philosophical method be constructed. As he moved deeper in his research of political economy, Marx had already begun to realize fully that the greatest theoretical shortcoming of the “proletariat opposition party” members, such as Gray and Bray, was their non-scientific critique of capitalist social reality. On the surface, these Ricardian socialists seemed to criticize capitalism, beginning to formulate plans to reform capitalism **on the basis of economics**; however, in reality, their investigation did

¹See Müller, *Auf dem Wege zum “Kapital”: zur Entwicklung des Kapitalbegriffs von Marx in den Jahren 1857–1863* (Chinese translation: Müller, *Tongwang Ziben lun de daolu*, p. 7).

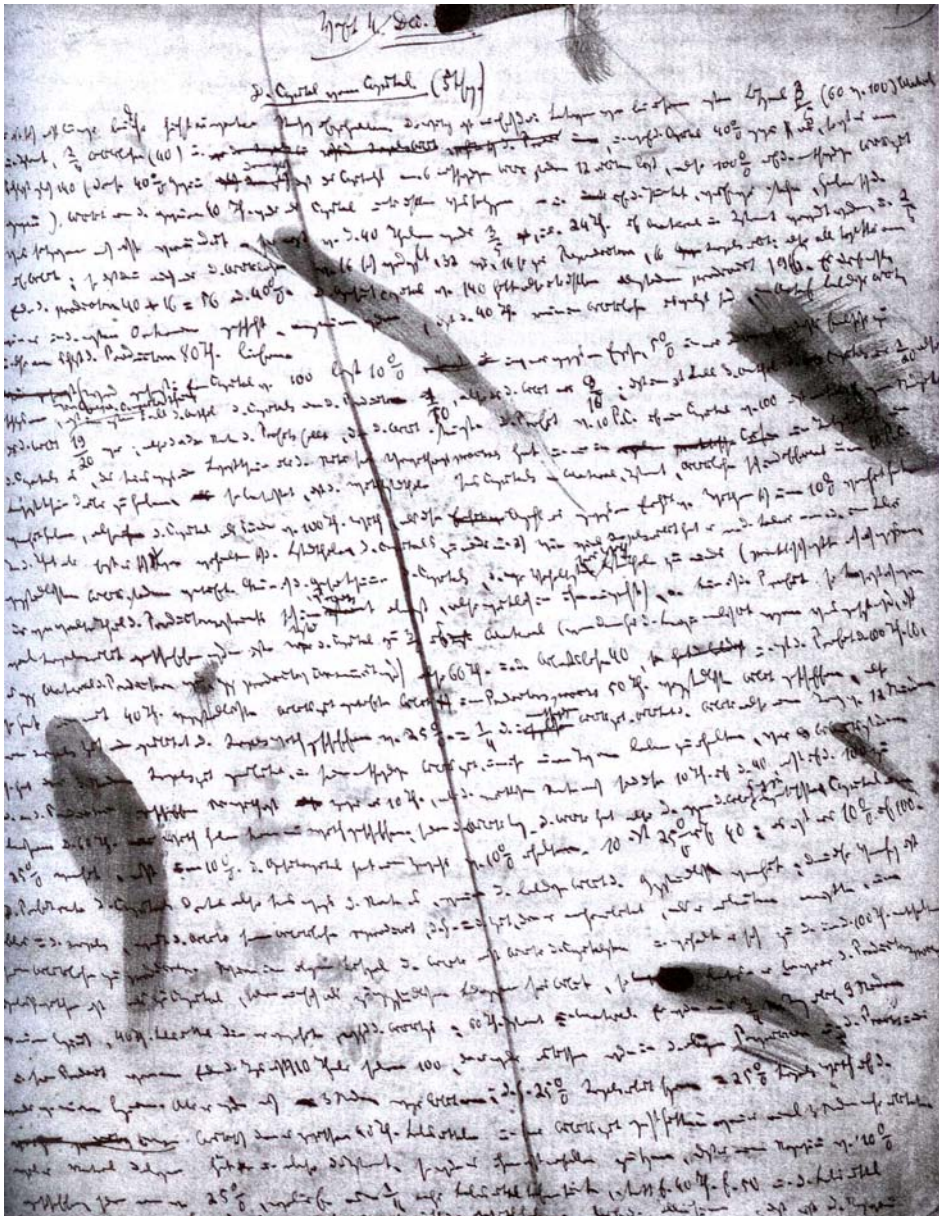


Figure 9.1: Facsimile of a page from the sixth notebook of Grundrisse

not progress beyond the **particular social phenomena** of capitalism. These phenomena are really mysterious things expressed invertedly in the form of material, i. e., the most deceptive pseudo-phenomenon of the money and the like. The essence of this non-scientific theoretical tendency was **the reform of inverted economic pseudo-phenomena**. I believe that there are three levels of significance here: first, the construction of bourgeois economic theory centered on fetishisms by bourgeois political economists, based on the direct **affirmation** of inverted material phenomena. Second, the realization of “equitable exchange” based on labor money (labor time) as replacements through the critique of bourgeois economic deceit in the realm of circulation by Ricardian socialist economists; these economists **refuted** bourgeois political economic conclusions using the transformative theory of exchange of the labor theory of value. Third, Proudhon’s petty bourgeois school of thought, the “third path” that opposed the bourgeois and the proletariat. Proudhon not only did not understand the logic of classical economics, but he also lacked the theoretical courage necessary to be a socialist economist; therefore his theoretical viewpoints were often the **product of the further vulgarization of things (labor money) that had already been proven to be non-scientific**. This practice is the fallacy within a fallacy, as described by Kant’s metaphor: “one man milking a he-goat and the other holding a sieve underneath.”

It is common knowledge that the writing of *Grundrisse* began with “The Chapter on Money”; here, Marx explains the truth that an economic “he-goat” does not produce milk, or in other words, the true role of money in bourgeois economic operation and the true place of relations of circulation and distribution in the whole of capitalist productive relations. Thus Marx pierces the fog of capitalism and reaches the essence of pseudo-phenomena. We can see that Marx’s thought experiment and theoretical creation that we have already seen started at this point; thus in the scientific experiments in *Grundrisse*, Marx was able to develop his scientific, socially critical historical phenomenology. This is his first layer of direct theoretical goals. Next, he realized that his real opponent in terms of economic theory was Ricardo; in his accounting of Ricardo’s economics, his scientific, economic theoretical logic first truly became evident. However, here we will primarily focus on the first theoretical level.

In the manuscript of *Grundrisse*, Marx first analyzes how the Proudhonist Darimon mistakenly equates capitalist money circulation and credit. In Marx’s opinion, the whole secret of Proudhon’s “wisdom” was founded on this ludicrous logical obfuscation. At the same time, Marx profoundly reveals the concrete mistake that Darimon makes in exaggerating the role of banks in mediating the capitalist money market. It is not difficult for us to see that Marx immediately grasps the essence of this issue:

Can the existing relations of production and the relations of distribution which correspond to them be revolutionized by a change in the instrument of circulation, in the organization of circulation? Further question: Can such a transformation of circulation be undertaken without touching the existing relations of production and the social relations which rest on them?²

²Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 57 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 63).

These insightful questions actually pierce the “tricks of circulation” of the “revisionism” of the Proudhonists, who are stuck in the realm of circulation, mired on the level of inverted phenomena. Marx writes that Proudhon and others like him “do not understand the internal connection between relations of production, distribution, and circulation.” *It is not until here that we finally see the relation between production and other economic links, which Marx spent a great deal of time discussing in Introduction: it was to lay the foundation for his critique in this section.* Here Marx had already begun to understand that circulation was not a determining element in economic relations; money was not the essence of capitalist modes of production. For Proudhon, money is first identified as the essence of capitalist social existence, before “good” and “unchanged” forms of money — labor money — is used to replace “bad” forms of money. On the subject of Proudhon’s misunderstanding, Marx writes:

None of them [forms of money], as long as they remain forms of money, and as long as money remains an essential relation of production, is capable of overcoming the contradictions inherent in the money relation, and can instead only hope to reproduce these contradictions in one or another form. One form of wage labour may correct the abuses of another, but no form of wage labour can correct the abuse of wage labour itself.³

Therefore, Marx sarcastically quips: “Let the pope remain, but make everybody pope. Abolish money by making every commodity money and by equipping it with the specific attributes of money.”⁴ This means that the Proudhonists desire to adjust the monetary system to eliminate social contradictions that are not caused by relations of exchange, all without abandoning the basis of the existing society. This is obviously a ridiculous daydream built on an insubstantial foundation.

In Marx’s opinion, the theories of the Proudhonists are simply not scientific; the level of their understanding does not even attain the basic principles and level of understanding of classical economics. The physiocrats understood that they needed to move from circulation to production; Smith and Ricardo’s labor theory of value was even more the scientific abstract view for which social materialism was the premise. Therefore, as Marx criticizes Proudhonism, he had no choice but to begin with classical economics. We can also see that here Marx first seriously discusses the relation between value, value-in-exchange, money, and prices; his starting point is still Ricardo. Therefore, he directly cites Ricardo’s viewpoint: “The **value** (the real exchange value) of all commodities (labour included) is determined by their cost of production, in other words by the labour time required to produce them. Their **price** is this exchange value of theirs, expressed in money.”⁵ Although Marx’s expression at this time was not yet precise, this did not prevent him from scientifically explaining that the price and value of a commodity are not

³*ibid.*, p. 58 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 64).

⁴*ibid.*, p. 61 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 68).

⁵*ibid.*, p. 72 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 80).

directly equal: “the latter [value] appears as the law of the motions which the former [prices] runs through.”⁶ Moreover, “The value of commodities as determined by labour time is only their **average value**.” Of course, at this time Marx was still unable to differentiate between value and value-in-exchange. He was also unable to understand the qualification of necessary labor time, and therefore believed that average value played a great role in market exchange. However, Ricardo’s views were enough to match the concept of labor money as proposed by Proudhon, Gray, and Bray. Marx writes that if one believes that to use “time chits” to directly identify labor time instead of objectified labor time in the form of precious metals can eliminate the real differences and contradictions between prices and value, that so doing “does away with all crises, all faults of bourgeois production,” then this is nothing but an illusion. Speaking on the fallacy that appears here, Marx writes:

The money price of commodities = their real value; demand = supply; production = consumption; money is simultaneously abolished and preserved; the labour time of which the commodity is the product, which is materialized in the commodity, would need only to be measured in order to create a corresponding mirror-image in the form of a value-symbol, money, time-chits. In this way every commodity would be directly transformed into money; and gold and silver, for their part, would be demoted to the rank of all other commodities.⁷

Put simply, the basic error of the Gray-Bray plan (labor money) was that they made the essence and phenomena, the true content and form of expression of capitalist economic life equivalent. This muddled practice of calling black white was a kind of **phenomenological near-sightedness** in terms of theoretical logic.

It is plain to see that what Marx was trying to explain the **heterogeneity between essence and phenomenon** in the capitalist economic process. This was something that Ricardo had already unconsciously accomplished in his theoretical abstraction. Next, Marx especially desired to explain that the general equivalence of the commodity of money was the thing “alienated to the commodity itself;” more importantly, Marx explains “how and why” the value relations which are the essence of the commodity society “obtain a separate material existence in the form of money.”⁸ This viewpoint approached the subject of the historical phenomenology of Marx’s special theory of historical materialism: **how the essence of particular capitalist social relations are invertedly expressed as material phenomena**. In contrast to the “enslavement to material” in *The German Ideology*, Marx here uses concrete economic analysis to historically explain this inversion and thus critically dig through phenomena to unearth the hidden essence of capitalist productive relations. This profound critique returned all “falsehoods” and “strange circumstances” to their original form.

⁶Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 73 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 81).

⁷*ibid.*, p. 73 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 82).

⁸*ibid.*, p. 75 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 83).

9.1.2 The transformation of abstract value into substantive money in the process of exchange

Marx's phenomenological critique was realized by exposing multiple false phenomena.

Marx's **first level of analysis** focused on the **objectified** relation between value and money. *At this time, he had not yet directly or concretely explained the essence of value: abstract labor.* Marx wrote that the value of commodities was different from commodities themselves; commodities (products) are only value (exchange value) in the price estimation that takes place in different commodity exchanges (whether real or imaginary). Marx observed: "value is the social relation of commodities, the economic essence of commodities." *Later, Marx historically explained that as a kind of social relation, value was the product of certain historical conditions, a new historical form of human social subsistence.* As we have already seen, Marx had already seen through the lens of the general theory of historical materialism that social existence — especially social relations themselves — was an interactive, non-substantive instrumental existence between objects and between subjects. In this sense, **value as a social relation exists objectively, but it is not something that can be directly observed.** Marx writes, "a relation can obtain a particular embodiment and become individualized only by means of abstraction."⁹ The depth of Marx's thinking here was incomprehensible to scholars such as Proudhon.

Theoretically speaking, value, this equivalence effect of commodities, "On paper, in the head, this metamorphosis proceeds by means of mere abstraction; but in the real exchange process a real **mediation** is required, a means to accomplish this abstraction."¹⁰ Generally speaking, value is an abstraction, "This abstraction will do for comparing commodities; but in actual exchange this abstraction in turn must be objectified, must be symbolized, realized in a symbol."¹¹ This is the necessary link between **value abstraction** and **objectified substance**; the result in reality is the emergence of an equivalent material, a "third thing" that links commodities. Writing on this connection, Marx asserts:

[Commodities] must be exchanged against a third thing which is not in turn itself a particular commodity, but is the symbol of the commodity as commodity, of the commodity's exchange value it self; **which thus represents, say, labor time as such**, say a piece of paper or of leather, which represents a fractional part of labour time. (Such a symbol presupposes general recognition; it can only be a social symbol; it expresses, indeed, nothing more than a social relation)... this symbol, this material sign of exchange value, is a product of exchange itself, and not the execution of an idea conceived *a priori*. (In fact the commodity which is required as medium of exchange becomes transformed into money, into a symbol, only little by little; as soon as this has happened,

⁹*ibid.*, p. 77 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 87).

¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 77 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 86).

¹¹*ibid.*, p. 78 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 88).

it can in turn be replaced by a symbol of itself. It then becomes the conscious sign of exchange value).¹²

What Marx criticizes in this citation is the idealist theoretical logic of Hegel-Proudhon. He attempts to emphasize that in the capitalist economic process, **the transformation of the abstract into the ruling element was not an *a priori* ontological assumption, but rather the historical result of economic operation.**

In the real operation of the commodity economy, “As a value, the commodity is an equivalent; as an equivalent, all its natural properties are extinguished; it no longer takes up a special, qualitative relationship towards the other commodities; but is rather the general measure as well as the general representative, the general medium of exchange of all other commodities. As value, it is **money**.”¹³ This is because in actual economic exchange, the commodity value that men could not face directly “achieves an existence different from its natural one.” In other words:

Because commodities as values are different from one another only quantitatively; therefore each commodity must be qualitatively different from its own value. Its value must therefore have an existence which is qualitatively distinguishable from it, and in actual exchange this separability must become a real separation, because the natural distinctness of commodities must come into contradiction with their economic equivalence, and because both can exist together only if the commodity achieves a double existence, not only a natural but also a purely economic existence.¹⁴

Abstract value relations achieve a **material form: money**. Value is the relational means of the reflexive agreement of commodities in exchange; abstract value relations must be objectified in reality into a substance, and therefore money becomes the **quadratic means** of realizing commodities in market exchange. Please note that the **objectification of relations itself is a kind of veiling of essence**. According to Marx’s understanding at this time, the properties of money are manifested in four aspects: 1) the standard of commodity exchange, 2) the means of exchange, 3) the representation of commodities, and 4) general commodities that exist in conjunction with particular commodities.¹⁵ *Of course, we will see later that the transformation from abstract value relations to money was a long process of historical change in reality.*

On his second theoretical level, Marx focuses on the investigation of the **dominant role** that money, this independent and objectified exchange relation, plays in real existence. Marx believes that the value formed in exchange is the necessary result of production in the commodity economy. The transformation of demand and products in exchange to purely exchange value develops along with the division of labor, that is to say, with the social character of production. Originally, exchange value was only the means and tool by which commodities were realized in social

¹²Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 79 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 89).

¹³*ibid.*, p. 76 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 85).

¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 76 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 85).

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 90).

exchange; however, in the further development of the commodity economy, the place and elements of the commodity economy began to experience two important changes. First, money which first appeared as a **means** (exchange relation) begins to become the **purpose of production**. “To the degree that production is shaped in such a way that every producer becomes dependent on the exchange value of his commodity, i. e. as the product increasingly becomes an exchange value in reality, and exchange value becomes the immediate object of production.”¹⁶ Second, relations of exchange themselves begin to become the **dominant** things in interhuman relations. Money becomes the true **ruling** power in economic operation. Marx writes:

But as the latter [increasingly social character of production] grows, so grows the power of **money**, i.e. the exchange relation establishes itself as a power external to and independent of the producers. What originally appeared as a means to promote production becomes a relation alien to the producers.¹⁷

It can be seen that **man’s tools become his master**. Thus all the social relations in capitalist society become money relations: “taxes in kind into money taxes, rent in kind into money rent, military service into mercenary troops, all personal services in general into money services, of patriarchal, slave, serf and guild labour into pure wage labor.”¹⁸ Thus appears before us the so-called world of money; the essential phenomenon of this world is the inversion of goal and means, of human subsistence and money relations. However, living as we do in the reality of money, it becomes ever more difficult for us to see the truth of this economic world. *This is something that is taking place in our Chinese society today.*

Next, Marx specifically analyzes the possibility that the concurrent existence of money and commodities will necessarily lead to contradictions and crises in the economic process. Simply put, “We see, then, how it is an inherent property of money to fulfill its purposes by simultaneously negating them; to achieve independence from commodities; to be a means which becomes an end; to realize the exchange value of commodities by separating them from it; to facilitate exchange by splitting it; to overcome the difficulties of the direct exchange of commodities by generalizing them; to make exchange independent of the producers in the same measure as the producers become dependent on exchange.”¹⁹ Money is both the product of contradiction and the means by which contradiction can be resolved. It is also the premise to the substantive division of contradiction and its further aggravation. In the course of his analysis of the **third aspect** of this contradictory relationship, Marx suddenly breaks the normal flow of his discussion to write his first **aphorism**:

All commodities are perishable money; money is the imperishable commodity. With the development of the division of labour, the immediate product ceases to be a medium of exchange. The need arises for

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 91).

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 80 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 91).

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 81 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 91).

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 85 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 97).

a general medium of exchange, i.e. a medium of exchange independent of the specific production of each individual. Money implies the separation between the value of things and their substance. Money is originally the representative of all values; in practice this situation is inverted, and all real products and labours become the representatives of money.²⁰

Without a doubt, this is an extremely important theoretical summary. Marx directly identifies this as the **inversion** and **alienation** that takes place in the real economic relations of the capitalist economy. However, bourgeois economists attempt to eliminate alienation, calling the contradictions and inversions of this social essence normal and natural; this cannot help but make us vigilant and lead us to reflect.

Just before completing this explanation of theoretical logic, Marx declares: “It will be necessary later, before this question is dropped, to correct the idealist manner of the presentation, which makes it seem as if it were merely a matter of conceptual determinations and of the dialectic of these concepts.”²¹ It is evident that this statement is another critique of Hegel and Proudhon. In terms of theoretical logic, Marx explains that what fundamentally exists is not the dialectic of the movement, inversion, and contradictory development of abstract ideas; rather, it is the dialectic of the movement, inversion, and contradictory development of the **economic relations (abstract)** in the reality of capitalist social history. Of course, because this objective movement is not the general material change of the natural world but is rather the social historical movement constituted by the activity of human subjects, this dialectic must be a practical historical dialectic. *In this sense, young Lukacs’ and Korsch’s “dialects of subject and object” was a fairly reasonable suggestion, yet also an exaggeration of this particular historical context.* At the same time, Marx warns us that the target of his phenomenological analysis is not ideal essence, the relation between self-conscious thought and material phenomena, but is rather made up of the relation between the essences of complex economic phenomena, pseudo-phenomena, and productive relations in objective social reality. Thus, right from the beginning he separates his historical phenomenology from Hegelian spiritual phenomenology.

9.1.3 The “Three Great Social Forms” and the historical premise of inverted social relations

In fact, in our previous textual discussion, we focused on deriving Marx’s philosophical logic from his economics context. At this point, readers will directly encounter the first **philosophical activation point** in Marx’s economics discussion in *Grundrisse*. This activation point begins on the second half of page 20 of the first notebook and is active until page 24.²² I see this philosophical historical analysis based on economics as a new deepening and profound application of the historical

²⁰Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 83 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 94–95).

²¹*ibid.*, p. 85 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 97).

²²*ibid.*, pp. 89–97 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 102–111).

principles of historical materialism; it is the basis of the **historical analysis** of historical phenomenology. I believe that the direct goal of this economic historical analysis is, of course, the refutation of the non-historical nature of bourgeois economics. In other words, today's capitalist productive relations not only did not always exist, but they are not destined to persist into the future either. As such, we must maintain a historical perspective, a historical analysis, i. e., we must discover what human relations **were**, what they **are**, and what they **will be**. Such an analysis will be a historical, essential scientific placement; it is what the scholarly world usually refers to as the theory of the "three great social forms." However, I believe that this is not a reflection on fact-based history, but rather a deep historical analysis based on philosophical logic. This analysis can be summarized using the terms "was, is, and will be."

We already know that in Marx's *Introduction*, he proposed the analogy of human and ape anatomy. "Human anatomy" refers to the modes of production in the capitalist economy, while the "ape anatomy" refers to pre-capitalist society. According to this logic, communism is a more developed, more advanced, health human body. It is my opinion that in contrast to the opposition between "should" and "is" in past humanist logic, after 1845, real history (objective "is") had already become the premise of Marx's scientific theory. This is a historical relation between **past, present, and future**, the real possibility of two real social historical periods and one historical direction or orientation. Specifically, it was Marx's view that real history had revealed the relation between simple social systems and advanced, complex systems. If we view prehistoric simple social systems as the direct form of social existence, then the complex economic systems of capitalist society appears in inverted form; this is the inversion and alienation of which Marx spoke at the end of the last sub-section. The essential question is, **this relation occurs in relation to what?** The humanist alienation in the *1844 Manuscript* is relative to idealized labor; this is an inversion of "species-essence." But what of the inversion in *Grundrisse*? Evidently this inversion refers to the **objective inversion of labor relations themselves**. Marx's thinking on this type of objective inversion was what we have already discussed, the subjective critique proceeding from the standard of labor. However, does the use of the term "labor" here refer to direct, individual concrete labor in the past natural economy, or to the future non-enslaved labor activity of men in communist society? Of special import to us, is there any element of "should" in this inversion and alienation? Let us proceed with the concrete analysis of these questions.

I first include Marx's famous declaration on the three kinds of social relations in the three great social forms:

Relations of personal dependence [*persönliche Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse*] (entirely spontaneous at the outset) are the first social forms [*die Gesellschaftsform*], in which human productive capacity develops only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence founded on **objective** dependence [*die Abhängigkeit*] is the second great form, in which a system of general social metabolism, of universal relations, of all-round needs and universal capacities is formed for the first

time. Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third. Patriarchal as well as ancient conditions (feudal, also) thus disintegrate with the development of commerce, of luxury, of **money**, of **exchange value**, while modern society arises and grows in the same measure.²³

For a more complete discussion of the questions of the three great social forms and historical time periods, please refer to my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*.²⁴ At this point, let us turn the emphasis of our interpretation to the **historical transformation** of social relations, which is the object of historical phenomenology. We can see that this important paragraph contains a **premise**, a **central component**, and a **goal**: the **true freedom and liberation of human productive forces, interhuman social relations, and the human subject in real historical circumstances**. Please note that the first two theoretical viewpoints here do not refer to what we usually understand to be general material productive forces and human productive relations in an economics sense; rather, these viewpoints refer to specific social historical existence under certain conditions of history. The “human subject” is not an abstract value postulate, but real human individuals under certain conditions of history.

Before entering the scope of our discussion of what Marx calls the “three great social forms,” we ought to be clear that Marx here was certainly not trying to conduct a periodization of history in a historical sense, but was rather explaining how the objectification and inversion (“present”) of capitalist economic relations took place historically (“past” — the first social form is the **objective historical reference system** for this objectification and inversion). He also attempts to explain the real possibility (“possible”) that this inversion could be historically sublated. *Communism is the ultimate reference system by which this objectification and inversion are abolished*. Marx's arguments here revolve around this particular theoretical point: after entering the capitalist economic process, interhuman relations led to an **objective historical transformation and inversion**. His argument gradually expands and repeatedly changes rhythm in his exposition. At the same time, because Marx, in the concrete writing of his text, did not separately expound on the three social forms but rather focused on discussing the second form, his explanation of the other two social forms is scattered. For the sake of discussion, our discussion of the first and third social forms will not follow the textual sequence, but will rather be analyzed together.

What Marx refers to as the “first great social form” primarily refers to the **economic** social form that existed before the emergence of capitalist society. Its connotation is what I have referred to as the “past.” In terms of Marx's textual meaning here, this does not include the primitive social stage that existed before entering the economic social form; the specific era that Marx references is the “the

²³Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 90–91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjizue shougao*, I, p. 104).

²⁴See the third chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

patriarchal relation, the community of antiquity, feudalism and the guild system.” Marx makes three points in his important theoretical exposition of this social form.

First, in these societies, man’s productive force is weak, and both its quality and extent are extremely limited. Marx points out that in the first social form, man’s natural production (including the reproduction of the human race and man’s demands on nature) occupy a **dominant** position in his real life. In this social form, the production of material means of life is, at the most, a secondary concern. *In comparison with the exposition of the so-called third link of human social historical subsistence in the general historical materialism of The German Ideology, Marx’s explanation here is much more precise.*²⁵ In this early social form, both in agriculture as well as hunting/fishing, the labor of the human subject can only play a **helping** role towards nature. Furthermore, for the human subject in this social form, he makes “not the acquiring of wealth his object, but self-sustenance.”²⁶ This means that human subsistence at this time was like that of animals, dependent on natural production, struggling to maintain life; it was still impossible to create enormous surplus wealth. Marx writes that under these circumstances, “individuals or the individual member of a family or clan (later, community) directly and naturally reproduces himself, or in which his productive activity and his share in production are bound to a specific form of labour and of product, which determine his relation to others in just that specific way.”²⁷ Therefore, man was at one with nature during this time period. Later on, Marx writes that in the productive labor process in this social form, “the worker relates to the objective conditions of his labour to his property; this is the natural unity of labour with its material presuppositions. The worker thus has an objective existence independent of labour. The individual relates to himself as proprietor, as master of the conditions of his reality.”²⁸ Men are the masters of their own existence, the rulers of the conditions of their own reality. In this stage:

Individuals relate not as workers but as proprietors — and members of a community, who at the same time work. The aim of this work is not the **creation of value** — although they may do surplus labor in order to obtain **alien**, i. e. surplus products in exchange — rather, its aim is sustenance of the individual proprietor and of his family, as well as of the total community [*Gemeinschaft*].²⁹

As such, the purpose of economic activity at this time was the **production of value-in-use**; there were no value relationships that took place for the **purpose of exchange**. The direct goal of production was the reproduction of individuals in certain relations between individuals and the community (individuals compose the basis of communities). Concretely speaking, the appropriation of the natural conditions of labor, i. e., the appropriation of land, “as the original instrument of labor as well as its workshop and repository of raw materials,” does not take

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 147 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 172).

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 383 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 477).

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 103).

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 379 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 471).

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 379 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 471).

place through labor, but is rather the premise to labor itself. Individuals see the objective conditions of labor simply as their own, as the inorganic nature by which their own subjectivity is self-realized. We can see that the primary objective condition of labor is not any product of labor, but **nature**.

Second, corresponding to this productive force there exist two different inter-human relations, i. e., natural relations of blood, and local ties based on the relation between **ruler and ruled**. The essence of both these relations is the dependency of man towards other men. The first relation occurs naturally, while the latter is political. Here, “although their relations appear to be more personal, they enter into connection with one another only as individuals imprisoned within a certain definition, as feudal lord and vassal, landlord and serf, etc., or as members of a caste etc. or as members of an estate etc.”³⁰ This means that in these societies, inter-human relationships are still expressed as **direct connections between one man and another** (*die unmittelbare persönliche Beziehung*), not the **indirect** inter-human relationship (*Verhältnis*) that was expressed invertedly through inter-material relations in later capitalist market exchange. This does not mean that there is no exchange in these societies; rather, “**exchange** proper only runs parallel or, by and large, does not so much take a grip on the life of entire communities as, rather, insert itself between different communities; it by no means exercises general domination over all relations of production and distribution.”³¹ At this period in time, exchange was not the purpose of social life, nor was it the dominant relation in social existence.

Third, the subsistence state of individuals is, of course, very low; individuals are not independent, but rather depend on communities of blood or caste. Communities connect individuals through either **direct** natural blood relations or **direct**, external feudal relations, communities. In this community, individuals are not free, but rather come under the “personal restriction of the individual by another.”³² However, in terms of the characteristics of the individuals themselves, “in earlier stages of development the single individual seems to be developed more fully, because he has not yet worked out his relationships in their fullness, or erected them as independent social powers and relations opposite himself.”³³ This is the dialectical relationship of the **fullness of subsistence and true non-richness** of ancient men. On this point, Marx writes:

Thus the old view, in which the human being appears as the aim of production, regardless of his limited national, religious, political character, seems to be very lofty when contrasted to the modern world, where production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production.³⁴

In the old society, **man is his own purpose**, and society glitters with the light of humanity. On the other hand, in modern society, **production (for exchange) be-**

³⁰Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 95–96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 110).

³¹*ibid.*, pp. 91–92 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 105).

³²*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 110).

³³*ibid.*, p. 95 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 109).

³⁴*ibid.*, p. 392 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 486).

comes the purpose of man. *This also presages the death of man in post-modernism; as Foucault writes, all traces of man will be wiped away, like a face drawn in the sand.* This comparison is made in the dimension of history.

Of course, Marx did not attempt to set the first great social form as the **ideal model** of social development (as Rousseau attempted with his natural society). Therefore, there is no “should” postulate relative to the “alienation” of the “present” second social form. The first great social form **objectively existed** before capitalist society; in fact, this form was nothing but the **early, simple** social structure in the development of human society. Furthermore, there is another point that Marx makes clearly: relative to past society (even if it was composed of direct inter-human communities), present capitalist society in all aspects is an enormous historical improvement. Thus Marx clearly points out that “it is as ridiculous to yearn for a return to that original fullness as it is to believe that with this complete emptiness history has come to a standstill.”³⁵ This makes Marx’s viewpoint different from the romantic logic of scholars such as Rousseau, Sismondi, and Proudhon; it also makes his views different from his own logical proposition in the *1844 Manuscript* of the original species-relations of non-alienated men. A correct understanding of this point is vital to our critical appraisal of the capitalist economy, as well as our scientific understanding of Marx’s re-introduction of the concepts of objectification, inversion, and alienation in his historical phenomenology.

9.1.4 The historical emergence of the objectification and inversion of social relations

The present capitalist society, as the “second great social form,” was consistently the primary object of Marx’s historical analysis. Of course, what Marx had to face first was the present reality of the enormous increase in material productive forces of capitalist society. A fundamental impetus of this development was the departure of material production from the immediate needs of individuals, and the transformation of the goal of production from past, concrete, value-in-use to value-in-exchange. Patriarchal as well as ancient conditions (feudal, also) thus disintegrate with the development of commerce, of luxury, of **money**, of **exchange value**, while modern society arises and grows in the same measure.³⁶ Here, “Activity, regardless of its individual manifestation, and the product of activity, regardless of its particular make-up, are always **exchange value**, and exchange value is a generality, in which all individuality and peculiarity are negated and extinguished.”³⁷ Exchange value becomes the **generality** in existence.

Here is implied the profound relation between the “Many” and the “One” that was first studied by the Eleatic School. The use value of various goods are the differentiated “Many,” while the abstract exchange value (value) that erases qualitative differences between goods is the “One.” These two elements are both in-

³⁵*ibid.*, p. 95 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 109).

³⁶*ibid.*, pp. 90–91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 104).

³⁷*ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 103).

timately related and diametrically opposed; ultimately, exchange value, this objective “One,” negates and extinguishes the “Many” of differentiated products. Of course, such a philosophical expression omits many mediating elements. Past production immediately creates the products that individuals need; this refers to value-in-use, which itself causes this production to be **limited** (including the production of luxury goods). At the same time, this kind of productive activity and its products themselves are, without exception, engraven with the rich and diverse individuality and characteristics of the workers who participated in their creation, because production at that time was carried out by individuals full of individuality (this is the original meaning of “handicrafts”). It was impossible for the products of individual labor to be completely identical, and all results of labor were different, unique. This is similar to the labor of the skilled craftsmen, such as cobblers and tailors, that we are still able to see today. The product of their labor — shoes and clothes — are all unique, individual. However, in the capitalist production process, the purpose of production is no longer the value-in-use of products, i. e., no longer the certain, **concrete** results of labor determined by nature and qualitatively different. Rather, the purpose is now the exchange value of commodities, i. e., the **abstract** results of labor that are devoid of all labor substrate and are only differentiated quantitatively. This defines the dual nature of labor. Here, all products and activities must be converted into exchange value: “This social bond is expressed in **exchange value**, by means of which alone each individual’s own activity or his product becomes an activity and a product for him; he must produce a general product — **exchange value**, or, the latter isolated for itself and individualized, **money**.”³⁸ Thus labor includes both the aspect of concrete individual labor and social labor; in exchange, the two aspects form a definite spontaneous unity.

Exchange and division of labour reciprocally condition one another. Since everyone works for himself but his product is nothing for him, each must of course exchange, not only in order to take part in the general productive capacity but also in order to transform his own product into his own subsistence.³⁹

In terms of the objective progression of production, the goal of production shifts from direct value-in-use to indirect value-in-exchange, from the concrete “Many” of individual production to the abstract “One” in social market exchange; the commodity economy whose purpose is exchange allows production itself to become, for the first time, **limitless**. This is the fundamental reason for why capitalism forges cruel productive forces. Thus Marx explains that modern exchange (social exchange) is not the **man’s natural, species need for intercourse** (Hess), but the **necessary** product as production develops to a certain historical stage. Please note that under the premise of the division of labor and exchange systems in production, exchange value necessarily becomes the dominating “One” in human life; this is not an **evil debasement of human nature**, but rather the need and **necessary** result of the development of production. At the same time, an extremely important

³⁸Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 103).

³⁹*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 104).

issue arises: This necessity does not emerge because of the arbitrary changes to social relations themselves, but is rather composed of **necessary** laws born from the objective basis of material production. Therefore, Marx scientifically explains, for the first time, that the fundamental reasons for the changes in capitalist social relations were productive forces and development. **Any discussion of changes in social relations without this foundation** can only be non-scientific.

Marx goes on to discover that in the inter-human relations in the civil society of bourgeois economists (such as Smith): “Each [individual] pursues his private interest and only his private interest; and thereby serves the private interests of all, the general interest, without willing or knowing it.”⁴⁰ These relations are deified into the natural social essence of “each man for himself, and God for all.” Contrary to this, Marx scientifically points out that the modes of subsistence of capitalist society are not the will of some natural law, but the result objectively formed from the division of labor and exchange, produced by capitalist production. In a society of division of labor and exchange, “the reciprocal and all-sided dependence of individuals who are indifferent to one another forms their social connection.”⁴¹ **This social connection can only be expressed in the exchange value that emerges as men exchange the product of their labor.** Marx writes:

The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange values presupposes the dissolution of all fixed personal (historic) relations of dependence in production, as well as the all-sided dependence of the producers on one another. Each individual’s production is dependent on the production of all others; and the transformation of his product into the necessities of his own life is [similarly] dependent on the consumption of all others.⁴²

This then means that the collapse of the form of past human social existence and its transformation into new social relations is not the realization of some idea, nor is it the subjective desire of man, but rather a **historical, objective shift** born from the production carried out by men. At the same time, “Exchange, when mediated by exchange value and money, presupposes the all-round dependence of the producers on one another, together with the total isolation of their private interests from one another, as well as a division of social labour whose unity and mutual complementarity exist in the form of a natural relation, as it were, external to the individuals and independent of them.”⁴³ Direct, inter-human relations that had existed in the first great social form have dissolved; man can now only indirectly and spontaneously connect to other men through the complex mediating relationships of market exchange. Man in these **quasi-natural** relationships external to himself is completely and profoundly isolated. Marx writes:

But human beings become individuals only through the process of history. He appears originally as a **species-being** [*Gattungswesen*], **clan**

⁴⁰*ibid.*, p. 89 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 102).

⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 103).

⁴²*ibid.*, p. 89 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 102).

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 104).

being, herd animal although in no way whatever as a “zoon politicon” in the political sense. Exchange itself is a chief means of this individuation [*Vereinzelung*]. It makes the herd-like existence superfluous and dissolves it.⁴⁴

At this time, the modern social relations (the structure of the capitalist economy) that Marx expounds here were evidently not things that he could have specifically identified in *The German Ideology*. First, this is because what emerges here is what I have referred to as the **narrow** historical materialist viewpoint that Marx developed in economics research, i. e., **in the social form of economy, man’s creations begin to become objective forces not dependent on his own will**. Simply put, this is **historical** economic determinism. In other words, based on the viewpoint of the **fundamental theory** of material production of the general theory of historical materialism, definite economic forces and economic relations become the **dominant** things in man’s modern life. *The theorists at the Second International ahistorically identified this historical dominance as a universal law*. Marx’s concrete historical analysis here is obviously much more complex than the analytical logic of traditional philosophical textbooks; it could not be simply replaced by the assertion that productive forces determine relations of production. *The problems in the social relations of modern China’s socialist market economy and modern capitalist social relations belong to a much more complex structural totality*. Unfortunately, in our past research, these important expositions were merely listed under concrete explanations of empirical economics, and thus were weakened.

Second, Marx completely explains, for the first time, the second great social form, i. e., **the objectification and inversion of inter-human relations in capitalist society**. This is an issue to which we accord special attention. Because exchange value has become the goal, all must transform into exchange value. Exchange value thus becomes the only means by which individuals attain real social acceptance. At the same time, exchange value necessarily develops from general equivalence into money. In contrast to past, direct, inter-human relations of intercourse, inter-human relations in modern capitalist society become inevitable phenomena through the medium of the objectification (inversion) of exchange. Marx writes:

The social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product, and the share of individuals in production here appear as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals. The general exchange of activities and products, which has become a vital condition for each individual — their mutual interconnection here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing. In exchange value, the social connection between persons is transformed into a social relation between things; personal capacity into objective wealth.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 399–400 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 497).

⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 103–104).

Thus appears **inversion and objectification**. But why do they have faith in the thing? Obviously only because that thing is an **objectified relation** between persons; because it is objectified exchange value, and exchange value is nothing more than a mutual relation between people's productive activities.⁴⁶ Marx found that the premise of money existence is the objectification of social relationships themselves; money is expressed here as "collateral." In market exchange, when one person acquires a commodity from another person, he must leave behind money as collateral. At first glance, "people place in a thing (money) the faith which they do not place in each other." Moreover, "The very necessity of first transforming individual products or activities into **exchange value**, into **money**, so that they obtain and demonstrate their social **power**."⁴⁷ As soon as you have money, you have power. Money is power! "Their own exchange and their own production confront individuals as an **objective** relation which is **independent** of them."⁴⁸ Marx continues: "Each individual possesses social power in the form of a thing. Rob the thing of this social power and you must give it to persons to exercise over persons."⁴⁹ In fact, Marx explains the secret of how money acquires mysterious power in economic phenomena through analyzing the inverted nature of exchange relationships in the process of capitalist economics. *I have noticed that Max Scheler borrowed Marx's economic phenomenological critique to use in the context of theodicy. Scheler believed that real commodities — the market economy — was a kind of divine "overthrow of value," i. e., the inversion of qualitative value and semblance value, of life value and usefulness value.*⁵⁰

In Marx's later *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx points out even more clearly: "It is a characteristic feature of labour which posits exchange-value that it causes the social relations of individuals to appear in the perverted form of a social relation between things...although it is thus correct to say that exchange-value is a relation between persons, it is however necessary to add that it is a relation hidden by a material veil."⁵¹ In terms of Marx's viewpoint of historical phenomenology, "Only the conventions of our everyday life make it appear commonplace and ordinary that social relations of production should assume the shape of things, so that the relations into which people enter in the course of their work appear as the relation of things to one another and of things to people."⁵² **This is the phenomenon that historical phenomenology attempts to disprove.**

A social relation of production appears as something existing apart from individual human beings, and the distinctive relations into which they enter in the course of production in society appear as the specific properties of a thing — it is this perverted appearance, this prosaically

⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 93 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 107).

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 105).

⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 104).

⁵⁰Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte* (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 69sq., pp. 209sq. (Chinese transl.: *Jiazhi de dianfu*, pp. 22–134).

⁵¹Marx, "Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie," p. 21 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan," p. 22).

⁵²*ibid.*, p. 22 (Chinese transl.: "Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan," p. 23).

real, and by no means imaginary, mystification that is characteristic of all social forms of labour positing exchange-value.⁵³

It is also necessary for us to define another issue: unlike the *1844 Manuscript*, the objectification and inversion of which Marx speaks here are no longer an **abstract, subjective value judgment**, but rather **objective, historical understanding**. This can be seen in two ways: first, the objectification and inversion of human relations, when compared with the direct relations (“man’s dependence”) of the first great social form, imply historical progression, not the debasement of “human nature.” “Certainly, this objective connection is preferable to the lack of any connection, or to a merely local connection resting on blood ties, or on primeval, natural or master-servant relations.”⁵⁴ Second, these objectified and inverted relations create, on a higher level, “fully developed individuals,” i. e., the individuality and force of the free development of men in the third great social form. Marx remarks with great perspicuity:

The degree and the universality of the development of wealth where *this* individuality becomes possible supposes production on the basis of exchange values as a prior condition, whose universality produces not only the alienation of the individual from himself and from others, but also the universality and the comprehensiveness of his relations and capacities.⁵⁵

Why do inversion and objectification create the universality and comprehensiveness of man’s relations? Because in the world historical progression formed by the capitalist economy where exchange is the goal, “In the case of the **world market**, the connection of the **individual with all**, but at the same time also [this connection is] **independent of this connection from the individual.**”⁵⁶ In the world market, opened by frequent and broad exchange of commodities, money, and capital, the intermediary nature of economic objectification make all who enter the market become intimately related integral parts of a whole. Marx explains that **only through the objectification and inversion of man’s relations can the material possibility of his further comprehensive liberation in real historical development be produced**. Here, Marx’s thinking is closer to the premise of objective necessity in Hegel’s historical dialectic. This discussion, founded on the basis of economics, is much more advanced than the research of the same topic in *The German Ideology*. At the same time, we can already affirm that this scientific understanding is completely different from the ethical critique in the *1844 Manuscript*.

However, unlike bourgeois ideology, Marx would never simply affirm this historical progress. He would not, like the bourgeois economists, view the society that is formed from “[man’s] spontaneous interconnection, this material and mental metabolism which is independent of the knowing and willing of individuals,

⁵³Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,” p. 35 (Chinese transl.: “Zhengzhi jingjixue pipan,” p. 38).

⁵⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 108–109).

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

and which presupposes their reciprocal independence and indifference” as a “natural product.” He would not view inverted and objectified social relations as the objective natural attributes that society naturally possesses.⁵⁷ Marx writes: “it is an insipid notion to conceive of this merely **objective bond** as a spontaneous, natural attribute inherent in individuals and inseparable from their nature (in antithesis to their conscious knowing and willing).”⁵⁸ This is because these objective social relations are “the product of history:”

The alien and independent character in which it presently exists *vis-à-vis* individuals proves only that the latter are still engaged in the creation of the conditions of their social life, and that have not yet begun, on the basis of these conditions, to live it. It is the bond natural to individuals within specific and limited relations of production.⁵⁹

Similarly, “Equally certain is it that individuals cannot gain mastery over their own social interconnections before they have created them.”⁶⁰ To view these historical, objectified social relations as the natural form of society is to use false economic material phenomena to veil essential social relations. This was the essence of the whole of bourgeois ideology.

Third, the modern social relations that Marx elucidated here demonstrate the **inversion of individual subsistence circumstances** in the second great social form. In Marx’s opinion, in the capitalist economic process, “(1) individuals now produce only for society and in society; (2) that production is not *directly* social, is not ‘the offspring of association,’ which distributes labour internally. Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under individuals, manageable by them as their common wealth.”⁶¹ This is because,

In the money relation, in the developed system of exchange (and this semblance seduces the democrats), the ties of personal dependence, of distinctions of blood, education, etc, are in fact exploded, ripped up (at least, personal ties all appear as **personal** relations); and individuals **seem** independent (this is an independence which is at bottom merely an illusion and it is more correctly called indifference), free to collide with one another and to engage in exchange within this freedom; but they appear thus only for someone who abstracts from the **conditions**, the **conditions of existence** within which these individuals enter into contact (and these conditions, in turn, are independent of the individuals and, although created by society, appear as if they were **natural conditions**, not controllable by individuals).⁶²

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁶⁰*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁶¹*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 105).

⁶²*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 110).

Here, although individuals **seem** to enjoy greater freedom, actually, they come under “an objective restriction of the individual by relations independent of him and sufficient unto themselves.”⁶³ Marx goes on to point out that “a particular individual may by chance get on top of these relations, but the mass of those under their rule cannot, since their mere existence expresses subordination, the necessary subordination of the mass of individuals.”⁶⁴ It is evident that these relations are not the abolition of dependency relations, but rather the further generalization of those relations. Marx writes, “they are merely the elaboration and emergence of the general **foundation** of the relations of personal dependence.”⁶⁵ Marx later asserts that in the period of capitalist production, “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.”⁶⁶

It is in this historical world of the commodity-market economy that inter-human social relations are invertedly expressed as material relations and individual subsistence is necessarily transformed into an isolated, objectified, fragmented subsistence in order to produce exchange value. In the face of powerful, objectified economic forces, individual subsistence appears insignificant. Individuals invertedly appear as the sovereign development of the market economy as well as the tools by which it realizes profits. Production truly progresses rapidly and wealth is truly accumulated rapidly; however, the men who create this ever-changing world appear to be nothing. Is not this actual historical progression the inversion of the end and the beginning, of black and white? Whether relative to the past simple form (“past”) of human subsistence or relative to the possibility of liberation based on the material conditions created by big-industrial production (“future”), today’s capitalist human social subsistence is an abnormal, twisted human tragedy. The goal of Marx’s historical phenomenology was the utter tearing down of the thick veil of historical phenomenology around the market economy, thus revealing the essence of this definite social historical developmental period and thereby manifesting communist subsistence, a form that truly conforms to human subsistence. This is the so-called third great social form.

In the context of this text, the third great social form was not the primary object of Marx’s exposition. Communist human emancipation was merely a **extremely forward-looking** view of the world after conducting phenomenological critique of capitalist reality. The third great social form merely points towards an actual possibility; it was not a value assumption of what should exist, but rather an objective direction in historical development — “future.” The direction of the third social form is very clear: “Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the third stage.”⁶⁷ First is the social productive force developed in the second social form. Next are individuals connected on the basis

⁶³Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 110).

⁶⁴*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 111).

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 111).

⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 392 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 486).

⁶⁷*ibid.*, p. 91 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 104).

of communal appropriation and control of production materials. This union is not arbitrary, but rather presupposed by the development of material and spiritual conditions. These individuals thus engage in “free exchange.” Finally, “universally developed individuals, whose social relations, as their own communal relations, are hence also subordinated to their own communal control, are no product of nature, but of history.”⁶⁸ This is because,

In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity’s own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a **predetermined** yardstick? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?⁶⁹

The third social form is not some kind of idealized kingdom that should exist, but is rather a new totality established on the basis of material, universal exchange relations created by the second great social form. This is the “absolute movement of becoming” of human liberation.

9.1.5 Abstract becomes ruling: Different answers from historical phenomenology and spiritual phenomenology

After explaining how direct, inter-human relations are inverted and objectified into material relations in the process of the capitalist economy, Marx suddenly emphasizes the important and profound view of philosophical historical theory that he had already proposed earlier: the question of why the **abstract becomes the ruling phenomenon** in modern society. I am of the opinion that here Marx first reveals the most important actual basis of the modern idealist conception of history. We could even say that in Marx’s economics research, he profoundly interpreted Hegel’s objective idealism for the first time. Thus Marx fundamentally differentiates between his **historical phenomenology and spiritual phenomenology**.

As Marx says, “**material** dependency relations also appear, in antithesis to those of **personal** dependence.”⁷⁰ “the objective dependency relation is nothing more than social relations which have become independent and now enter into opposition to the seemingly independent individuals; i.e. the reciprocal relations of production separated from and autonomous of individuals.”⁷¹ Marx next changes

⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 94 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 108).

⁶⁹*ibid.*, p. 392 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 486).

⁷⁰*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 111).

⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 111).

the direction of his analysis, writing: “individuals are now ruled by **abstractions**, whereas earlier they depended on one another.”⁷² What does Marx mean here by “abstractions?” According to Marx’s definition here, “the abstraction, or idea, however, is nothing more than the theoretical expression of those material relations which are their [individuals] lord and master.” This is an extremely profound theoretical summary. In Marx’s context at this point, abstraction is value, the general form of value: money. As we have already discussed, in the operation of the capitalist economy, value formed in exchange was a kind of historical objective abstraction, i. e., undifferentiated labor in general. Of course, this is necessary social labor realized in market exchange. We have already discussed the fact that exchange value ascended from a means to an end itself, which caused the objectification and substantiation of the **abstract ratio** of relations of labor exchange in actual economic operation. At the same time, these objectified relations become a power external to individuals. In his later discussion, Marx points out:

We have seen that the basis of **value** is the fact that human beings relate to each other’s labour as equal, and general, and in this form social, labour. This is an abstraction, like all human thought, and social relations only exist among human beings to the extent that they think, and possess this power of abstraction from sensuous individuality and contingency.⁷³

This means that “relations are, of course, expressed only in ideas; therefore philosophers believe that the characteristic of the new era is the rule of this new time period by ideas.”⁷⁴ This is the **true context** of Marx’s declaration that **abstractions have come to rule**. In fact, this statement is **an important philosophical source of many different forms of modern idealist philosophy**. This context also leads us to think of the “One” of the Eleatic School, as well as Plato’s theory of relativity, and especially Hegel’s philosophy, with which young Marx had been so enamored because it penetrated the secret of bourgeois political economy. Hegel’s spiritual phenomenology directly ontologizes social relations (ordered structures) historically formed in human social practice into the essence of the world; thus, the form of concrete material existence itself is mistakenly identified as a phenomenon of the essence of ideas. Hegel peels back layers of material phenomena, self-consciousness, and ideas, making historical reality into an *a priori* logical structure and the history of the emergence of the Spirit. *The mistaken identification that Hegel makes of bourgeois classical economics which I discussed in the first chapter is clearly revealed here by Marx*. Corresponding to this, Marx expands the significance of his social historical phenomenology.

I believe that there are three levels of meaning to Marx’s phrase “rule by abstractions.”

The first layer of meaning is objective historical abstraction itself. As we have already discussed, no non-substantive relations can be grasped by sensuous

⁷²Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 96 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 111).

⁷³Karl Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861–1863),” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. II/3.1, p. 210 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 47, p. 255).

⁷⁴*ibid.*, vol. II/3.1, p. 210 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 47, p. 255).

observation; they can only be reflected by idea abstraction (this also applies to laws). First, natural existence possesses the functional attributes of material. The non-substantive relations (essence) of various material activities and laws cannot be directly observed either. Second, social existence possesses the functional attributes of human activity. It is not substantive; this social material existence is primarily composed of activity, relations, processes, and laws. Material substance is only the material bearer of these elements. In a certain sense we can say that the essence of social existence is made up of social relations; thus historical materialism is “relational ontology.” *Later, Heidegger and Hiromatsu inherited this viewpoint from Marx.* We have previously mentioned many times that relations and laws in social life and not sensuous, observable existence; productive force is an abstraction of relations. We originally understood productive forces as composed of three types of substance. This is, of course, false, because its essence is man’s relation with nature. Relations of production manifest these same qualities even more clearly. In the progression of reproduction of productive relations, in particular, these relations are continually re-creating; they are not material, but rather functional relations constructed by man’s labor. Once man ceases his activity, these relations immediately dissolve. Of course, only through abstraction can social relations also possess the subsidiary substance of material; under particular historical conditions, this relation will also experience inverted objectification (such as commodities, money, and capital). Once this relation has been objectified, it invertedly expresses itself and immediately becomes the ruling force that dominates human subsistence. The essence of economic determinism is the transformation of economic relations into a dominant power.

On the second layer of meaning, because ideas reflect relations and laws (especially in the understanding of social life), they are often mistakenly believed to be decisive things. This is an inverted reflection of **relation ontology**. Please note that this idea determinism is primarily objective idealism, because subjective idealism proceeds from man’s feelings, intuition, desires, and instincts. In fact, the essence of rational idea theory focuses on relations and laws. As we have already seen, because all essential existence in human social life is non-observable, it constantly historically constructs and deconstructs in the process of life. Human activity itself, if it was not objectified, would immediately be dispelled. Therefore, the functional structural existence of social activity objectively persists through definite material accessories. Only through an underlying rational understanding can human subjects dispel the fog surrounding social existence; only thus can they pierce and truly understand social relations and underlying functional social structures. Thus, consciousness of the essence of social life, as well as the determination of individuals by this rational abstraction are both mistakenly believed to be ideas. *It is on this point that Levine makes an enormous mistake: he immediately identifies Marx’s view here as so-called “social a priori,” i. e., the true precedence of concepts in social life. This is a crude objective idealism.*⁷⁵

⁷⁵Levine, *Dialogue within the Dialectic* (Chinese transl.: *Bianzhengfa neibu duihua*, pp. 199–200).

On the third level of meaning, abstraction in capitalist reality comes to rule. This means that in modern capitalist society, **objective** abstraction rules social existence in objectified form. For Marx, the “abstraction (essence)” that rules real social existence is the equivalent relations of abstract labor — value relations — replacement by material — idea nature — material symbol — symbol (credit). Essentially speaking, this is truly a form of idea determinism in reality. Furthermore, the abstract ideas of this relation are again objectified in economics; men believe that these inverted material relations truly exist, and thus fetishisms are born. It is a characteristic of past social history that relations and laws immediately oppress men; in capitalist society, on the other hand, the abstraction of economic exchange relations takes on the form of objectified relations, indirectly ruling and oppressing men. Furthermore, this enslavement is expressed as the pseudo-nature and enslavement to material of the natural formula. Compared with the external despotism of the past, the control of this abstract “invisible hand” appears to be objective domination, a more equitable “rule by no one.” It is evident that Marx and Engels both refute the rule of this abstract relation over men; in particular, as this abstract rule assumes objectified form, it does not appear to be expressed as human relations, but rather as natural relations and laws. *To use Hannah Arendt’s words, rule by no one does not necessarily mean no rule. Doubtless, under certain circumstances, this rule can be the most cruel, the most abusive form of rule.*⁷⁶

In the discussion of economics, Marx expounds on historical philosophy. Here, social economic relations are crucial, and these relations are ultimately abstract; this is what Marx referred to as “abstraction rules man.” Why this abstraction comes to rule is a profound question that philosophy apparently cannot answer clearly. Therefore Marx returns to his original economics line of thought, connecting this particular abstraction with money.

Marx points out that “Labor time cannot directly be money.”⁷⁷ It is the general nature of labor, **abstract** social objectification that “makes the product of labor time into exchange value.”⁷⁸ This is the relation between the abstract value substance (labor in general) and the quantity of value (labor time). At the same time, “In order to be **general money** directly, it would have to be not a **particular**, but **general** labour from the outset; i. e. it would have to be posited from the outset as a link in **general production.**”⁷⁹ This is the objective necessity of moving from concrete to abstract.

A product posited as exchange value is in its essence no longer a simple thing; it is posited in a quality differing from its natural quality; it is posited as a **relation**, more precisely as a relation in general, not to one commodity but to every commodity, to every possible product. It expresses, therefore, a general relation; the product which relates to

⁷⁶Hannah Arendt [Alunte 阿伦特], “Gonggong lingyu he siren lingyu,” 公共领域和私人领域 [Public realm and private realm], ed. Wang Hui 汪晖 and Chen Yangu 陈燕谷, trans. Liu Feng 刘锋 (1998): p. 72.

⁷⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 99 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 115).

⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 99 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 115).

⁷⁹*ibid.*, p. 102 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 118–119).

itself as the realization of a **specific quantity** of labor in general, of social labor time.⁸⁰

Abstract value in general is transformed into a specific objectified object. “Exchange value presupposes social labor as the substance of all products, quite apart from their natural make-up.”⁸¹ However, it is immediately expressed as a kind of natural good. Thus products become commodities, commodities becomes exchange value, exchange value and commodities are placed together and form a particular existence: money. “From its servile role, in which it appears as mere medium of circulation [money] suddenly changes into the lord and god of the world of commodities.”⁸² **Abstract rule** in real society **begins here**. In the past, “every form of natural wealth presupposes an essential relation between the individual and the objects, in which the individual in one of his aspects objectifies himself in the thing, so that his possession of the thing appears at the same time as a certain development of his individuality.”⁸³ Someone who possesses sheep and cows is a shepherd; if he possesses grain, he is a farmer. Marx goes on to point out:

Money, however, as the individual of general wealth, as something emerging from circulation and representing a general quality, as a **merely social result**, does not at all presuppose an individual relation to its owner; possession of it is not the development of any particular essential aspect of his individuality; but rather possession of what lacks individuality, since this social [relation] exists at the same time as a sensuous, external object which can be mechanically seized, and lost in the same manner.⁸⁴

Thus, he who possesses this abstract general wealth can rule the world. Appropriating the world by appropriating an abstraction is the fundamental cause of the abstract ruling the world. *In a post-modern context, the abstraction of this kind of rule is knowledge (the rational logos), hence Foucault’s saying: “Knowledge is power!”*

Marx goes on to point out that “[money] is itself the **community**, and can tolerate none other standing above it.”⁸⁵ Where hired labor exists, money will not only not cause the collapse of the capitalist social form, but is also the condition for the development of this social form, the driving force for the development of all productive forces, i. e., material and spiritual productive forces. **This actual abstract rule is not expressed as cruel oppression, but rather becomes a condition of self-identification, which, if left, leaves men unable to subsist.** Thus this particular (bourgeois) abstract rule becomes even more stable, even more firm. Marx continues:

⁸⁰*ibid.*, pp. 133–134 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 154).

⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 134 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 154).

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 146 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 171).

⁸³*ibid.*, p. 146 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 171).

⁸⁴*ibid.*, p. 146 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 171).

⁸⁵*ibid.*, p. 147 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 172).

As material representative of general wealth, as individualized exchange value, money must be the direct object, aim and product of general labor, the labour of all individuals. Labor must directly produce exchange value, i. e. money. It must therefore be **wage labor**.⁸⁶

Under the constraints of these three “musts,” workers have no choice but to voluntarily enslave themselves. Capitalists produce general wealth in order to appropriate the representative of general wealth. However, because of this, the true source of wealth is opened. “When the aim of labour is not a particular product standing in a particular relation to the particular needs of the individual, but money, wealth in its general form, then, firstly the individual’s industriousness knows no bounds.”⁸⁷ Thus, “[money] was a means for expanding the universality of wealth, and for drawing the dimensions of exchange over the whole world; for creating the true **generality** of exchange value in substance and in extension.”⁸⁸ Thus **the abstract rule of money is necessarily expanded over the whole earth**. Here, the bourgeois money relations of which Marx writes truly become a global “One” (the absolute essence of monotheistic God). The inverted world of pseudo-phenomena completely veil the world that actually exists.

9.2 Capital: The True Relation Underlying Exchange

After having analyzed the historical and logical relation between exchange value and money, Marx’s historical phenomenology delves deeper, embarking on the critique of capital. Marx explained how, as a particular kind of money, as money that can produce money, capital was not material; it was not the natural attributes of material, but was rather a particular historical relation that truly reflected the essence of capitalist modes of production. It was a stranger, veiled social relation. Furthermore, Marx attempted to explain which form of capital and on what level played a fundamentally decisive role. Finally, Marx also attempted to explain how this relation was veiled by surface level semblances. Historical phenomenology historically peels back the layers of historically formed phenomena and pseudo-phenomena in capitalist social life; these phenomena and pseudo-phenomena are exchange in circulation, for which money relations are both the start and the finish. Thus, Marx resolves to step away from the phenomenological realm of circulation and search for the more important essence with a broader scope of the overall productive process. We will see that as Marx reveals the essence of capital relations, he again scientifically identifies the phenomenon of alienation that actually takes place in the operation of the capitalist economy.

9.2.1 Apparent equality and freedom born from exchange

A new chapter in *Grundrisse* begins with the second notebook, under the title “The Chapter on Money as Capital.” *In the manuscripts that followed, Marx*

⁸⁶Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 148 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 173).

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 148 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 174).

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 149 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 175).

used the simple title “Chapter on Capital.” This signifies that Marx was about to **transition from money to capital.**

Marx again begins the writing of this text with a discussion of money. He points out that it is extremely difficult to understand money in terms of its qualifications; for instance, in the world of money, it is impossible to understand the essence of this world. This is because in terms of money, “social relation, a definite relation between individuals, here appears as a metal, a stone, as a purely physical, external thing which can be found, as such, in nature, and which is indistinguishable in form from its natural existence.”⁸⁹ It is mistakenly believed that money is the most important thing in economic life, when in fact, it is only a phenomenon that exists in the commodity-market economy social form. According to our earlier discussion, this is still a kind of inverted phenomenon of the essence of social life in its expressed form; however, it is also an extremely important and unavoidable characteristic, an incurable symptom, of social life. Before moving to the next stage of his phenomenological analysis, Marx first investigates the issue of bourgeois freedom and equality, which exists at the same phenomenological level as money. I believe that this is a remarkable section of analysis.

It is common knowledge that freedom, equality, and charity, as the central content of bourgeois ideology, have always been defined as a God-given human right, a kind of natural right. Here, Marx conducts profound economic analysis of this claim, finding that the bourgeois demand for equality was not a natural right, but was rather a **historically** formed notion of right on the basis of inter-human relations in the capitalist economy. This implies that bourgeois freedom and equality are directly born from the capitalist economic process; it is a social qualification in a particular form.

First is the **economic emergence of equality.** Marx points out that its first characteristic is:

As far as the formal character is concerned, there is absolutely no distinction between them, and this is the economic character, the aspect in which they stand towards one another in the exchange relation; it is the indicator of their social function or social relation towards one another. Each of the subjects is an exchanger; i.e. each has the same social relation towards the other that the other has towards him. As subjects of exchange, their relation is therefore that of **equality.**⁹⁰

This is the equality of subject exchange. This kind of equality is **formal** equality in a legal sense.

The second characteristic is that in exchange, “the commodities which they exchange are, as exchange values, equivalent.”⁹¹ This means that the things that equal exchanging subjects exchange are **essentially equivalent.** Here exchange is also equal. Marx points out that three elements formally exist in this equitable exchange: first, the subject of exchange relations — **exchangers** — who occupy

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 161 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 190).

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p. 165 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 193).

⁹¹*ibid.*, p. 165 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 193).

the same qualification; second, the object of their exchange — exchange value, **equivalents** — not only must these objects truly be equal, but they must also be recognized as being equal; finally, exchange behavior itself, i. e., its mediating role. It is through this medium that subjects appear as exchangers (equal men), and their objects appear as equivalents (equal things).⁹²

Marx attempts here to explain that “Only the differences between their needs and between their production gives rise to exchange and to their social equation in exchange.”⁹³ If two people both need air, and air is abundant, then they are not brought into **social contact**. If two people have the same needs and project their own labor onto the same object, then they will not have any **social relation**. In real life, men have different needs, and these needs will only become more varied with the development of history. However, under conditions of the division of labor, production is different. Therefore, under these circumstances, “this need on the part of one can be satisfied by the product of the other.”⁹⁴ Therefore, men complement each other, need each other, and realize this interdependent relationship through exchange: “they stand not only in an equal, but also in a social, relation to one another.”⁹⁵ It is evident that the equal relations that men enjoy in social existence are not arbitrary, nor are they gifts; rather, they develop in the ever-richer, particular social relations produced by capitalist market exchange.

The second characteristic is the **emergence of free economics**. Marx goes on to point out that because of the natural differences between individuals and their commodities, men are united through exchange: “[natural differences] form the motive for the integration of these individuals, for their social interrelation as exchangers, in which they are **stipulated** for each other as, and **prove** themselves to be, equals, there enters, in addition to the quality of equality, that of **freedom**.” This means that in the process of exchange:

Although individual A feels a need for the commodity of individual B, he does not appropriate it by force, nor vice versa, but rather they recognize one another reciprocally as proprietors, as persons whose will penetrates their commodities. Accordingly, the juridical moment of the Person enters here, as well as that of freedom, in so far as it is contained in the former. No one seizes hold of another’s property by force. Each divests himself of his property voluntarily.⁹⁶

This then forms the most important real basis for freedom. Furthermore, in these economic relations, each individual serves others in order to serve himself; individuals use each other as their own means. These two circumstances appear thus in the consciousness of two individuals: 1) each person can only attain his own ends by using other people; 2) each becomes means for the other (being for another) only as end in himself (being for self); 3) each individual is a means and an ends,

⁹²Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 165 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 193).

⁹³*ibid.*, p. 166 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 194).

⁹⁴*ibid.*, p. 167 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 195).

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 166 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 195).

⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 167 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 195–196).

and only by becoming a means can he reach his own ends, only by making himself an end in himself can he become a means. This is a very speculative expression, because Marx is explaining the **dialectic of means and ends** that objectively appears in capitalist relations of exchange. Marx writes, “out of the act of exchange itself, the individual, each one of them, is reflected in himself as its exclusive and dominant (determinant) subject. With that, then, the complete freedom of the individual is posited.”⁹⁷ This also implies that in the bourgeoisie, individual freedom very much is a necessary by-product of the economic process.

Therefore, when the economic form, exchange, posits the all-sided equality of its subjects, then the content, the individual as well as the objective material which drives towards the exchange, is **freedom**. Equality and freedom are thus not only respected in exchange based on exchange values but, also, the exchange of exchange values is the productive, real basis of all **equality and freedom**.⁹⁸

It is evident that the bourgeois notions of freedom and equality are the necessary products of their own social existence; their most important real basis are the exchange relations in the capitalist commodity-market economy. On this point, Marx points out: “As pure ideas they are merely the idealized expressions of this basis; as developed in juridical, political, social relations, they are merely this basis to a higher power.”⁹⁹ Marx’s analysis here is extremely important.

In Marx’s opinion, the capitalist monetary system was the “realization of this system of freedom and equality.” In the circulation of money, **money is the same no matter who possesses it**. On the scale of money, equality is expressed materially, because in exchange, the natural differences between commodities are diminished along with the differences between the holders of money. For sellers, when a worker buys something for ten dollars and a prince buys something for ten dollars, “all distinction between them is extinguished. [... they] appear to the seller in the same function, in the same equality.”¹⁰⁰ It is money that erases the hierarchical differences of feudal society. This is the fundamental basis for the bourgeois **political liberation**. *Marx’s analysis here is really the logical extension of his Reflections in London Notes*. However, Marx would soon explain that freedom and equality here exist only in **form**. Although this is the case, when compared with past feudal society, this is a real historical improvement in terms of inter-human social relations.

At this point, Marx begins his analysis with circulation and exchange, two concepts studied by many economists, even social economists. He identifies the surface-level relations that take place on the level of circulation and exchange, especially the false bourgeois idea of politics and government established on this phenomenological level. This is the point beyond which bourgeois thought was never able to progress. However, Marx was not interested in simply affirming or

⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 168 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 196).

⁹⁸*ibid.*, p. 168 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 197).

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 168 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 197).

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, pp. 169–170 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 198–199).

refuting this phenomenon, but rather wanted to consider the essence that supported the surface-level social phenomena of bourgeois ideology. He points out:

In present bourgeois society as a whole, this positing of prices and their circulation etc. appears as the surface process, beneath which, however, in the depths, entirely different processes go on, in which this apparent individual equality and liberty disappear.¹⁰¹

Please note that Marx here is historically peeling back the social phenomena of capitalist society in order to pierce its underlying essence. As such, we are about to see Marx's extraordinary historical phenomenological analysis.

In Marx's analysis, he finds that in fact, **presupposing** exchange value as the objective basis of the whole of the capitalist system of production, it "in itself implies compulsion over the individual." Where is real freedom and equality? This is what Marx concentrates on trying to explain to us. Under Marx's analytic gaze, individual products in the capitalist social economic process are not produced **for individuals**; only in the social process of market exchange do they become such products. Here already implies "the whole negation of [the individual's] natural existence... that he is therefore entirely determined by society."¹⁰² This is a form of compulsion that cannot be seen. At the same time, under conditions of the division of labor, the relations between individuals are no longer simple relations between exchangers. "therefore this presupposition [exchange value] by no means arises either out of the individual's will or out of the immediate nature of the individual, but that it is, rather, **historical**, and posits the individual as already **determined** by society."¹⁰³ This is a kind of latent compulsion. This is a theoretical blind spot for bourgeois thinkers and some opponents of capitalism. It is in this sense that Marx identifies the reformist plans of the French socialists such as Proudhon as nothing more than an "idealization of **capitalist** society." These theorists believe that "exchange and exchange value etc. are **originally** (in time) or **essentially** (in their adequate form) a system of universal freedom and equality, but that they have been perverted by money, capital, etc." Therefore, they believe that merely by eliminating the interference of money and capital, they can restore true freedom and equality. In contrast to their superficiality and naivete, Marx cuts right to the heart of the facts:

Exchange value or, more precisely, the money system is in fact the system of equality and freedom, and that the disturbances which they encounter in the further development of the system are disturbances inherent in it, are merely the realization of **equality** and **freedom**, which prove to be inequality and unfreedom.¹⁰⁴

The dialectic of phenomena and essence hidden deeply beneath economic relations here was something that thinkers such as Proudhon were unable to understand.

¹⁰¹Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 171 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 200).

¹⁰²*ibid.*, p. 171 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 200).

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p. 171 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 200–201).

¹⁰⁴*ibid.*, p. 172 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 201).

As the Chinese poet Su Shi¹⁰⁵ wrote, “One cannot see the true form of Lu Mountain when one stands on the mountain itself.”¹⁰⁶ Applying these words to Marx, in order to for him to see through to the truth of the bourgeois world, he would need to step away from the economic phenomenological world of circulation and exchange, step towards the essence of society, into the process of production, and thus reveal the essence of capitalist relations of production.

9.2.2 Underlying revelations: What actually happens behind circulation

What Marx really wanted to explain was how in capitalist economic operation, the exchange relations that ruled in circulation were truly the dominant relations that composed this social life. Capitalist social life and the whole of its ideology was truly established on this fundamental relation. Bourgeois theoretical logic, and even the logic of all past reformist socialist thinkers opposed to bourgeois society was developed on this level. However, Marx believed that the whole realm of circulation and exchange that can be directly sensed was only the **surface-level phenomenon** of this social economic life; it was not the true essential relation in this society. Marx found that in this movement on the surface of the bourgeois world, exchange value is realized in pure form in circulation. Just as we have already said, a worker who buys bread and a millionaire who buys bread are both pure buyers in this action. To them, the bread retailer is only a seller, “All other aspects are here extinguished.”¹⁰⁷ The words “all other aspects are extinguished” carry deep connotations here; they indicate the **essential realm where human senses cannot penetrate**, as well as the **political unconscious** expectation of the bourgeoisie. *As Benjamin wrote, the more important the nature and significance of a behavior, the more it escapes our view.*¹⁰⁸ In the process of circulation, or, as Marx wrote, when money appears in exchange as the simple qualification of money, the true social relations of capitalist society are veiled. The new theoretical starting point of Marx’s historical phenomenological critique was aimed at surpassing this observational level and thus enter the level where **money is understood as capital**.

Marx writes, “Money as capital is an aspect of money which goes beyond its simple character as money. It can be regarded as a higher realization; as it can be said that man is a developed ape.”¹⁰⁹ Entering this level of discussion, we must first understand the **historical nature** of the category of economics. *It is not hard for us to discover that the role of historical materialist methodology began here. It should*

¹⁰⁵ Su Shi (1037–1101), also known as Su Dong Po, was a famous Chinese poet, painter, calligrapher and statesman of the Song Dynasty. He was highly productive; around 2,700 poems and about 800 letters have survived. There is more than fair and subtle reason to quote Su Shi here. In his function as a governor of Xuzhou, he wrote a petition to the Imperial court about the situation of the iron industry in his district. (Editor’s note for the English edition of this book.)

¹⁰⁶ A famous quote from Su Shi’s poem “*Ti Xilin bi* 题西林壁 [Inscribed on the Walls of West Forest Temple]”, and more famous than the rest of the poem. See Ronald C. Egan, *Word, image, and deed in the life of Su Shi*, vol. 39, Harvard-Yenching Institute Cambridge, Mass: Harvard-Yenching Institute monograph series (Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994). (Editor’s note for the English edition.)

¹⁰⁷ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 174 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 205).

¹⁰⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Einbahnstraße* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928), p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 173 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 204).

be clear that there are no so-called unchanging general economic qualifications of natural humanity and social essence as the bourgeois economists would have us believe: **All categories are historical.** It is evident that Marx attempted to use the historical principle of historical materialism to break down the non-historical barriers of the social materialism in economics. For instance, in terms of theoretical logic, on one hand, Marx found that the concept of value preceded capital; on the other hand, the existence of general value in reality is presupposed by capitalist modes of production. Marx concisely asserts: “This determination of value, then, presupposes a given historic stage of the mode of social production and is itself something given with that mode, hence a historic relation.”¹¹⁰ Marx’s words here contain two levels of significance. First, the various elements of the determination of value itself was formed and developed in a **given** stage of past historical modes of production, and it is expressed as the result of these processes. The development from value to money and then to capital is a historical developmental process. Second, as soon as capital is produced, it becomes a **dominant** thing, like the “general illumination.” Therefore, Marx specifically explains that what he studies here — money as capital — of course takes place under **the premise of recognizing this historical process, then abstractly, specifically studying** “developed bourgeois society, which is already moving on its own foundation.”¹¹¹ This is a basic logic premise of historical phenomenology.

According to Marx’s views here, the phenomenon that veiled capital relations, the essence of capitalist society, was the process of exchange in circulation that we have already discussed. In other words, it was the money kingdom that still belonged to the **realm of phenomenology.** We can see that Marx’s thinking shifted on a deeper level; he keenly points out that bourgeois economists “demand that capital be **really** reduced to pure exchange, whereby it would disappear as a power and be destroyed, whether in the form of money or of the commodity.”¹¹² We know that for the bourgeois economists, three subjects and three things appear simultaneously in the process of exchange: landlords take land, capitalists take capital, and workers take labor and exchange these things equally and then take equally three kinds of income, rent, profits, and wages. However, we only see the freedom and equality realized in the process of exchange in circulation without asking what happens behind circulation. Marx reveals: “[Circulation’s] immediate being is therefore pure semblance. **It is the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it.**”¹¹³ This means that bourgeois freedom and equality are both phenomenological, or, in other words, formal semblances. This is because the subjects and objects that appear in exchange are not produced in the process of circulation: “**Circulation therefore does not carry within itself the principle of self-renewal. The moments of circulation are presupposed to it,** not posited by it.”¹¹⁴ We can see that behind exchange there exist certain things that capitalists are unwilling to expose.

¹¹⁰Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 174 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 205).

¹¹¹*ibid.*, p. 175 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 206).

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 177 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 208).

¹¹³*ibid.*, p. 177 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 209).

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 177 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 208).

Marx admits that capital first comes from circulation, i. e., from commercial capital (capital in circulation) that takes money as its own starting point. This is the first form of capital in the earliest state of capitalist economic development; the next form of capital in its development is money capital. However, in the realm of pure circulation that we have been discussing (the movement of simple exchange value), **commodity capital and money capital themselves are both unable to realize capital**. This means that for the things that appear in exchange, such as commodities and money (capital) are not **created** by the process of circulation; circulation is only a surface-level phenomenon. What Marx wants to ask is this: what is capital? How is money as capital produced? Returning to the realm that we just left, how is exchange value created? However, to truly resolve these questions, we must pass through the surface-level phenomenon of circulation and enter the **realm of production**. *Please note that this is a extension and deepening of the line of thought in London Notes and Ricardo Notes*. In fact, we already know that in bourgeois political economy, this thinking was an important improvement that began with the physiocrats. Classical economics already began to focus on and proceed from the realm of production. But more importantly, Marx discovered that the view of bourgeois economists towards production was still full of **objectified pseudo-phenomena that appeared in inverted form**. Their theories were still full of fantasy and imagination, taking clouds for flowers and staring at the moon in the water.

Marx believed that in classical economics, although capital had entered the realm of production, it still appeared in **objectified form**: “Just as exchange value, i. e. all relations of commodities as exchange values, appears in money to be a thing, so do all aspects of the activity which creates exchange values, **labor**, appear in **capital**.”¹¹⁵ For economists such as Ricardo, capital is a tool of production. Using Ricardo’s words, capital “is accumulated (realized) labor (properly, **objectified labor**), which serves as the means for new labor (production).”¹¹⁶ *The added parenthetical notes here were Marx’s own definitions*. Thus, the bourgeois economists only see “the simple material of capital, without regard to the formal character without which it is not capital.”¹¹⁷ This comment is quite profound; however, it was impossible for the context of old observational materialism (including all philosophical materialism, especially social materialism) to grasp this penetrating phenomenological understanding. The weapon that Marx uses here to surpass the ideology of bourgeois economics was **non-substantive historical materialist scientific epistemology**. Marx wanted to firmly grasp the **formal qualifications that the senses were unable to attain**; these were **the definite social relations in terms of objects as real carriers**. To use a somewhat improper analogy, this was similar to the ideal forms and logical essence that penetrated material phenomena, as advocated by Hegel’s idealism. Marx holds on to the **non-substantive functional structures** that compose social existence, i. e., the social re-organization of the historical essence of the material content of social classes.

¹¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 177, Fußnote (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 208, Fußnote 1).

¹¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 179 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 211). ok Marx quoted the original text from pages 327 and 499 of the third edition of Ricardo’s *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*.

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 179 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 211).

Marx writes that without the particular social forms of capital and only emphasizing its content, **“as which it is a necessary moment of all labor, then of course nothing is easier than to demonstrate that capital is a necessary condition for all human production.”**¹¹⁸ Marx goes on to assert that **“Capital is conceived as a thing, not as a relation.”**¹¹⁹ “A definite **social relation of production**, which is expressed in things, is taken as the material and natural quality of these things, strikes us forcibly when we open the nearest textbook of political economy.”¹²⁰ If the classical economists are correct and capital is a tool of production, then it must exist in all of society: “Capital would have existed in all forms of society, and is something altogether unhistorical.”¹²¹ This is what the bourgeois ideology attempted to prove, as well as the secret of the deception of bourgeois economic ideology.

Marx’s later argument would offer even more penetrating insights:

The crude materialism of the economists who regard as the *natural properties* of things what are social relations of production among people, and qualities which things obtain because they are subsumed under these relations, is at the same time just as crude an idealism, even fetishism, since it imputes social relations to things as inherent characteristics, and thus mystifies them.¹²²

This is an even deeper level of veiling by social pseudo-phenomena. Only through this **veiling** can “capital become an extremely mysterious existence.”¹²³ However, in the scientific scope of Marx’s historical phenomenology, capital is not a thing, but rather a social relation under certain conditions of history; it is a ever-changing, dynamic relation that will never be frozen. “It is then evident that [capital] is a **relation, and can only be a relation of production.**”¹²⁴ In movement of capitalist economics, capital is money, fixed property, and even manpower; however, this does not mean that capital is a thing, but rather that man, material, and metal can all become the **material carriers** of this relation. *Marx’s proof here is much more profound and comprehensive than his Wage Labor and Capital, where the topic was proposed.*

Taking our discussion one step further, Marx identifies that capital is a relation, focusing on the forms that make capital what it is; in fact, this means that he historically pointed out the **true relation of enslavement veiled by superficially equal and just exchange phenomena** that is realized by the particular antagonism between capital and labor in exchange. Marx’s views here are profound: “Capital exchanges itself, or exists in this role, only in connection with **not-capital**, the

¹¹⁸Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 180 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 212).

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 180 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 212).

¹²⁰Karl Marx, “Das Kapital. Erstes Buch. Sechstes Kapitel. Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses,” in Marx and Engels, *MEGA 2*, vol. II/4.1, p. 73 (Chinese transl.: “[Ziben lun] di yi ce. Di liu zhang. Zhijie shengchan guocheng de jieguo,” p. 56).

¹²¹Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 179 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 211).

¹²²*Grundrisse*, p. 567 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, II, p. 202).

¹²³Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861–1863),” vol. II/3.6, p. 2163 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 48, p. 40).

¹²⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 415 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 518).

negation of capital, without which it is not capital; the real **not-capital** is labor.”¹²⁵ In the historical analysis of capital, labor appears along with new thinking points. As the modern Chinese poet Bei Dao wrote, “New opportunities and glittering stars / adorn the limitless night sky.”¹²⁶ I believe that this **labor** was the **real point of origin** of Marx’s historical phenomenology, an important turning point. Considering the development of historical materialism, this means that labor **returns from the objective dimension of production to the subjective dimension of labor activity**. At the same time, it is in the phenomenological unveiling of these profound enslavement relations that Marx begins to realize his greatest economics discovery: the secret of the production of surplus value. To use Engels’ words, this is his second great historical discovery, after the establishment of historical materialism.

9.2.3 Critical logic proceeding from the subjective dimension: Capital and labor, as well as objectified labor and living labor

At this point in our discussion, there is no doubt that the exchange of capital and labor is already an abstraction. The economic links that are observable to man are the exchanges between capitalists and workers; capitalists pay wages in the form of money, and workers pay the “commodity” of labor. On the surface, in this process of exchange, both sides engage in exchange voluntarily and equally. However, after an arduous process of thought, Marx finally discovered that **what the two exchanging sides actually pay and actually receive at the end of exchange** are completely and essentially different. There is an enormous gap between the equality at the beginning and the inequality at the end.

If we want to truly understand Marx’s profound vision here, it is evidently not enough to merely stand on the basis of general social epistemology. I believe that even standing on the principles of the general theory of historical materialism is insufficient. As such, before I continue the analysis of the essence of exchange, we must consider some of the unique definitions that Marx makes of capital and labor. I would also like to point out that it was in these new definitions that Marx constructed the most important basis of his special theory of historical materialism, and especially the historical point of origin of historical phenomenology: **Actual subjective labor**. I believe that this is the case for three reasons:

First, as we know, practice was the basis for Marx’s new worldview in *Theses on Feuerbach*; in the general theory of historical materialism in *The German Ideology*, on the other hand, material production in practice was identified as the basis of social existence. In general philosophical logic, both practice and production indicate a **complete unity of subject and object in objective activity**. Classical economics (social materialism) was able to accept the logic line of thought that proceeded from production to define social wealth, and then confirmed the basis of society. However, when Marx began to critique capitalist modes of production

¹²⁵*ibid.*, p. 198 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 231).

¹²⁶From Bei Dao’s perhaps most famous poem, “The Answer (*Huida* 回答)”, written in 1976. (Editor’s note for the English edition.)

from an economics perspective, he had to face an even more critical problem: **the place of the various elements of production in the productive process**. In the bourgeois ideology, landowners, capitalists, and workers simultaneously possess through different elements of production: land, capital, and labor. These three elements appear to be equally important. Although classical economics recognized the labor theory of value and the fact that capital is accumulated labor, this did not prevent economists from starting with production and superficially **homogenizing** these three fundamentally different elements of production. At this point, Marx discovers that there are underlying problems with criticizing capitalist economic relations from the **objective dimension of production**. As such, he had no choice but to launch a deeper investigation of this issue.

Generally speaking, general material production that creates the basis of social existence does not play an **equal** role for the different elements that participate in the process of production. Marx provides great insight in his analysis that in production, there exist objectified labor, instruments of labor, and labor (not laborers). First, objectified labor has the relation “of the **raw material**, i. e. of the formless matter, the mere material for the form-positing, purposive activity of labor.” Second, instruments of labor, i. e., the objective means which subjective activity inserts between itself as an object, as its conductor. Third, the labor activity generated and realized by tools towards the object in production by the human subject; in other words, “labor as activity.”¹²⁷ In general labor, “labor is the living, form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time.”¹²⁸ **Human labor does not create material in production; rather, it gives natural material a kind of self-serving (definite social historical needs) social form of existence**. In fact, this is the basic meaning of “social wealth.” To recognize this point is to recognize the **fundamental position of subjective labor activity** in the the process by which material production creates social historical existence. I believe that this is the **logical starting point** of Marx’s special theory of historical materialism. Considering this from the perspective of philosophical logic, Marx **once again proceeds from the subjective dimension**, the real historical point of origin of his historical materialism. I should point out that the labor activity of which Marx writes here is not the idealized human species-essence that **should exist but does not**, which he proposed in the *1844 Manuscript*; rather, it is the labor activity that objectively exists in the production of all of actual society.

Second, one point that requires additional explanation is that under certain historical conditions — specifically in capitalist production with exchange as its goal, which Marx studied at this time — labor itself is split and the productive process is subsequently divided in two. Marx discovered that besides the concrete labor, which we have already discussed, that has material creating form (value-in-use) in general production, there was also abstract labor that necessarily appears in exchange and that creates value; this is the famous theory of **labor duality**. Besides the actual **material form-setting** process that forms the value-in-use of products,

¹²⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 219 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 256).

¹²⁸*ibid.*, p. 272 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 331).

there also exists a process of **social crystallization** of labor that creates value. At this point, Marx evidently focuses more on the aspect of social qualification on the level of value after the productive process.

Third, where workers were unified with their own labor activity, with the instruments of production, and with the objects of labor in past social forms, the labor that Marx faces here was merely non-capital labor in the capitalist economic process, i. e., **labor that only depends on capital and is separated from ownership**. Marx here gives a detailed qualification of this concept of labor. Labor posited as **not-capital** as such is:

(1) **not-objectified labor, conceived negatively** (itself still objective; the not-objective itself in objective form). As such it is not-raw-material, not-instrument of labor, not-raw-product: labor separated from all means and objects of labor, from its entire objectivity. This living labor, existing as an abstraction from these moments of its actual reality (also, not-value); this complete denudation, purely subjective existence of labor, stripped of all objectivity.¹²⁹

In other words, the labor subject under capitalist economic conditions, as a purely independent existence without any objective conditions of realization, is a particular result of history, a tragic historical result.

(2) **Not-objectified labor, not-value**, conceived **positively**, or as a negativity in relation to itself, is the not-**objectified**, hence non-objective, i. e. subjective existence of labor itself. Labor not as an object, but as activity; not as itself **value**, but as the **living source** of value.¹³⁰

This is a non-objectified, purely subjective labor activity that exists in possibility. However, at the same time, it is the only living source capable of truly creating value.

[(3)] In the use value which confronts money posited as capital, labor is not this or another labor, but **labor pure and simple**, abstract labor; absolutely indifferent to its particular **specificity**, but capable of all specificities. Absf

This means that labor under capitalist economic conditions is necessarily dependent on the abstract labor of social exchange; individual labor divorced from this production leads to emptiness (death by starvation).

Furthermore, Marx goes on to identify subjective labor (living labor) as fundamentally different from objectified labor.

Objectified labor, i. e. labour which is **present in space**, can also be opposed, as **past labor**, to labor which is **present in time**. If it is to be present in time, alive, then it can be present only as the **living subject**, in which it exists as capacity, as possibility; hence as **worker**. The only

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p. 216 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, pp. 252–253).

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 216 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 253).

use value, therefore, which can form the opposite pole to capital is **labor (to be exact, value-creating, productive labour)**.¹³¹

In Marx's opinion, this value-in-use only became real under the impetus and demands of capital, because activity without an object was a concept that only existed on paper; it was actually nothing. This labor was prepared by history for capital subsistence. Its only form of existence was to be the victim of exploitation by capital thirsty for its blood. Without the exploitation of capital, labor could not subsist. This is the root reason for why labor subjects automatically subject themselves to the rule of the capitalist economy. *To use the insightful words of Terry Eagleton, the subservience of the subject is a general characteristic of the bourgeois social system.*¹³² True as they are, these words hurt as they are straight to the point.

After having completed this phenomenological analysis, let us return to the "equal" exchange between workers and capitalists. From our prior discussion we know that the surface-level capitalist economic exchange was simple exchange, as both sides acquire equivalents. Workers obtain money, and capitalists obtain commodities (labor); the price of this commodity seems to be equal to the money paid for it. It is also on apparently equal grounds that workers stand up to capitalists in this exchange. To use Marx's later view, "the exchange which proceeds between capitalist and worker thus corresponds completely to the laws of exchange; it not only corresponds to them, but also is their highest development."¹³³ However, this is something that we observe floating on the surface; if we use the standard of the special theory of historical materialism that we already discussed, the situation becomes completely different. Marx emphasized that in the exchange of capital and labor, the first step is exchange; like the circulation of ordinary commodities, this is a kind of equal exchange. However, the second step is a process that is qualitatively different from exchange. Marx discovers that in this exchange, capitalists pay a certain quantity of money (this is actually material labor, i. e., the labor results created by workers in the past), while workers do not sell labor (this point allowed Marx's cognitive level here to immediately surpass his corresponding view in *Wage Labor and Capital*). "What the worker sells is the disposition over his labor, which is a specific one, specific skill etc."¹³⁴ *This was the most important step in Marx's revolutionary theory of surplus value.* Thus workers obtain a certain quantity of money necessary to maintain the necessary conditions of their subsistence: "Capital buys it as living labor, as the general productive force of wealth; activity which increases wealth."¹³⁵ The essential difference after phenomenological reduction is that the "disposition over labor" that the capitalist obtain is actually **what creates value**. In Marx's later exposition, he points out that for workers, the last stage of this free exchange is labor force as a commodity

¹³¹Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 196 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 228).

¹³²Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), p. 168 (Chinese transl.: *Meixue yishi xingtai*, p. 158).

¹³³*Grundrisse*, p. 555 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, II, p. 186).

¹³⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 204–205 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 240).

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p. 226 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 266).

and a value exchanged with other commodities and values. Labor force is purchased as objectified labor, while the value-in-use of labor force is in living labor, in creating exchange value.

[The worker] is absorbed into the body of capital as a cause, as activity. Thus the exchange turns into its opposite, and the laws of private property — liberty, equality, property — property in one's own labor, and free disposition over it — turn into the worker's propertylessness, and the dispossession of his labor, the fact that he relates to it as alien property and vice versa.¹³⁶

Marx believes that this is because “the capitalist obtains labour itself, labor as value-positing activity, as productive labor; i.e. he obtains the productive force which maintains and multiplies capital, and which thereby becomes the productive force, the reproductive force of capital, a force belonging to capital itself.”¹³⁷ In this superficially equal exchange, capitalists “obtain two things free of charge, first the surplus labor which increases the value of his capital; but at the same time, secondly, the quality of living labor which maintains the previous labor materialized in the component parts of capital and thus preserves the previously existing value of capital.”¹³⁸ In fact, this was the first time that Marx scientifically revealed the exploitive relations veiled behind capitalist equitable exchange. This was also Marx's **second great discovery**: the earliest structure of his **theory of surplus value**. At the same time, this was the deepest and most important level of critique in Marx's historical phenomenology.

The problem that Marx resolved was that after the completion of the exchange between capital and labor, **real social relations take place in the productive process**. Marx wants to prove that under the superficially equitable exchanges of capitalist society, there lay buried **essential inequality**. He writes:

The exchange of equivalents, however, which appeared as the original operation, an operation to which the right of property gave legal expression, has become turned round in such a way that the exchange by one side is now only illusory, since the part of capital which is exchanged for living labour capacity, firstly, is itself **alien labor**, appropriated without equivalent, and, secondly, **has to be replaced with a surplus by living labor capacity**, is thus in fact not consigned away, but merely changed from one form into another. The relation of exchange has thus dropped away entirely, or is a **mere semblance**.¹³⁹

What the capitalist uses to exchange for labor is itself the objectified result of another person's labor. This is because it wants to obtain an equal recompense, and so only changes its means and returns to itself; it is never really given away.

¹³⁶ *Grundrisse*, p. 556 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, II, p. 187).

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 198 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 231).

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 276 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 336).

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 367 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 455).

Thus the premise for the participation of the capitalist in exchange does not exist at all.

Furthermore, in the progression of social history, the earliest emergence of ownership was based on one's own labor. However, modern ownership in the capitalist economy appears as the **right to appropriate the labor of others**, as the inability of labor to appropriate its own product. *We can see that this is another explanation of capitalist economic relations; however, compared with the 1844 Manuscript, Marx's discussion here is a more scientific analysis.* Marx believes that this necessarily leads to an even more important result: "The result of the process of production and realization is, above all, the reproduction and new production of the **relation of capital and labor itself, of capitalist and worker.** This social relation, production relation, appears in fact as an even more important result of the process than its material results."¹⁴⁰

It is under the oppression of essentially unequal ruling relations of capital, behind the equitable exchanges circulation, that the surplus labor of workers, appropriated freely by capitalists, creates a surplus beyond equitable exchange: this is **surplus value.** *This is the first time that Marx brings up the issue of surplus value (page 19 of the third notebook).*

Surplus value in general is value in excess of the equivalent. The equivalent, by definition, is only the identity of value with itself. Hence surplus value can never sprout out of the equivalent; nor can it do so originally out of circulation; it has to arise from the production process of capital itself.¹⁴¹

As such, though capital and labor are exchanged superficially, exchange is "this form is a mere **semblance**, and a **deceptive semblance.**"¹⁴² Marx here uses historical phenomenological critique to penetrate the deception of capitalist ideology: "This exchange of equivalents proceeds; it is only the surface layer of a production which rests on the appropriation of alien labor **without exchange**, but with the **semblance of exchange...** it is a mere **illusion**, but a **necessary illusion.**"¹⁴³ Surprisingly, Marx refers to this illusion here as **alienation: labor alienation.**

Production based on exchange value, on whose surface this free and equal exchange of equivalents proceeds, is at its base the exchange of **objectified labor** as exchange value for living labor as use value, or, to express this in another way, the relating of labor to its objective conditions — and hence to the objectivity created by itself — as alien property: **alienation of labor.**¹⁴⁴

Did Marx not already abandon the theoretical logic of the humanist conception of history in 1845? If so, why does he bring up alienation again here? The discussion of these questions naturally leads us to investigate alienation.

¹⁴⁰Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 367 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 455).

¹⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 240 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 286).

¹⁴²*ibid.*, p. 372 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 462).

¹⁴³*ibid.*, p. 412 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 513).

¹⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 416 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 519).

9.2.4 Alienation: A re-confirmed objectively inverted relation

We can see that here Marx once again seriously brings up the issue of alienation in his economics research. This time, alienation becomes the most central viewpoint in Marx's historical phenomenological scientific critique. I believe that the alienation that Marx reveals here in capitalist economic relations is nothing at all like the humanist “**should**” **value postulate** that appears in the *1844 Manuscript*, but is rather an **objective self-opposition that emerges in real social relations**.

We have already analyzed the fact that in pre-capitalist social production, the role and place of labor — especially the unity of labor activities and the subject himself, of labor objects and instruments — were both very clear. This situation, however, changes in the process of capitalist production.

Living labor therefore now appears from its own standpoint as acting within the production process in such a way that, as it realizes itself in the objective conditions, it simultaneously repulses this realization from itself as an alien reality, and hence posits itself as insubstantial, as mere penurious labor capacity in face of this reality alienated from it, belonging not to it but to others; that it posits its own reality not as a being for it, but merely as a being for others, and hence also as mere other-being, or being of another opposite itself.¹⁴⁵

Therefore, in the capitalist economic process, this process by which labor becomes reality is also the process by which it loses its own reality: “[Labor] posits itself objectively, but it posits this, its objectivity, as its own not-being or as the being of its not-being — of capital.”¹⁴⁶ Under conditions of capitalism, the result of the worker's labor in production is the **creation by “me” of capital inimical to “me.”** Capital is the real **alienation** of labor activity.

On this point, Marx offers even more insights:

The independent, for-itself existence of value *vis-à-vis* living labor capacity — hence its existence as capital — the objective, self-sufficient indifference, the **alien quality** of the objective conditions of labor *vis-a-vis* living labor capacity, which goes so far that these conditions confront the person of the worker in the person of the capitalist — as personification with its own will and interest — this absolute **divorce, separation** of property, i.e. of the objective conditions of labour from living labour capacity — that they confront him as **alien property**, as the reality of other **juridical persons**, as the absolute realm of *their* will — and that labor therefore, on the other side, appears as **alien labor** opposed to the value personified in the capitalist, or the conditions of labor — this absolute separation between property and labor, between living labor capacity and the conditions of its realization, between objectified and living labor, between value and value-creating activity —

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. 363 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 450).

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 363 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 450).

hence also the alien quality of the content of labor for the worker himself — this divorce now likewise appears as a product of labor itself, as objectification of its own moments.¹⁴⁷

Labor capacity has appropriated for itself only the subjective conditions of necessary labor — the means of subsistence for actively producing labor capacity, i. e. for its reproduction as mere labor capacity separated from the conditions of its realization — and it has posited these conditions themselves as **things, values**, which confront it in an alien, commanding personification. The worker emerges not only not richer, but emerges rather poorer from the process than he entered.¹⁴⁸ It is easy to see that this was not the contradiction and conflict between “should” and “is” in humanist logic, but rather objectively, **historically existing** relations of alienation in the capitalist production process.

Marx writes that this objectified force, constantly increased by labor production, is expressed as capital, as material labor that rules and controls living labor. As a value of capital, of rule over living labor capacity, and endowed with its own power and will, this objectified force is in opposition to labor capacity that exists in abstract, purely subjective poverty that has lost its objective conditions. Labor capacity not only produces wealth for others and poverty for oneself, but it also produces the relation between wealth that relates to itself and labor capacity as poverty. In extinguishing this poverty, wealth acquires new life force and increases itself.¹⁴⁹ “The product of labor appears as **alien property**, as a mode of existence confronting living labor as independent, as **value** in its being for itself; the product of labor, objectified labor, has been endowed by living labor with a soul of its own, and establishes itself opposite living labor as an **alien power**.”¹⁵⁰ This is the actual alienation of economic relations themselves.

Later, Marx would insightfully summarize his views on alienation:

The rule of the capitalist over the worker is therefore the rule of the object over the human, of dead labor over living, of the product over the producer, since in fact the commodities which become means of domination over the worker (but purely as means of the rule of **capital** itself) are mere results of the production process, the products of the production process. This is exactly the same relation in the sphere of material production, in the real social life process — for this is the production process — as is represented by **religion** in the ideological sphere: the inversion of the subject into the object and *vice versa*. Looked at **historically** this inversion appears as the point of entry necessary in order to enforce, at the expense of the majority, the creation of wealth as such, i. e. the ruthless productive powers of social labor, which alone can form the material basis for a free human society. It is necessary to pass through this antagonistic form, just as man had first

¹⁴⁷Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 361–362 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 448).

¹⁴⁸*ibid.*, p. 362 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 449).

¹⁴⁹*ibid.*, p. 401 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 499).

¹⁵⁰*ibid.*, p. 363 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 450).

to shape his spiritual forces in a religious form, as powers independent of him. It is the **alienation process** of his own labour. To that extent, the worker here stands higher than the capitalist from the outset, in that the latter is rooted in that alienation process and finds in it his absolute satisfaction, whereas the worker, as its victim, stands from the outset in a relation of rebellion towards it and perceives it as a process of enslavement.¹⁵¹

This is, without a doubt, a complete inversion: “all the productive powers of social labour present themselves as productive powers of capital, just as the general social form of labor appears in money as the quality of a thing... Here once again we have the inversion of the relation, the expression of which we have already characterised as **fetishism** in considering the nature of money.”¹⁵² This inversion is “a personification of the thing and a reification of the person”; capitalists do not rule over workers as in any kind of personal capacity, but only insofar as they are “capital.” Their rule is nothing but “that of objectified labour over living labour; the rule of the worker’s product over the worker himself.”¹⁵³

Marx points out that in the capitalist productive process, the objective world of wealth as an alien power in opposition to labor, expands through labor itself. Furthermore, it acquires an ever more broad and ever more perfected existence, and thus in comparison with already created value, i. e., the real conditions that create value, the impoverished subject of living labor capacity appears even more different. “The greater the extent to which labour objectifies itself, the greater becomes the objective world of values, which stands opposite it as alien — alien property.”¹⁵⁴ Marx would later write that in the developmental process of labor productive force, the material conditions of labor, i. e., objectified labor, necessarily increases relative to living labor. He points out:

The objective conditions of labor assume an ever more colossal independence, represented by its very extent, opposite living labour, and that social wealth confronts labour in more powerful portions as an alien and dominant power. The emphasis comes to be placed not on the state of being **objectified**, but on the state of being **alienated**, dispossessed, sold; on the condition that the monstrous objective power which social labor itself erected opposite itself as one of its moments belongs not to the worker, but to the personified conditions of production, i.e. to capital.¹⁵⁵

We can see that this is an **objective inversion and twisting of inter-human relations** in the operation of the capitalist economy.

¹⁵¹Marx, “Das Kapital. Erstes Buch. Sechstes Kapitel. Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses,” pp. 64–65 (Chinese transl.: “[Ziben lun] di yi ce. Di liu zhang. Zhijie shengchan guocheng de jieguo,” pp. 48–49).

¹⁵²Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861–1863),” vol. II/3.6, p. 2160 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 48, p. 36).

¹⁵³*ibid.*, vol. II/3.6, p. 2161 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 48, p. 37).

¹⁵⁴Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 364 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao, I*, p. 452).

¹⁵⁵*Grundrisse*, p. 698 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao, II*, p. 360).

In Marx's opinion, "this twisting and inversion is a **real phenomenon**, not a merely **supposed one** existing merely in the imagination of the workers and the capitalists. But obviously this process of inversion is a merely **historical** necessity, a necessity for the development of the forces of production solely from a specific historic point of departure, or basis, but in no way an **absolute** necessity of production; rather, a vanishing one, and the result and the inherent purpose of this process is to suspend this basis itself, together with this form of the process."¹⁵⁶ Inversion is not imaginary, but rather an objective form of existence of capitalist social relations in social history. On the other hand, "the bourgeois economists are so much cooped up within the notions belonging to a specific historic stage of social development that the necessity of the **objectification** of the powers of social labor appears to them as inseparable from the necessity of their **alienation** *vis-à-vis* living labor."¹⁵⁷ Standing on the heights of historical phenomenology, Marx was able to assert:

The **most extreme form of alienation**, wherein labor appears in the relation of capital and wage labor, and labor, productive activity appears in relation to its own conditions and its own product, is a necessary point of transition — and therefore already contains in **itself**, in a still only inverted form, turned on its head, the dissolution of all **limited presuppositions of production**, and moreover creates and produces the unconditional presuppositions of production, and therewith the full material conditions for the total, universal development of the productive forces of the individual.¹⁵⁸

This was a completely new scientific diagnosis.

At this point let us pause for some brief commentary. Why does Marx again bring up alienation after his discussion of historical phenomenology in the scope of economics? In our earlier discussion, we saw that by Marx's 1845 *The German Ideology*, he had already refuted the philosophical logic of humanism, while at the same time transcending the alienation conception of history. So what is going on here?

First, looking back at the basic line of thought in Marx's post-1845 philosophical development, I have discovered that the **mark** left by his investigations is a enormous **spiral path**: in his philosophical revolution in 1845, Marx refuted humanist subjective value logic, and his new starting point was the objective dimension of general material production in the general theory of historical materialism. On the theoretical level of his critique of capitalist reality, he no longer derived the theoretical force of his phenomenological critique from the subjective standard of the alienation conception of history, but rather proposed a fact-based, objective historical identification from the perspective of objective economic contradiction caused by the division of labor. This state of affairs persisted until the end of the 1840s. After beginning the concrete study of economics, and especially in his

¹⁵⁶ *Grundrisse*, p. 698 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, II, pp. 360–361).

¹⁵⁷ *Grundrisse*, p. 698 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, II, p. 361).

¹⁵⁸ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 417 (Chinese transl.: *Jingjixue shougao*, I, p. 520).

research for *Grundrisse*, Marx began to realize that it was correct to proceed from material production to describe the basis of general social history. However, because of the **mediation of innumerable inversions and objectifications in capitalist relations of production**, approaching these relations from the perspective of production led to a **veiling of essence that economics could not surpass**. Criticizing capitalism merely on the objective dimension was not enough; it could not truly resolve the **upside-down phenomena** of social relations in the world of capitalism. Marx **had no choice but to again proceed from the subjective labor activity in material production in again basing his historical phenomenological critique on a scientific, historical subjective dimension**. *Soviet scholar Vasily Davydov observed this same issue; he correctly explained that Marx's concept of economic alienation here was different from the past labor alienation conception of history. However, his analysis lacks the depth from economics research that this text provides.*¹⁵⁹

Second, in the early stages of his construction of historical phenomenology, Marx had already consecutively used the theoretical identifications of **objectification** and **inversion** in his phenomenological critique of the conversion of exchange value into money. However, in terms of the underlying essential relations such as capital and labor, qualifications such as objectification and inversion could not accurately place the **self-oppositional nature of these social relations** that objectively take place. As such, the emergence of a **scientific** qualification of **relational alienation** was both necessary and normal. However, at this point, Marx's use of scientific concepts of alienation in his economic and historical phenomenology was fundamentally different from his past use of the humanist alienation conception of history; there was an especially great difference between the qualification of labor alienation that he uses here, and the logic of labor alienation that he employed in the *1844 Manuscript*. In fact, these are two completely different conceptions of alienation: the labor alienation in the *1844 Manuscript* was a humanist value postulate; the idealized essence that it formed was at odds with reality. This was a contradiction between **imaginary and real**. The self-alienation of labor was a logical reflection, established in ideas. The labor alienation in *Grundrisse*, on the other hand, was fundamentally Marx's reflection on real history. The objectified results of workers' past labor actually become the rulers and exploiters of today's workers. the **"past"** created by workers becomes the ruler of the **"present."** Capitalists use the creation of my labor (an un-nameable thing objectified into an abstraction) to engage in exchange with me (workers, including the results of past workers); this is an even more unequal exchange. Here, the starting point is not some logical value postulate, nor is it an a priori structure of logical method, but rather the objective historical result of social reality, the necessary form of the objective transformation of capitalist economic relations. Labor alienation was not at fault; rather, it was capitalist production that necessarily led to the dependency of man on external economic forces. Hired labor necessarily created a ruling power transformed out of itself: capital. This is the **actual** alienation of capital and labor relations that Marx describes here.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹Davydov, *Neomarksism i problema sociologii kul'tury*, chapter 1, section 6.

¹⁶⁰For a detailed analysis of this issue, please consult Sun and Yao, "Makesi zhuyi zhexue," vol. 2,

For Marx at this time, unlike his determination of labor alienation in the *1844 Manuscript*, this labor alienation that takes place in capitalist economic reality is first **progressive** in terms of the objective dimension of historical dialectics. Objective inter-human relations are inequitable exchange, exploitation, one-sidedness, objective inversion, and unjust: this “evil” creates hellish productive force. However, at the same time, these relations are barriers to the further development of production. On the subjective dimension of historical dialectics, labor alienation is first **progressive** as well; relative to past dependency on men, this is of course a kind of liberation. However, on a deeper level, it leads to a new enslavement to material, to the loss of subjectivity, and causes alienation and conflict to enter social relations. I believe that it is at this point that Marx first realizes that the concept of alienation does not appear merely in the mind, but is rather the true reflection of the actual alienation of capitalist productive relations. This point was unreachable by pure philosophical materialism. As such, Hegel’s conception of alienation is profound because he observed the objective inversion of actual labor activity in economic reality.

9.3 *Capital*: A Mature Expression of Historical Phenomenology

I have previously analyzed the fact that *Grundrisse* was the historical phenomenology of Marx’s philosophy, while *Capital* was the “logic” of Marx’s economics. However, if we delve deeper in our investigation of these points, we discover that in *Capital*, at the same time that he comprehensively explained and expressed his political economic theories, Marx’s historical phenomenological critique acquired a more mature expression in a philosophical sense. Unlike the difficult theoretical logical construction that took place in Marx’s *Grundrisse*, the logical development in *Capital* was a process by which Marx’s scientific theoretical line of thought was systematically presented. Here, we will briefly summarize Marx’s extraordinary analysis of historical phenomenology and fetishisms in *Capital*; this can be thought of as a small summary of our prior discussion.

9.3.1 “Table-turning” and the fetishism of commodities

In *Capital*, Marx’s expression of historical phenomenology is concentrated in the first four chapters of the first volume. I have discovered that Marx’s historical phenomenological critique is directly connected to his disproof of the three great capitalist fetishisms. This implies that the three levels of **material phenomena** worshipped by the three great fetishisms are directly Marx’s **illusory scope**, which he peels back layer by layer in his historical phenomenology. In fact, this phenomenological critique proceeds in conjunction with Marx’s economics analysis in *Capital*. Because I have already conducted cursory discussion of Marx’s theory of the three great fetishisms in my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx’s Histori-*

cal Dialectic,¹⁶¹ here I will simply further my analysis of the specific developmental process of the critical theory of the three great fetishisms in Marx's study of economics, again using the scope of historical epistemology as my reference point. Of course, in my analysis here, I do not plan to develop my argument according to Marx's concrete economics line of thought, i. e., I do not proceed textually in proposing and resolving questions. Rather, I use the clearest and most concise threads of Marx's argument to summarize the unique historical phenomenological critique that was unconsciously hidden within Marx's economic logic.

Here we must first emphasize the differences between the idea of original fetishisms and the concept of fetishisms in social economic life that Marx discusses here. In the nature worship and animism of the distant past, fetishisms referred to the worship of external, natural, objective, observable material, or mysterious power. For Marx, this term primarily refers to the **unconscious worship of social beings (relations); it is an inverted material phenomenon (false relation)**. In contrast, this social economic fetishism is more complex than the primitive one; its central idol is not in the shape of any material or man. In fact, people do not even know what, in essence, is the thing that they worship. In worshipping their god, they know only that it surpasses man and nature; however, men really know very little of the true essence of commodities, money, and capital. They know only that these three things are general material carriers, but as for their essence, people are incapable of even imagining it. For Marx, the inverted false scope was an important level of economic fetishisms. This scope manifests the following aspects:

First is the **illusory** scope of the fetishism of **commodities**. We can see that Marx's analysis begins with the empirical level, which can be reached by our senses. He writes that as we encounter goods in our daily lives, these goods generally are not imbued with unknowable mystery. For instance, a table is made of wood and has a definite shape; it can stand up, and things can be placed on top of it. At this point, the table does not have any "metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties." The correct premise of natural materialism and all old materialism as based on the truth of this direct observation. Of course, here we will acknowledge that the table is the product of human labor; in using it, the table realizes a social role in meeting human needs. However, on the level of use, there still does not appear any kind of mysteriousness. It is, however, this same table that so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent:

It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table-turning" ever was.¹⁶²

These means that in past society, a table was produced through labor, and it was used to place objects on. The purpose of production was use. In the commodity

¹⁶¹See the second subsection, fourth section, third chapter of my book *The Subjective Dimension of Marx's Historical Dialectic*. (Author's note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁶²Marx, *Das Kapital I*, pp. 70–71 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, pp. 46–47).

economy, on the other hand, products as commodities (goods used in commercial exchange) are produced; their purpose is first not for use, but rather for exchange, realizing the **value** represented by the table through exchange. Marx tells us that the value properties of the table are not its material natural properties, nor its own useful role, but are rather a **definite social relation**. Beyond the value relation in which the table realizes its useful role, this is another realization in exchange of the social value relation of labor that it implies. In particular, in capitalist economic life, this social relational property of the table that cannot be directly manifested is invertedly expressed in objectified form.

Marx writes:

In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things *quâ* commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things (*gesellschaftliches Verhältnis der Sachen*). In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.¹⁶³

This is a very well-known expression of Marx's thoughts on the fetishism of commodities. Marx tells us that the fetishism of commodities is a **material phenomenon unique to** capitalist modes of production. But this begs the question, what causes this material phenomenological inversion?

We generally recognize that commodities possess direct value-in-use, as well as value-in-exchange in the marketplace. "When, at the beginning of this chapter [chapter I of *Capital*], we said, in common parlance, that a commodity is both a use value and an exchange value, we were, accurately speaking, wrong." This "common parlance" referred to the basic classical economic terminology that Marx and Engels had always used. At this time, Marx had already realized the fact that exchange value was the **apparent form of value** in market exchange; it was

¹⁶³Karl Marx, *Le capital*, Traduction de M. J. Roy, entièrement révisée par l'auteur. Paris 1872–175, vol. II/7 of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA 2)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, Akademie-Verlag, [1872–1875] 1989), pp. 53–54 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun, di 1 juan, fawen xiudingban*, p. 52).

most often realized through prices. *In Grundrisse*, Marx had not yet strictly differentiated between the two. Relative to value, “exchange value, generally, is only the **mode of expression**, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it.”¹⁶⁴ Therefore:

A commodity is a use value or object of utility, and a value. It manifests itself as this twofold thing, that it is, as soon as its value assumes an independent form — viz., the form of exchange value. It never assumes this form when isolated, but only when placed in a value or exchange relation with another commodity of a different kind.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, “As use values, commodities are, above all, of different qualities, but as exchange values they are merely different quantities, and consequently do not contain an atom of use value.”¹⁶⁶ Though the uses of commodities vary, when the value of commodities appears in the form of exchange value, there is only a **qualitatively undifferentiated** quantity-relation. We can see that the properties and phenomenal forms of commodities were not phenomena that we can directly perceive and experience with our senses; this is the **essential qualification of social existence and social relations** that Marx identifies in the scope of his historical materialism. Thus Marx often writes, “since the existence of commodities as values (*Wertgegenständlichkeit*) is purely social, this social existence can be expressed by the totality of their social relations alone.”¹⁶⁷ This is the non-observable **material** in the special theory of historical materialism.

Marx writes: “Every product of labor is, in all states of society, a use value; but it is only at a definite historical epoch in a society’s development that such a product becomes a commodity, viz., at the epoch when the labor spent on the production of a useful article becomes expressed as one of the objective qualities of that article, i. e., as its value.”¹⁶⁸ This definite historical epoch is capitalist society. Through general division of labor in society and work, individuals become isolated units, single-dimensional utilitarian men; thus their one-sided labor and activity cannot exist independently, and their labor products cannot be realized. Only through the intermediary of market exchange can labor unite with production, can labor products be realized. Thus, **exchange becomes the purpose of production**. In the manuscripts he wrote before this point, Marx had previously written that “That he produces a commodity at all implies that his labor is one-sided and does not **directly** produce his means of subsistence, that these are rather obtained only by the exchange of his labor for the products of other branches of labor.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, in these definite social relations,

In the form of society now under consideration, the behavior of men in the social process of production is purely atomic. Hence their relations

¹⁶⁴Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 39 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 7).

¹⁶⁵*ibid.*, p. 61 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 34).

¹⁶⁶*ibid.*, p. 40 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 8).

¹⁶⁷*ibid.*, p. 66 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 41).

¹⁶⁸*ibid.*, p. 62 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 35).

¹⁶⁹Marx, “Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861–1863),” vol. II/3.1, p. 241 (Chinese transl.: “Jingjixue shougao (1861–1863 nian),” vol. 47, p. 303).

to each other in production assume a material character independent of their control and conscious individual action. These facts manifest themselves at first by products as a general rule taking the form of commodities.¹⁷⁰

Marx believes that it is only here, in this social form, that the following situation comes into being. “On the one hand all labor is, speaking physiologically, an expenditure of human labor power, and in its character of identical abstract human labor, it creates and forms the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labor is the expenditure of human labor power in a special form and with a definite aim, and in this, its character of concrete useful labor, it produces use values.”¹⁷¹ These are the dual properties of historically formed labor, i. e., the two value relations formed on different levels by abstract labor and concrete labor (general social labor and special individual labor).

But where does the mysterious character of commodities, which we discussed earlier, come from? Marx answers: “When we bring the products of our labor into relation with each other as **values**, it is not because we see in these articles the **material receptacles** of homogeneous human labor. Quite the contrary: whenever, by an exchange, we equate as **values** our different [kinds of] **labor**, by that very act, we also equate, as human labor, the different kinds of labor expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we **do it**. Value, therefore, does not walk around with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic.”¹⁷²

Marx concisely points out:

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labor appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labor; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor.¹⁷³

In the manuscript that he had written not long before, Marx expressed the notion that the agents of capitalist production live in a “world controlled by magic; they see their own relations as material properties, the properties of the material elements of production.”¹⁷⁴ This is an especially dangerous mysterious error, i. e., being unable to penetrate inverted, objectified social relations, we mistakenly view the **non-substantive existence of social relations** produced by this relation as the natural properties of goods themselves. This is the true emergence of the fetishism

¹⁷⁰Marx, *Das Kapital I*, pp. 89–90 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 71).

¹⁷¹*ibid.*, p. 48 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 18).

¹⁷²*ibid.*, p. 73 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 50). (Later, Žižek emphasized and magnified Marx’s judgment, leading to cynicism as a form of ideology (refer to part 1 of Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London/New York: Verso, 1989) (Chinese transl.: *Yishi xingtai de chonggao duixiang*)). (Author’s note for the second edition of this book.)

¹⁷³Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 48).

¹⁷⁴Marx, *Mehrwert III*, p. 1511 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di san ce*, p. 571).

of commodities. Marx writes: “The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labor as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production.”¹⁷⁵ In feudal society, which existed before capitalist society, “no matter, then, what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society, the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labor, appear at all events as their own mutual personal relations, and are not disguised under the shape of social relations between the products of labor.”¹⁷⁶ It is evident that the logical line of thought that Marx uses to analyze fetishisms is not the humanist value postulate “should,” but rather the “past” of real historical development (the direct form of inter-human relations in pre-capitalist society) and “later” relations (objectified economic relations in capitalist society).

9.3.2 General social wealth and the fetishism of money

Marx’s analysis of the fetishism of commodities was the first phenomenological layer that he peeled back in his historical phenomenological analysis. We should point out that this confusing, perplexing material phenomenological inversion is not the deepest form of fetishism. In other words, the “fetishism inherent in commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labor” is only the **first phenomenological level** of economic fetishisms. “The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production. It therefore makes its appearance at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as now-a-days. Hence its fetish character is comparatively easy to be seen through.”¹⁷⁷ Marx’s critique of the fetishism of **money**, on the other hand, constitutes the **second level** of his analysis of the complex objectified and inverted structure of capitalist social relations.

We all know that capitalist society is an extreme world of money. In actual capitalist economic operation, the exchange of commodities and realization of value is ultimately accomplished through conversion to money. Therefore, in this social life:

Everything, commodity or not, is convertible into gold. Everything becomes saleable and buyable. The circulation becomes the great social retort into which everything is thrown, to come out again as a gold-crystal. Not even are the bones of saints, and still less are more delicate res sacrosanctae, extra commercium hominum able to withstand this alchemy.¹⁷⁸

Money is the only path towards **social realization** for capitalist society; it is because of this that we spend our lives in pursuit of money. Thus the **transformation of money into God** is natural and necessary.

¹⁷⁵Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 75 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 52).

¹⁷⁶*ibid.*, p. 76 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 53).

¹⁷⁷*ibid.*, p. 81 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 59).

¹⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 122 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, pp. 113–114).

Confronting this phenomenological riddle, Marx writes: “a task is set us, the performance of which has never yet even been attempted by **bourgeois** economy, the task of tracing the genesis of this money form, of developing the expression of value implied in the value relation of commodities, from its simplest, almost imperceptible outline, to the dazzling money-form.”¹⁷⁹ This is because if the exchange value of commodities must be expressed through the exchange relation of another good, this will still make us think that there is a social relation hidden somewhere therein. Rather, in the money form, even this trace of a social relation is gone. According to Marx’s analysis, the mysterious character of fetishisms is strengthened and deepened in money.

As we have already pointed out, money was historically formed in the exchange of commodities. In the beginning, there was exchange of things; as the quantity and scale of commodity exchange increased, however, people needed an equivalent that would act as a standard in exchange. This equivalent became human labor, or the labor (value) relations that necessarily emerge in exchange. In the beginning, the abstraction of value relations was expressed through a special equivalent represented by concrete goods. In the historical developmental process of exchange, special equivalents developed into general equivalents, which were generally expressed in the form of a few special goods. On the basis of this general equivalent, the value of goods “becomes the visible incarnation, the social chrysalis state of every kind of human labor.”¹⁸⁰ It is at the end that money, representing general social wealth, appears. Marx writes:

Just as every qualitative difference between commodities is extinguished in money, so money, on its side, like the radical leveller that it is, does away with all distinctions. But money itself is a commodity, an external object, capable of becoming the private property of any individual. Thus social power becomes the private power of private persons.¹⁸¹

Thus, originally invisible social relations now have their own sensuous material manifestations. Money extinguishes the all the true differences between people, veiling all the truth behind the phenomena. Thus the mysteriousness of social relations formed in the fetishism of commodities is magnified limitlessly and inflated to the extreme with money, now becoming an incomprehensible riddle.

Marx profoundly points out that in the equivalent form of money, **three inversions** of economic phenomena take place: first, **use value becomes the phenomenological form opposed to material value**. At the beginning, “use value” (the usefulness of things) was the natural qualifications of general products, the material basis of value. However, in the continually developing exchange process of the commodity-market economy, value as the medium for material exchange becomes the subject that men peruse first and foremost. This is because with the substitution of this subject, money is able to appropriate everything. Therefore, “use value”

¹⁷⁹Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 49 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 20).

¹⁸⁰*ibid.*, p. 66 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 41).

¹⁸¹*ibid.*, pp. 122–123 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, pp. 113–114).

becomes the appearance realized by money. Money causes inter-human relations to become completely inverted. Second, **“concrete labor becomes, therefore, the medium for expressing abstract human labor.”** At the beginning, concrete labor was activity that truly changed material objects; abstract labor, on the other hand, was merely a kind of general equivalent qualification of concrete labor. However, money, now the representative of abstract labor, becomes the actual ruler of all concrete labor. Third, **“private labor becomes the medium for expressing direct social labor.”** This means that under conditions of capitalism, individual labor and social labor become diametrically opposed contradictions. It was these three inversions of complex social economic relations that immediately led to money’s **obfuscation. That which once crawled on the earth as a medium transforms into the god of all creation.**

Here Marx continues to analyze the chicanery of commodities and money:

So soon as the universal equivalent form becomes identified with the bodily form of a particular commodity, and thus crystallized into the money-form. What appears to happen is, not that gold becomes money, in consequence of all other commodities expressing their values in it, but, on the contrary, that all other commodities universally express their values in gold, because it is money. The intermediate steps of the process vanish in the result and leave no trace behind. Commodities find their own value already completely represented, without any initiative on their part, in another commodity existing in company with them. These objects, gold and silver, just as they come out of the bowels of the earth, are forthwith the direct incarnation of all human labour. Hence the magic of money.¹⁸²

On this point, Marx’s expression is concise: **“The riddle presented by money is but the riddle presented by commodities; only it now strikes us in its most glaring form.”**¹⁸³

9.3.3 Money that generates money and the fetishism of capital

After reviewing Marx’s analysis of the fetishisms of commodities and money, we now have a basic understanding of the basic existence and emergence of these fetishisms in capitalist social economic life. *In fact, these are all phenomena that with which we come into contact in the social economic reality of China today.* However, Marx discovered that in the economic life of capitalist society, there was another fetishism that the majority of people never faced directly, and could not truly see through: the fetishism of **capital**. This is the **essential social relationship that Marx’s historical phenomenology penetrates**. Writing on the fetishism of capital, Marx observes:

In the case of the simplest categories of the capitalist mode of production, and even of commodity-production, in the case of commodi-

¹⁸²Marx, *Le capital*, p. 71 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun, di 1 juan, fawen xiudingban*, p. 73).

¹⁸³Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 90 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 71).

ties and money, we have already pointed out the mystifying character that transforms the social relations, for which the material elements of wealth serve as bearers in production, into properties of these things themselves (commodities) and still more pronouncedly transforms the production relation itself into a thing (money). All forms of society, in so far as they reach the stage of commodity-production and money circulation, take part in this perversion. But under the capitalist mode of production and in the case of capital, which forms its dominant category, its determining production relation, this enchanted and perverted world develops still more.¹⁸⁴

We have already seen that money is the product of exchange and commodity circulation. Marx writes that “**money is the earliest apparent form of capital.**” Abui Looking back at the early developmental history of capitalism, capital always appears in the form of money; as commercial capital and usury capital, it is opposed to land ownership. However, to say that money is a phenomenon of capital is already commonplace and unsurprising in our economic life today (including modern Chinese social life). This is because the first new capital always arrives on the market in the form of money. Industrial capitalists come to the labor market, commercial capitalists to the commodity market, and financial capitalist to the money market; what they bring is, without exception, money. It is this “money” that, through a certain process, becomes capital.

Marx reminds us of the fact that in the capitalist market economy, there are two different processes of circulation. There is the process of **selling to buy** (commodity-money-commodity, $C - M - C$) and the process of **buying to sell** (money-commodity-money, $M - C - M$). Marx finds that in the first process, money is “money as currency,” while in the latter process, money is “money as capital.” In the first process, money is truly paid out, while in the second process, people “let the money go, but only with the sly intention of getting it back again. The money, therefore, is not spent, it is merely **advanced.**”¹⁸⁵ In the first process, use value is the aim, but in the latter process, it is exchange value. More importantly, in the first process, commodities in exchange are equivalent to commodities, while at the end of the latter process, “more money is withdrawn from circulation at the finish than was thrown into it at the start.”¹⁸⁶ $M - C - M$ becomes $M - C - M'$. It is this “many” represented by M' , this **money that generates money, that allows money to become capital.** Because of this, Marx calls the process of $M - C - M'$ “the **general formula of capital** as it appears prima facie within the sphere of circulation.”¹⁸⁷ Simplifying this formula even further, we arrive at the form form most endowed with the character of fetishism: $M - M'$. This is **interest-bearing capital.** Marx wrote that interest-bearing capital is a pure form of fetishism. Here, the fetish attains its most perfect form. This is because on the basis of breathing capital, “Interest-bearing capital is the consummate **auto-**

¹⁸⁴Marx, *Das Kapital III*, p. 801 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 935).

¹⁸⁵Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 136 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, pp. 135–136).

¹⁸⁶*ibid.*, p. 142 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 144).

¹⁸⁷*ibid.*, p. 142 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 144).

matic fetish, the self-expanding value, the money-making money, and in this form it no longer bears any trace of its origin. The social relation is consummated as a relation of things (money, commodities) to themselves.”¹⁸⁸ Marx writes that capital as interest-bearing capital has already attained the “complete **objectification, inversion and derangement**” of the inverted capitalist world.¹⁸⁹ It is the owners of this special money, as the conscious representatives of this movement, that become capitalists; at the same time, “it is only in so far as the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract becomes the sole motive of his operations, that he functions as a capitalist, that is, as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will.”¹⁹⁰ We have already pointed out that use value is not the direct aim of capitalists: “The restless never-ending process of profit-making alone is what he aims at.”¹⁹¹ Capitalists thus do not truly exist as men in a **subjective sense**, but rather everywhere act as personified, profit-seeking beings of capital. In contrast to this, workers become labor tools without life. As *Terry Eagleton wrote, capitalists and capital are life-forms that have already died; on the one hand, they are alive but unfeeling, while on the other hand, they are dead but active everywhere.*¹⁹²

Marx next leads us to see that in terms of the surface-level phenomena that we can directly observe, the process of circulation is realized through equal exchange; however, if it were truly an exchange of equivalents, then there would be no surplus value. This is because in the process of circulation, not so much as an atom is added to value. This brings up a contradiction: **from whence** do wealthy capitalists acquire their wealth? This question can obviously not be answered on the superficial level of circulation. To answer it, Marx had to abstractly delve deeper into the essence of society.

Marx profoundly reveals that capital is not any kind of material, as the capitalist economists would have us believe, but is rather a historical social relation. This is the essence of the mode of production of capitalist society. This relation is not eternal, but rather a historical existence under certain conditions.

The **historical** conditions of its [capital] existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It can spring into life, only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the **free laborer** selling his labor-power.¹⁹³

Opulent money-owners thus confront penniless laborers: “This relation has no **natural historical** basis, neither is its **social** basis one that is common to all historical periods. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older forms of social production.”¹⁹⁴ This is not some kind of natural order dictated by nat-

¹⁸⁸Marx, *Mehrwert III*, p. 1454 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di san ce*, p. 503).

¹⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 1455 (Chinese transl.: *Shengyu jiazhi lilun. di san ce*, p. 505).

¹⁹⁰Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 140 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 140).

¹⁹¹*ibid.*, p. 141 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 141).

¹⁹²Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, p. 200 (Chinese transl.: *Meixue yishi xingtai*, p. 192).

¹⁹³Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 155 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 160).

¹⁹⁴*ibid.*, p. 154 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 159).

ural law, but the result of the historical development of modern capitalism. In Marx's opinion, "**this one historical condition** comprises a world's history. **Capital**, therefore, announces from its first appearance a new **epoch** in the process of social production."¹⁹⁵ It is only under this specific historical condition that capital becomes a **construction of definite social relations**; these social relations are **capitalist modes of production**.

In Marx's historical scope of analysis here, we are able to see that under the rule of these particular capitalist modes of production, the exchange between capitalists and workers is not equal in a general sense. Capitalists take a given quantity of money (the value of labor-power) and obtain, through exchange, the **right to use** labor-power, i. e., the possibility for the employment of the creativity of labor-power itself (the use of labor-power is labor itself). "**Its [labor's] use-value** consists in the subsequent exercise of labor-force." We can see that exchange and its actual exercise are actually two different processes. The secret mechanism of all capitalist exploitation emerges here. Lurking behind what capitalists and workers see as equal exchange, "the **use-value** which the former [the money-owner] gets in exchange, manifests itself only in the actual utilization, in the **consumption** of the labor-power... **the consumption of labor-power** is at one and the same time the **production of commodities and of surplus-value**."¹⁹⁶ Thus the confusing M' , which, as we saw earlier, appears in the apparently equitable process of exchange, is actually created in the **production process** behind circulation.

Marx sarcastically writes:

Accompanied by Mr. Moneybags and by the possessor of labor-power, we therefore take leave for a time of this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in view of all men, and follow them both into the hidden **abode of production**, on whose threshold there stares us in the face "No admittance except on business." Here we shall see, not only **how capital produces**, but **how capital is produced**. We shall at last force the **secret of profit making**.¹⁹⁷

Marx profoundly points out that bourgeois freedom and equality was nothing but an economic semblance, an ideological illusion. "the sale and purchase of labor-power" go on in the realms of **circulation** and **commodity exchange**. These are "in fact a **very Eden of the innate rights of man**." The bourgeois class and all "Free-trader Vulgaris" proceed from the sphere of **simple** circulation or commodity exchange and use **ideas, concepts and standards** to judge the social equality and freedom of the hiring of labor by capital and wages. This is the **unconscious** essence of the bourgeois **politics**. However, as soon as we step away from this falsely equal exchange and process of circulation, as soon as we enter the sphere of production, we discover vampiric capitalists and workers waiting to be exploited. Marx passionately writes:

¹⁹⁵Marx, *Das Kapital I*, p. 155 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 160).

¹⁹⁶*ibid.*, p. 160 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 167).

¹⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 160 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 167).

As capitalist, he is only capital personified. His soul is the soul of capital. But capital has one single life impulse, the tendency to create value and surplus-value, to make its constant factor, the means of production, absorb the greatest possible amount of surplus-labor. Capital is dead labor, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks.¹⁹⁸

This is what takes place outside the sphere of exchange and circulation; it is also the truth that capitalists want to conceal. The formally equal exchange that takes place in the realm of circulation does not equal the generation of surplus value in the production process. This is the true basis of all capitalist social existence and development. This is the true inequality behind the façade of equality, the injustice lurking behind justice. This is because actually existing social relations — the relation between labor and its products — are fundamentally inverted here. “This complete inversion of the relation between dead and living labour, between value and the force that creates value, mirrors itself in the consciousness of capitalists.”¹⁹⁹ Essentially speaking, though it is obvious that workers support capitalists through their labor, this relation is invertedly manifested as capitalists giving wages to workers to support themselves. Even more unfortunate, if workers do not go to the capitalists’ factories to submit themselves to exploitation, then they die of starvation. Though it is obvious that capitalists take the past dead labor created by workers to exchange with those workers (the essence of this exchange is that capitalists obtain the labor source capable of creating surplus value), this inequality is superficially manifested as the charity and benevolence of capitalists towards workers.

At this point, we have already seen that this superficially beautiful capitalist world is fundamentally inverted. This is a **world of deceit**, one afflicted by multiple inversions, where phenomenon veils essence (to use Karel Kosík’s words). As Marx would later write:

The complete mystification of the capitalist mode of production, the conversion of social relations into things, the direct coalescence of the material production relations with their historical and social determination. It is an enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world, in which Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre do their ghost-walking as social characters and at the same time directly as mere things.²⁰⁰

To cite a well-known Chinese poem, “the water in the ditch is clear as a mirror because living water continually flows through it.”²⁰¹ At this point it is not difficult for us to understand that Marx’s scientific historical phenomenology could only

¹⁹⁸*ibid.*, p. 209 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 233).

¹⁹⁹*ibid.*, p. 280 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 324).

²⁰⁰Marx, *Das Kapital III*, p. 804 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 938).

²⁰¹These two lines form the second half of the poem “观书有感 *guan shu you gan* [Reflections While Reading]” by Zhu Xi (1130–1200), a Song Dynasty Confucian scholar, being the most influential rationalist Neo-Confucian in China. (Editor’s note for the English edition.)

ultimately be constructed after repeatedly entering the “living water” of capitalist social reality, after penetrating surface-level material phenomena and inverted pseudo-phenomena, and after peeling back layer after layer of phenomena. Like a sturdy evergreen tree, Marx’s phenomenology on the one hand faces an idealized heaven, and on the other hand is firmly rooted in the earth of reality. Marx writes, “all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.”²⁰² Similarly, we can also say with confidence that if the inverted and objectified phenomena of capitalist economic forms are equated with its essential mode of production, then historical materialism and historical phenomenology also become superfluous.

²⁰²Marx, *Das Kapital III*, p. 792 (Chinese transl.: *Ziben lun*, p. 923).

Appendix

Timeline of Marx's Important Scholarly Research and Texts

May 5, 1818: Karl Marx is born in Trier, Rhine Province, in what is modern Germany. His father is an attorney.

September 24, 1835: Marx graduates from Trier High School; his graduation essay is titled *Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession*.

October 15, 1835 to late August, 1836: Obeying the wishes of his father, Marx studies law at the University of Bonn.

October 22, 1836: Marx transfers to the University of Berlin.

Late 1837: Marx joins the “Doctor’s Club”, a branch of the Young Hegelians.

Summer 1839: Marx takes seven notebooks of notes entitled *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy*. In late 1839, Marx begins correspondence with Bruno Bauer, another Young Hegelian (this correspondence continues until the end of 1842).

Late 1840 to March 1841: Marx writes his thesis for his doctorate of philosophy, entitled *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*. He also writes *Berlin Notes* (eight notebooks), consisting primarily of excerpts from Spinoza, Hume, Leibniz, Aristotle, and Kant, etc. His immediate goal was to earn a position on the faculty of the philosophy department of the University of Bonn.

March 30, 1841: Marx graduates from the University of Berlin.

April 1841: Marx receives his doctorate from the University of Jena, then returns to Trier from Berlin.

Early July 1841: Marx moves to Bonn and begins to study Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity*.

August to September 1841: Marx contributes to the first volume of Bauer’s *The Trumpet of the Last Judgement against Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist. An Ultimatum*. This book was published in November 1841. Marx also makes the acquaintance of Moses Hess at this time.

Second half 1841: Marx works with Bauer to write the *Anekdoten*.

January 1842: Founding of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Moses Hess worked as an editor and assistant editor-in-chief until December 1842.

January 15 to February 10, 1842: Marx writes “Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction” for Arnold Ruge’s *Deutsche Jahrbücher*.

January to March, 1842: Marx travels to Trier from Bonn, then returns to Bonn in April.

April, 1842: Marx begins writing for the *Rheinische Zeitung*, including the first “Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly.”

April to May, 1842: Marx writes the five notebooks of Bonn Notes, focusing on excerpts concerning religious and artistic history. These notebooks were written in preparation for several of Marx’s articles on religious art.

June 1842: Marx writes his second “Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly.”

June 29 to July 4, 1842: Marx writes “The Leading Article in No. 179 of the *Kölnische Zeitung*.”

Early October, 1842: Engels makes the acquaintance of Hess, begins to be influenced by his communist ideas.

October 1842: Marx moves to Cologne.

October 15, 1842: Marx becomes the editor-in-chief of the *Rheinische Zeitung*; he writes “Communism and Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung.”

October 1842: Marx writes his third “Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly,” on the “Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood.” In this essay, Marx confronts real economic issues for the first time.

October 1842 to Early 1843: Marx studies the French Utopian socialists such as Fourier, Cabet, Dézamy, Considerant, and Proudhon.

Late November, 1842: Marx meets Engels for the first time; they part ways with little love lost between them.

End of November, 1842: Marx breaks ties with Die Freien, a Berlin-based faction of the Young Hegelians.

December 18, 1842: Marx writes “The Divorce Bill.”

December 31, 1842 to January 15, 1843: Marx writes a series of essays entitled “The Ban on the Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung.”

January 1 to January 20, 1843: Marx writes “Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel.”

March 17, 1843: Marx retires from the editing department of the *Rheinische Zeitung* because the newspaper was being censored and shut down by the authorities. His resignation announcement was published in the March 18 edition of the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

March to September, 1843: Marx writes three letters to Ruge, discussing how to publish the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* internationally.

May to October, 1843: Marx moves from Cologne to Kreuznach. While studying a broad range of historical and political works and writing the five notebooks that constitute *Kreuznach Notes*, he also writes *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.

October 3, 1843: Marx writes to Feuerbach, inviting him to write for the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher*.

Late October, 1843: As the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* was to be published in Paris, Marx decides to move there.

Late October 1843 to March, 1844: Marx maintains close correspondence with Hess, Heine, and Herwegh.

November 1843: Marx receives two articles submitted to the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* from Engels in Manchester: *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* and "Conditions in England: On Thomas Carlyle's 'Past and Present.'" Marx did not take excerpts from these texts.

January 1844: Marx reads Hess' *On the Essence of Money*, which he had sent to the editorial department of the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* (this text was published in January 1845).

Late 1843 to January 1844: Marx writes *On the Jewish Question* and *Introduction to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. He also continues to make corrections to his book *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.

November 1843 to January 1845: Marx builds close ties with the leaders of French democratic and socialist groups, the German secret society Bund der Gerechten, and most of the secret organizations of French workers. He frequently attends the meetings of German and French workers.

October 1843 to January 1845: Marx studies political economy. He writes the seven notebooks comprising *Paris Notes*, which are composed primarily of excerpts from the writings of classical political economists. These include Say, Smith, Ricardo, Mill, McCulloch, de Tracy, List, and others. He also excerpts from Eugène Buret's *The Poverty of the Working Class of England and France*. At the end of these notes, he includes excerpts from Engels' *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Late February, 1844: Marx and Ruge's *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* is published in Paris.

About March, 1844: Marx breaks ties with Ruge. Marx begins to correspond with Engels through letters.

February to May, 1844: Marx ceases writing *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, returning to his analysis of the French Revolution, which he had begun in July-August, 1843 in Kreuznach and continued in October of that year in Paris.

Spring, 1844: Marx researches the history of the national assembly, focusing on the history of the French Revolution after September 1792, when it entered the nascent stage of the republic.

March 23, 1844: At the international democracy banquet, Marx associates with Russian thinkers such as Bakunin, Potemkin, and Tolstoy, as well as French thinkers such as Leroux and Blanc. He exchanges many political and theoretical ideas with them during the meeting.

Late May to early June, 1844: Marx ceases writing his history of the National Convention, diving again into the frantic research of political economy (this was probably because of the rebellion by Silesian textile workers on June 4-6, 1844, as well as the the ensuing debate on the causes and consequences of this proletariat revolt).

April to August, 1844: In the process of taking political economic excerpts, Marx writes the *1844 Manuscript*.

July 1844: Marx formally makes the acquaintance of Proudhon; the two have frequent contact.

July 31, 1844: Marx writes Critical Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian" in critique of Ruge. The article is published on August 7 and 10, in the Paris-based, German-language newspaper *Vorwärts!*. Marx also begins writing and editing for *Vorwärts!* at this time.

July 31, 1844: Marx writes *Critical Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian"* in critique of Ruge. The article is published on August 7 and 10, in the Paris-based, German-language newspaper *Vorwärts!*. Marx also begins writing and editing for *Vorwärts!* at this time.

August 11, 1844: Marx writes to Feuerbach, inquiring as to his opinion towards criticizing Bauer.

About August 28, 1844: Passing through Paris, Engels meets with Marx. In the 10 days that Engels spends in Paris, he and Marx complete the writing plan and outline of their *The Holy Family*.

- Early October, 1844:** Engels writes to Marx, informing him of the socialist propaganda work taking place in Germany, and discussing the urgent need to write two or three books elucidating the principles of materialism and communism in order to establish the foundation of the socialist theoretical movement.
- After October 18, 1844:** Marx receives a letter from Wilhelm Weitling, in which Weitling comments on Marx's *Critical Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian"* and requests further correspondence with Marx.
- Late October, 1844:** The Young Hegelian Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* is published in Leipzig.
- November 19, 1844:** Engels writes to Marx, commenting on Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* and informing Marx of his intention to publish a pamphlet criticizing List's 1841 work *The National System of Political Economy*.
- Late November, 1844:** After writing *A Critique of Critical Criticism*, Marx submits his manuscript to the publishing company in Frankfurt. During the printing process, Marx adds the words "Holy Family."
- December 1844:** Marx reads Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* and plans to write an article criticizing it in *Vorwärts!*
- Late 1844 to January 1845:** Marx continues to study 18th and 19th century works economics works from England, France, and Germany. In his 1844-1847 Notebooks, he writes the outline "Hegel's Construction of the Phenomenology," as well as outlines for articles on modern states and "Reading Notes in a Notebook."
- February 1, 1845:** Marx signs a publication contract with Paris publisher Carl Friedrich Julius Leske. He agrees to publish a book in two volumes on economics, *Critique of Politics and Political Economy*. The manuscript was completed either at the end of 1844 or the beginning of 1845 (according to Marx's letter to Leske on August 1, 1846).
- February 3, 1845:** Marx is banished from Paris and moves to Brussels, Belgium.
- February 1845:** Marx continues to study economics at Brussels. He begins to write *Brussels Notes*. He reads and excerpts from the works of Buret, Say, Sismondi, McCulloch, Garnier, Blanqui, and Pecchio for *Brussels Notes A*, in three notebooks.
- February to December, 1845:** Marx exchanges frequent letters with the leaders of German democratic and socialist activist groups, as well as the leaders of Bund der Gerechten.
- About February 24, 1845:** *The Holy Family* is published.
- March 1845:** Marx writes the manuscript of *On List*.

March 10 to 15, 1845: Marx writes the outline of his *Library of Best Foreign Socialist Writers* in the *1844-1847 Notebooks*.

March to May, 1845: Marx publishes *Library of Foreign Socialists* along with Engels and Hess.

Spring, 1845: Marx writes *Theses on Feuerbach* in his *1844-1847 Notebooks*.

April 5, 1845: Engels moves next door to Marx in Brussels. Marx there introduces Engels to his new worldview. Not long after, Hess moves next door to Engels.

Late May, 1845: Engels publishes *Condition of the Working Class in England* in Leipzig.

May to early July, 1845: Marx continues to study political economy, taking notes on Senior, Storch, Boisguillebert, Lauderdale, Babbage, Ure, etc. This was *Brussels Notes B*, in four notebooks.

About July 12, 1845: Marx and Engels travel to London and Manchester in order to study English economic texts. At the same time, they study economic and political life in England, as well as the English workers' movement.

Late July to early August, 1845: Marx and Engels spend a great deal of time in Manchester's Chetham's Library, studying the works of British economists. There they record the nine notebooks of Manchester Notes, including excerpts from Petty, Tooke, Burke, Bray, Owen, Thompson, and Cobbett.

Mid-August, 1845: Marx and Engels meet with Julian Harney, the editor of the chartist newspaper *The Northern Star*, as well as the leaders of the London branch of the Bund der Gerechten.

About August 20, 1845: Marx and Engels attend a conference in London organized by the chartists, the Bund der Gerechten, as well as the leaders of democratic and revolutionary movements from many different countries.

About August 24, 1845: Marx and Engels return to Brussels from England.

September 1845 to early 1846: Marx maintains a close relationship with Hess.

November 1845: The third volume of Wigand's *Vierteljahrschrift* is published. Marx and Engels decide that before publishing another work on economics, they would publish a book criticizing "the German ideology."

End of 1845 to early 1846: Marx and Engels begin writing *The German Ideology*; Hess participates in writing the chapters criticizing Ruge and Kuhlmann. In order to complete this manuscript, Marx halted work on the first volume of his *Critique of Politics and Political Economy* (this manuscript was later lost).

Early 1846: Marx and Engels establish the Communist Correspondence Committee in Brussels. Their goal was to link the various socialists and progressive workers from various countries, both in terms of thought and organization. They planned to organize correspondence committees in London, Paris, and Germany, thus laying the foundation for an international proletariat political party.

March 30, 1846: In a meeting of the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee, Marx and Engels harshly criticize "true socialism" and Wilhelm Weitling's crude egalitarian communism. Weitling himself was in attendance at this meeting. Hess retires from the Communist Correspondence Committee over his disagreement with Marx and Engels over the treatment of Weitling.

Late April, 1846: Marx and Engels continue to write *The German Ideology*.

May 5, 1846: Marx writes to Proudhon, suggesting that he become the French correspondent for the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee. He also invites Proudhon to participate in the tactical and theoretical discussion of the workers' movement.

May 17, 1846: Proudhon replies to Marx, further convincing the latter that there were fundamental differences in their opinions. This led Marx to abandon his plan to establish connections to the French workers' movement through Proudhon.

May 11, 1846: The circular written by Marx and Engels opposing the "true socialist" Hermann Kriege was passed by the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee. This circular was issued to all the other committees.

Summer 1846: Marx and Engels had already completed the bulk of *The German Ideology*, though Marx continued to make corrections to the first chapter of the first volume.

September 1846: In several letters to Marx, Engels criticizes Proudhon's petty bourgeois views.

About October 29, 1846: Marx signs the second circular against Kriege, written by Brussels communists. The original text of this circular has been lost.

December 28, 1846: Marx writes to the Russian writer Annenkov, criticizing Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*. Marx's philosophical thought here experiences a *shift*; for this reason he does not complete his corrections to the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. Also, he was unable to publish the book because of German book censors as well as the opposition of the "true socialists."

Late 1846: Marx reads and excerpts from the works of Owen, Quesnay, and Fourier.

January to June 15, 1847: Marx takes notes from Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* (chapters one and two) in his *1844-1847 Notebooks*, while at the same time writing *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

Early July, 1847: Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* is published in Paris and Brussels.

August to September, 1847: The fourth chapter of the second volume of Marx's *The German Ideology* is published in the magazine *Westphälisches Dampfboot*.

September 12, 1847: Marx's "The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter" and the beginning of Engel's article "German Socialism in Verse and Prose" were published in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung*. Marx and Engels often contributed articles to this newspaper.

September 12, 1847: Marx's "The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter" and the beginning of Engel's article "German Socialism in Verse and Prose" were published in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*. Marx and Engels often contributed articles to this newspaper.

September 16 to 18, 1847: Marx and Engels attend an international economics convention held in Brussels. Though Marx prepared a speech, the planners of the convention feared the likely revolutionary content of his remarks, and therefore did not give him a chance to speak. After some editing, Marx's speaking notes were published in the September 29 edition of the *L'Atelier*.

Late October, 1847: Marx writes "Moralizing Criticism and Critical Morality."

October to November 1847: Hess publishes *The Results of the Proletariat Revolution*, conflicting directly with Marx and Engels.

November 27, 1847: Marx and Engels leave from Brussels and Paris respectively and travel to London, attending the second conference of the Communist League.

December 9 to the end of December, 1847: after the end of the second conference of the Communist League, Marx and Engels write *The Communist Manifesto*.

About December 13, 1847: Marx returns to Brussels from London.

Late December, 1847: Marx speaks on hired labor and capital at the Brussels Volunteer Worker's Association. In addition to preparing materials for this speech, Marx completed an outline of *Wages*. Marx receives a letter from Engels requesting that he critique Hess.

January 9, 1848: Marx speaks on free trade to the Democratic Association of Brussels; the text was published in February.

Late January, 1848: Marx completes *The Communist Manifesto*. It includes content critical of “true socialism,” as represented by Hess. Here Marx and Engels formally split away from Hess. The manuscript was sent to London for printing at the end of January.

February, 1848: Marx edits his speaking notes for “Hired Labor and Capital” (a portion of these notes were published in the April 1848 edition of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, under the title “Hired Labor and Capital”).

About February 24, 1848: *The Communist Manifesto* is published in London.

March 3, 1848: Marx is ordered by the Belgian government to leave Brussels.

March 15, 1848: Marx arrives at Paris and participates in several worker's movements.

Between March 21 and 29, 1848: Marx and Engels write the political creed of the Communist League in Germany: *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*.

About April 6, 1848: Marx and Engels depart Paris and return to Germany to participate directly in the revolution. They organize a worker's coalition in Mainz.

April 11, 1848: Marx and Engels travel from Mainz to Cologne, where they publish the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

June 1, 1848: The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* is published. The work of the revolution interrupts Marx's economics research.

August 23, 1848: Marx travels through Berlin to arrive at Vienna.

September 2, 1848: Marx gives a lengthy report on hired labor and capital at a meeting of the Vienna worker's coalition.

September 6, 1848: Marx again passes through Berlin to reach Cologne.

May 19, 1849: Marx is evicted from Cologne (Germany) by Prussian authorities.

June 3, 1849: Marx returns to Paris.

July 19, 1849: Marx is evicted from Paris (France) by French authorities.

About August 26, 1849: Marx arrives at London from France (Marx would live in London until his death). In 1850, Marx begins again to study economics.

February to March, 1849: Marx discusses political economy at his home with several workers.

Mid-June, 1849: Marx begins to go to the British Museum reading room to take excerpts from economics texts.

- July 1849:** Using works on the history of prices, the banking system, and economic crises in England and the European continent, as well as an entire set of the London magazine *The Economist*, Marx begins to systematically study the developmental history of the capitalist economy over the 10 previous years.
- Late September to early October, 1849:** Marx begins again his critical study of bourgeois political economy. He frequently travels to the reading room at the British Museum to study the works of Mill, Fullarton, Torrens, Tooke, and other economists. He also begins to systematically write commentary on his excerpts. He reads carefully every issue of *The Economist*.
- October to December 1849:** Marx studies economics, especially the works on money and credit. He excerpts from the works of Gilbart, Garnier, and Senior.
- January 1851 to December, 1853:** Marx continues to study economics, writing the 24 notebooks that make up *London Notes*.
- January 1851:** Marx studies the issues of money dependence and money circulation, reading Jacob's *An historical inquiry into the production and consumption of the precious metals*, Bailey's *Money and Its Vicissitudes in Value*, Lloyd's *Reflections*, and Carey's *The Credit System*.
- February 1851:** Marx studies the works of Hume and Locke on political economy. He focuses on Gray's *The Nature and Uses of Money*, taking extensive excerpts.
- March 1851:** Marx studies Ricardo's *The High Price of Bullion, a Proof of the Depreciation of Bank Notes*, Tooke's *An Inquiry into the Currency Principle*, and Robert Torrens's *The Principles and Practical Operation of Sir Robert Peel's Bill of 1844*; Marx studies, in particular, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.
- May 1851:** Still in the reading room of the British Museum, Marx studies and excerpts from the works of Henry Charles Carey, including *Essay on the Rate of Wages, Principles of Political Economy, and Past, Present, and Future*, as well as Malthus' *Principles of Political Economy*.
- June 1851:** Marx reads and excerpts from Malthus' *The Measure of Value*, Torrens' *On the Creation of Wealth*, Carey's *Essays on Economics*, Livingston's *The System of Public Debt and Its Influence*, Hodgskin's *Vulgar Political Economy*, Jones' *On Political Economy*, and Ramsay's *On the Distribution of Wealth*.
- July 1851:** Marx reads and excerpts from Hodgskin's *Labor Defended*, Owen's *Industrial System*, and Fielden's *The Curse of the Factory System*. Here Marx also studies the issues of agriculture and rent, focusing on the related works of Anderson, Hodgskin, and Ricardo. Marx also reads Justus Liebig's *Organic Chemistry*.

Late July, 1851: Marx reads Malthus' *An Essay on the Principle of Population*.

August to November, 1851: Marx studies the history of land ownership, colonization, population, credit, and the banking system. He reads the works of Symons, Loudon, Wakefield, Prescott, Hodgskin, Quetelet, Thompson, Malthus, Hume, Gray, Doubleday, Alison, Hardcastle, Price, and McCulloch. Marx also studies the subjects of agricultural technology and agricultural chemistry.

Early August, 1851: Marx studies Proudhon's *Idée générale de la Révolution au XIXe siècle*. In a letter to Engels, Marx discusses this work of Proudhon in great detail, asking for Engels' opinion as well.

Late August to October, 1851: Engels studies Proudhon's *Idée générale de la Révolution au XIXe siècle*, writing a commentary on it as well. Engels sends the commentary to Marx, who decides to use it as the preparatory foundation for an article criticizing Proudhon.

Late September to October, 1851: In researching the influence of machine production on the labor of workers, Marx reads and excerpts from works on the history of technology, including books by Poppe, Beckmann, and Ure.

Late November, 1851: Marx reads Proudhon's *Gratuité du Crédit*, refuting it absolutely in his commentary.

December 29, 1851 to March 25, 1852: Marx writes *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

March 5, 1852: In Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, he explains his newest contributions to the struggles of the classes.

July to August, 1852: Marx studies world history, the history of state structures, art history, and the plight of women in different epochs. He primarily reads Machiavelli, Hüllmann, Eichhorn, Sismondi, and de Ségur.

January to March, 1853: Marx studies money theory and other topics of political economy, while at the same time studying the history of culture and the history of the Slavic people. He reads and excerpts from Galiani, Wachsmuth, Kaulfuss, and others.

Late March to April, 1853: Marx prepares to establish his own political economic theory. He deepens his study of political economy. He reads the works of British political economists, especially Spencer, Newman, Opdyke, and Banfield. He begins to focus on money circulation, land and rent, population, as well as the role of the state in economic life, etc.

April to May, 1853: Marx studies the history of Asian colonies and vassal states. He reads McCulloch, Klein, Bernier, and others. Marx also studies the history of the blue book in the English Parliament as well as the history of the East India Company.

June 1853: Marx and Engels discuss the *issue* that the eastern countries (Turkey, Persia, Hindustan) have no ownership; they believe that this is the key to understanding the ancient east.

Late March to Early April, 1854: In research the east, Marx reads Hamel's *History of the Ottoman Empire*.

Late April to Early May, 1854: Marx begins to study Spanish and reads the works of Conde de Toreno, as well as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

Late July, 1854: Marx reads and excerpts from Augustin Thierry's *Essai sur l'histoire de la formation et des progrès du Tiers Etat*, which was published in 1853.

December 1854 to January 1855: Marx begins to read over the political economic notes that he had made a few years earlier. He writes a simple outline, including the words "money credit, crisis." Under each entry, he also adds the author's name and a cross-reference to his own notebooks.

Late February, 1855: Marx studies the history of Rome, excerpting from Niebuhr's *History of Rome* (three volumes).

October 1856: The advent of an economic crisis leads Marx to hasten his study of political economy.

July 1857: Marx writes his essay on Bastiat and Carey, including it with his manuscripts.

Late August to Mid-September, 1857: Marx writes "Introduction," but does not finish it. From October until May 1858, he writes an economics manuscript, an enormous work consisting of seven notebooks and titled *Critique of Political Economy*. Later called *Economic Manuscripts 1857-1858*, a more fitting title would perhaps be *Philosophic-Economic Manuscripts 1857-1858*.

Early January, 1858: In his investigation of profits, Marx reads heavily from Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Marx writes to Engels, informing him that if there is time, he would like to devote three printed pages to the explanation of the logical elements of Hegel's dialectic.

April 2, 1858: Marx writes to Engels, explaining his plan for a six-volume work of economics: 1) Capital, 2) Rent, 3) Hired Labor, 4) States, 5) International Trade, and 6) The World Market.

Early June, 1858: Marx writes an index for *Grundrisse*.

August to November, 1858: Marx begins work on the first volume of his six-volume work on political economy.

- November 12, 1858:** In a letter to Ferdinand Lassalle, Marx gives the following assessment of *Grundrisse*: “1. It is the product of 15 years of research, *i. e.* the best years of my life; 2. In it an important view of social relations is scientifically expounded for the first time.”
- February 23, 1859:** Marx completes his “Introduction” to *Critique of Political Economy* and sends it off for publication.
- February to March, 1859:** Marx reorganizes the index of the seven notebooks comprising *Grundrisse*, titling it “Outline of My Own Notebooks.”
- June 11, 1859:** The first volume of Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy* is published in Berlin.
- July 1860:** Marx writes *Herr Vogt*.
- Late November to December 19, 1860:** Marx reads Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*.
- Early June, 1861:** Marx resumes writing his work on political economy, which had been on extended hiatus for over a year.
- August 1861 to July 1863:** Marx fills 23 notebooks with his *Critique of Political Economy*. These were later referred to as *Political Economic Critique, 1861-1863 Manuscripts* (1,472 pages in total).
- August 1863 to December 1865:** Marx finishes the newest manuscript for the three volumes of *Capital*.
- About February 13, 1866:** Following the advice of Engels, Marx decides to first publish the first volume of *Capital*.
- March 27, 1867:** Marx finishes transcribing the first volume of *Capital*.
- September 14, 1867:** The first volume of *Capital* is published in Hamburg.
- March 14, 1868:** Marx reads the works of German historian von Maurer at the reading room of the British Museum.
- Early November, 1868:** Marx studies texts on the relation between land and rent, focusing on villages, as well as the place and role of villages in the social-economic systems of particular nations.
- January to February, 1869:** Marx reads the 1868 *British Money Market Review* and *Economist*, taking many excerpts.
- February 13 to August, 1869:** Marx reads texts on credit and bank circulation, excerpting from the works of Foster, Hausner, and others.
- April 1869:** Marx continues to write *Capital*.

Late 1869: Marx begins to learn Russian, in order to study land ownership issues in Russia.

February 1870: Marx reads Vassili Vassilyevitch Flerovsky's *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*.

April to May, 1870: Marx studies Ireland, especially the issue of rent.

August 1870 to early 1871: Marx reads the works of Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky.

1871 to 1872: Marx works on correcting and publishing the second German edition and French edition of the first volume of *Capital*.

February 1873: Marx studies N. Sieber's *Ricardo's Theories of Value and Capital*.²⁰³

July to October, 1873: Marx studies the history of land appropriation in Russia.

February to March, 1874: Marx studies plant physiology and artificial soil fertilizer; he reads the works of Justus Liebig and others on agricultural chemistry.

September 20 to October, 1875: Marx again studies political economy, especially the issue of land in Russia.

November 1875: Marx studies agricultural chemistry and physics.

Mid-February, 1876: In studying rent, Marx writes several paragraphs of commentary on Carey's views of rent.

April 1876: Marx plans to study the issues of agriculture and land ownership in the United States.

May to June, 1876: Marx studies communal ownership, reading the works of German historian von Maurer.

December 1876: Marx reads Hanssen and Cardenas' writings on the history of land ownership in Spain.

January to December 1877: Marx continues his research of the economic and social-political development of Russia after its land reforms, especially on

²⁰³**Nikolai Sieber** (alternative spelling: Nikolai Ziber, i. e. Зибер, Николай Иванович, 1844–1888) was a Russian economist and commentator on Marx's economics. *Ricardo's Theories of Value and Capital* (original title: Теория ценности и капитала Д. Рикардо), his dissertation, was written in 1871, and appeared in enlarged form in 1885. Sieber may be considered as a contemporary of Marx with the most profound understanding of Marx's theory, and his comments were endorsed by Marx: "That which astonishes the Western European in the reading of this excellent work, is the author's consistent and firm grasp of the purely theoretical position." (K. Marx, Afterword to the Second German Edition of *Capital*, January 24, 1873). (Editor's note for the English edition.)

land tenure in Russia. He reads A. I. Vasilchikov's *Land Tenure and Agriculture in Russia and other European States*,²⁰⁴ M. V. Neruchev's *Russian Land Tenure and Agriculture*,²⁰⁵ I. I. Kaufman's *Theory and Practise of Money and Banking* and Carl Knies' *Money and Credit*.²⁰⁶

April to September, 1877: Marx writes the fifth manuscript of what Engels calls the second volume of *Capital* (193 pages).

November to June, 1878: Marx writes the sixth manuscript of what Engels calls the second volume of *Capital* (62 pages).

December 1877: Marx again studies the works of Owen.

Late March to May, 1878: In reading Kauffman's *Teorija i praktika bankovogo dela* and taking excerpts, Marx writes many of his own thoughts on the subject of the theory and practice of the banking industry.

July 2, 1878: Marx writes the seventh manuscript of what Engels calls the second volume of *Capital* (23 pages).

December 1878: Marx continues to study the finance and banking industries, reading and excerpting from von Diest-Daber and Gassiot, among others.

July 1879 to November 1880: Marx criticizes the recently published Wagner political economy textbook.

October 1879 to October 1880: Marx reads and excerpts from Kovalevsky's works on the Russian commune system.

1880 to 1881: Marx writes the eighth manuscript of what Engels calls the second volume of *Capital* (234 pages).

May 1881 to February 1882: Marx studies primitive communes, taking excerpts from Morgan's *Ancient Society*; Marx writes a great deal of his own commentary on this book.

June 1882 to January 1883: Marx studies organic and inorganic chemistry.

March 14, 1883: Marx passes away in London.

²⁰⁴Alexander Ilarionovich Vasilchikov (Александр Иларионович Васильчиков, 1818–1881) was a Russian writer and founder of the cooperative movement “Committee of rural savings and loan associations.” His book *Land Tenure and Agriculture in Russia and other European States* (original title: Землевладение и земледелие в России и других европейских государствах) was published in 1876.

²⁰⁵M. V. Neruchev (Михаил Васильевич Неручев, 1835–1922) was a Russian agronomist and writer, head of the Kherson Agricultural School and secretary of the Bessarabian Statistical Committee. He was a pioneer of scientific research on vine. The majority of his writings appeared in periodicals but he also wrote a book, namely *Russian Land Tenure and Agriculture* (original title: Русское землевладение и земледелие. —Москва: в Унив. тип. (М. Катков), 1877).

²⁰⁶Geld und Credit. Erste Abtheilung: Das Geld. Darlegung der Grundlehren von dem Gelde, mit einer Vorerörterung über das Kapital und die Uebertragung der Nutzungen. Berlin 1873.

A Brief Introduction of MEGA

Historical Overview of MEGA

In the 1920s, under the direction of the 5th Congress of the Communist International, the The Soviet Central Marxist-Leninist Institute (called the “Marx-Engels Institut” at the time) compiled and translated the Marx/Engels Collected Works (in German, *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, abbreviated as *MEGA 1*). The project was headed by David Rjasanov. The compilation was begun in 1924 and the work was published in 1927. In 1931, Rjasanov was relieved of his position and replaced by Adoratskij. *MEGA 1* was originally to be divided into four parts and 40 volumes: 17 volumes in the first part would contain Marx’s general works, 13 volumes in the second part would contain *Capital* and its preparatory documents, 10 volumes in the third part would contain Marx’s letters, and the fourth part would contain an index. When it came to actual publication, *MEGA 1* contained 13 volumes: 8 volumes of Marx’s general works in the first part published between 1927 and 1935, 4 volumes in the second part containing Marx’s letters published between 1929 and 1931, and *Capital* with its preparatory materials published separately in 1939 (*Grundrisse*). Because of the subsequent rise of the German Nazi Party and the start of the second world war, the work of *MEGA 1* was forced to stop.

In the early 1960s, the central committees of the former Soviet Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany decided together to compile *MEGA 2*. This project was directed by the Marxist-Leninist Research Institute, which was a subsidiary of the central committees of the former KPDSU and SED.²⁰⁷ The basic compilation structure and textual content of the four parts of *MEGA 2* are the same as *MEGA 1*. In 1972, a “test-edition” (*Probekand*) was first published, in the form of an experimental publication (*Probekstücke*). This edition experimentally released the representative texts of the four parts (*Abteilung*) of *MEGA 1*. The experimental edition was printed and distributed to scholars around the globe, and played an important role in determining the textual compilation and publication form of *MEGA 2*. In 1975, *MEGA 2* was published by Dietz Press in Berlin. Originally 100 volumes were planned for *MEGA 2*, and publication was to be finished in the 1990s. Later, the number of volumes was increased to between 120 and 170; of these, in addition to the notes to be included in the fourth part of *MEGA 2*, it was also planned to include the list of all books owned by Marx and Engels, as well as all of their reading notes in these books – marginal notes (*sprechende Marginalien*), notations, and underlining. In preparation for this, an experimental edition of the collected marginal notes (*Marginalien. Probekstücke*) in part four of *MEGA 2* was published in 1983. Thus a new 40 volumes of the first part of *MEGA 2* (containing notes), as well as 30 volumes of the

²⁰⁷In 1920, the Soviet Central Committee established the “Marx/Engels Research Institute.” After Rjasanov was exiled in 1932, the name was changed to the “Marx-Engels-Lenin-Institut,” a name which it kept until 1952. Between 1953 and 1955, its name was changed again to the “Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Institut.” From 1955 until the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party, it was called “Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus.”

second (containing an annotated bibliography as well as marginal notes, etc.) were planned, and the publication of *MEGA 2* was postponed into the 21st century.

In the wake of events in the 1990s that rocked the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as well as the dissolution of the Marxist-Leninist Institute, the publication of *MEGA 2* was halted for a time. After 1993, *MEGA 2* was organized and published by the recently established International Marx-Engels Foundation (*Internationale Marx-Engels Stiftung*). Under the direction of the foundation, a new publication plan was agreed upon in 1995 and the number of volumes was set at 114. 33 volumes were set aside for the first part (works, essays), a number since revised to 32. 16 volumes were set aside for the second part (*Capital* and preparatory documents), a number since revised to 15. 45 volumes were set aside for the third part (correspondence), a number since revised to 35. 40 volumes were set aside for the first section of the fourth part (excerpts, notes), a number since revised to 31. 30 volumes were set aside for the second section of the fourth part (bibliography and marginal notes), a number since revised to 1. Three books in the last volume (32) of the fourth part of *MEGA 2* include the following content: IV/32.1: Annotated bibliography; IV/32.2: Written marginal notes; IV/32.3: Marks and symbols written on the books Marx read. In 1999, the editors of *MEGA 2* published a tentative edition (*Vorauspublikation*) of IV/32, including an annotated bibliography comparable to the first part of IV/32; this edition would become a reference for the compilation of Marx's marginal notes. In 2004, the *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 2003*²⁰⁸ published a "tentative edition" of Marx's *The German Ideology*, compiled by Ann Talbot. This edition included the sections of the first volume entitled "I. Feuerbach," "The Leipzig Council," "II. Saint Bruno," as well as Joseph Weydemeyer's "Bruno Bauer and his Defenders," included as an appendix.

The publication plan of *MEGA 2* continues to be modified to this day.²⁰⁹

Abbreviated Bibliography of MEGA 2

Before 1989, the plan for *MEGA 2* was to release 133 volumes in 142 books. Including the 30 volumes of annotated bibliography in the fourth part, there were to be 163 volumes in 172 books. Since that time, the number of volumes and books has been adjusted to 114 and 123 respectively. What follows is an introduction of the basic content of *MEGA 2* based on existing information.

²⁰⁸In order to correct printing errors that arise in the course of the preparation and publication of *MEGA 2*, its publishers and editors established a corresponding research magazine. Rjasanov published the first magazines for *MEGA 1*: *Marx-Engels-Archiv, 1926-1927*. Since 1975, with the publishing of *MEGA 2*, its editors have published 13 editions of *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch, 1978-1991*. Beginning in 1993, after the publication rights were transferred to the International Marx-Engels Foundation, the corresponding magazine became *MEGA Studies (MEGA-Studien, 1994-2002)*. This magazine was released twice each year, and continued in normal publication until 1998. In 1999, only one edition was published before the magazine was discontinued (11 editions were released in total). In 2003, *MEGA-Studien* was changed back to *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch*. Though this magazine has reverted to its original structure from before the unification of Germany (*Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch*), only the year is printed, not the total number of volumes. There have now been publications from 2003-2007.

²⁰⁹The materials in this section have been updated by the editor for the English edition.

Beiband: Compilation and Layout of *MEGA 2* (Beiband: Editionsrichtlinien der Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)) Published in 1993

1993. 239 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003350-1

Part One: Works, Articles, and Manuscripts (*Abt. 1: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe*)

32 Volumes.²¹⁰

***Volume 1:** Marx's works written before March 1843. (Bd. 1: Karl Marx: Werke, Artikel, literarische Versuche bis März 1843) Section one: *Difference Between Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, and the third "Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly," published in *Rheinische Zeitung*.²¹¹ Section two: High School essays and literary articles. Published in 1975.

1975. LXXXVIII, 1337 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003351-8

***Volume 2:** Marx's works written from March 1843 to August 1844. Articles published in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*: "On The Jewish Question," "Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction." Articles published in the Paris newspaper *Vorwärts! Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (published both according to date written and Marx's original writing plan). Published in 1982.

1982. 64, 516 S., S. 521 - 1018

Volume 3: Engels' works before August 1844. (Bd. 3: Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe bis August 1844) Includes texts such as *Umriß zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*. Published in 1985.

1985. LXII, 1372 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003353-2

***Volume 4:** Works by Marx and Engels written between August 1844 and December 1845 *The Holy Family*, Marx's *Draft of an Article on Friedrich List's book: Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie, Theses on Feuerbach*, etc.

***Volume 5:** Topical volume. Includes Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology*.

***Volume 6:** Works by Marx and Engels between 1846 and February 1848 Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*.

Volume 7: Articles by Marx and Engels published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

²¹⁰Volumes in this bibliography marked with the symbol * are ones closely related to the development of Marx's philosophical thought; specific content is listed for these volumes, while only abbreviated bibliographic information is included for other volumes.

²¹¹In earlier translations, the order of these two manuscripts was inverted, thus corrupting the Marx's and Engels' original line of thought. In modern translations, the original order was restored.

Volume 8: Same as above.

Volume 9: Same as above.

***Volume 10:** Works by Marx and Engels between July 1849 and June 1851. (Bd. 10: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe Juli 1849 bis Juni 1851) Mainly consists of articles published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, including Marx's "Class Struggle in France, 1848–1850." Published in 1977. 1977. L, 1216 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003354-9

***Volume 11:** Works by Marx and Engels between July 1851 and December 1852 (Bd. 11: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe Juli 1851 bis Dezember 1852) Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany, The Heroes of the Exile*, etc. Published in 1985. 1985. XLII, 1233 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003355-6

Volume 12: Works by Marx and Engels between January and December, 1853 (Bd. 12: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe Januar bis Dezember 1853) Consists primarily of articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune*, *The People's Paper*, and *Die Reform*. Published in 1984. 1984. XLVIII, 1290 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003356-3

Volume 13: Works by Marx and Engels between January and December 1854. (Bd. 13: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe Januar bis Dezember 1854) Consists primarily of articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune*. Published in 1985. 1985. XLVII, 1199 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003357-0

Volume 14: Works by Marx and Engels between January and December 1855. (Bd. 14: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, Januar bis Dezember 1855) Published in 2001. 2001. XV, 1695 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003610-6

Volume 15: Works by Marx and Engels between January and December 1856.

Volume 16: Same as above.

Volume 17: Same as above.

Volume 18: Works by Marx and Engels between October 1859 and December 1860. (Bd. 18: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, Oktober 1859 bis Dezember 1860) Includes Marx's *Herr Vogt*. Published in 1984. 1984. XXXVII, 1155 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003358-7

Volume 19: Works by Marx and Engels between January 1861 and August 1864.

Volume 20: Works by Marx and Engels between September 1864 and September 1867. (Bd. 20: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, September 1864 bis September 1867) Published in 2004.

2004. LVII, 2040 S., 34 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, 1 Faltkarte, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003359-4

Volume 21: Works by Marx and Engels between September 1867 and March 1871. (Bd. 21: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe September 1867 bis März 1871) Published in 2009.

2009. XIX, 1093 S., 1099 - 2432 ISBN: 978-3-05-004588-7

***Volume 22:** Works by Marx and Engels between March and November 1871 (Bd. 22: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, März bis November 1871) Marx's *Civil War in France*, with accompanying manuscripts. Published in 1978.

1978. LVIII, 1541 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003360-0

Volume 23: Works by Marx and Engels between November 1871 and December 1872.

Volume 24: Works by Marx and Engels between December 1872 and May 1875. (Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, Dezember 1872 bis Mai 1875) Published in 1984.

1984. XLVIII, 1375 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003361-7

***Volume 25:** Works by Marx and Engels between May 1875 and May 1883 (Bd. 25: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, Mai 1875 bis Mai 1883) Includes Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Published in 1985.

1985. LVI, 1320 S., gb. ISBN: ISBN 978-3-05-003362-4

Volume 26: Topical volume. Includes Engels' *Natural Dialectics* and manuscripts (1873–1882) (Bd. 26: Friedrich Engels: Dialektik der Natur (1873–1882)) *Natural Dialectics* is published chronologically by time of writing, as well as by Engels' original writing plan. Published in 1985.

1985. LXXII, 1111 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003363-1

Volume 27: Topical volume. Includes Engels' *Anti-During* and manuscripts (Bd. 27: Friedrich Engels: Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft (Anti-Dühring)) *Utopian Socialism and Scientific Socialism* (English and German versions). Published in 1988.

1988. LXXV, 1444 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003364-8

Volume 28: Topical volume. Includes Marx's *Mathematics Manuscripts 1878–1881*.

Volume 29: Topical Volume. Includes Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. (Bd. 29: Friedrich Engels: Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats) Published in 1990.

1990. XLIX, 898 S., gb. ISBN: ISBN 978-3-05-003365-5

Volume 30: Works by Marx and Engels between May 1883 and September 1886. (Bd. 30: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe Mai 1883 bis September 1886) Published in 2011.

2011. X, 555 s. : Beil. (1 Bl.), S. 561 - 1154 ISBN: 978-3-05-004674-7

Volume 31: Works by Marx and Engels between October 1886 and February 1891 (Bd. 31: Friedrich Engels, Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe, Oktober 1886 bis Februar 1891) Published in 2002.

2002. XVI, 1440 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003482-9

Volume 32: Works by Marx and Engels between March 1891 and August 1895. (Bd. 32: Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe März 1891 bis August 1895) Published in 2010.

2010. XIV, 528 S., S. 533 - 1590 ISBN: 978-3-05-004593-1

Part Two: *Capital* and Its Manuscripts (*Abt. 2: Das Kapital und Vorarbeiten*)

15 total volumes, 23 books (volume 1 in two books; volume 3 in six books; volume 4 in three books). Originally planned 16 volumes in 24 books.

***Volume 1:** Marx's *Grundrisse* (in two books). (Bd. 1: Karl Marx: Ökonomische Manuskripte 1857/58) Published between 1976 and 2006.

2., unveränderte Auflage 2006. XXIX, 1182 S., 27 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: ISBN 978-3-05-004245-9

***Volume 2:** Marx's economics manuscripts and writings between 1858 and 1861. (Bd. 2: Karl Marx: Ökonomische Manuskripte und Schriften, 1858–1861) Primarily consists of *Critique of Political Economy. Part 1*. Includes existing original manuscripts and fragments. Published in 1980.

1980. XXXI, 507 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003368-6

***Volume 3:** Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* (1861–1863 Manuscripts, in five books). (Teilbd. 3.1–3.6: Karl Marx: Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861–1863) (Teile 1–6)) Published between 1976 and 1980.

1976. XXVI, 499 S., gb.

1977. XXXVII, 668 S., gb.

1978. XI, 684 S., gb.

1979. XII, 471 S., gb.

1980. XXXVII, 476 S., gb.

1982. XI, 493 S., gb.

***Volume 4:** Marx's 1863–1867 economics manuscripts (in three books). (Teilbd. 4.1–4.3. Ökonomische Manuskripte 1863 - 1868. (Teile 1–3)) Published between 1988 and 1993.

1988. 40, 432 S. ISBN: 3-320-00061-6. Reprint 2011, ISBN: 978-3-05-004227-5. 1992. 25, 902 S. ISBN: 3-320-00062-4. Reprint 2012, ISBN: 978-3-05-005119-2. 2012. XII, 403 S. : Ill. ISBN: 978-3-05-003866-7

***Volume 5:** First volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in Hamburg in 1867. (Bd. 5. Das Kapital, Kritik der politischen Ökonomie : Bd. 1, Hamburg 1867) Published in 1983.

1983. 60, 649 S. : Ill.

Volume 6: First volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in Hamburg in 1872. (Bd. 6: Karl Marx: Das Kapital. Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band, Hamburg 1872) Published in 1987.

1987. LI, 1741 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003378-5

***Volume 7:** French edition of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, published between 1872 and 1875 in Paris. (Bd. 7: Karl Marx: Le Capital, Paris 1872–1875) Published in 1989.

1989. XLII, 1441 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003379-2

Volume 8: First volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in Hamburg in 1883. (Bd. 8: Karl Marx: Das Kapital. Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band, Hamburg 1883) Published in 1989.

1989. XLVI, 1519 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003380-8

Volume 9: English edition of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in London in 1887. (Bd. 9: Karl Marx: Capital. A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, London 1887) Published in 1990.

1990. XXVIII, 1183 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003381-5

Volume 10: First volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in Hamburg in 1890. (Bd. 10: Karl Marx: Das Kapital. Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band, Hamburg 1890) Published in 1991.

1991. XL, 1288 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003382-2

Volume 11: Manuscript of the second volume of Marx's *Capital* (in two books). (Bd. 11: Karl Marx: Manuskripte zum zweiten Band des Kapitals) Published in 2007.

2007. ca. 1600 S., gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-004177-3

Volume 12: Manuscript of the second volume of Marx's *Capital*, published between 1883 and 1884. (Bd. 12: Karl Marx: Das Kapital. Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie) Published in 2005.

Izumi Omura, Keizo Hayasaka, Rolf Hecker, Akira Miyakawa, Sadao Ohno, Shinya Shibata, Ryojiro Yatuyanagi (Bearbeiter).

2005. IX, 1329 S., 41 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-004138-4

Volume 13: Second volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in 1885 in Hamburg. (Bd. 13. Das Kapital : Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. — Bd. 2. Hamburg 1885)

2008. IX, 487 S. ISBN: 978-3-05-004174-2

Volume 14: Manuscript of the second volume of Marx's *Capital*, 1867 to 1884. (Bd. 14: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels: Manuskripte und redaktionelle Texte zum dritten Buch des *Kapital* 1871 bis 1895) Published in 2003.

2003. XI, 1138 S., 24 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003733-2

Volume 15: Third volume of Marx's *Capital*, published in Hamburg in 1894. (Bd. 15: Karl Marx: Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Dritter Band) Published in 2004.

2004. XI, 1420 S., 12 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, 2 Bde. im Schuber, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003797-4

Part Three: Correspondence (*Abt. 3: Briefwechsel*)

35 volumes. Originally planned for 45 volumes, with the last volume to include dedications by Marx and Engels.

Volume 1: Letters by Marx and Engels before 1846. (Bd. 1: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel bis April 1846) 93 letters by Marx and Engels, and 116 letters written to Marx and Engels by a third party.

1975. XXXIV, 964 S., 21 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003383-9

***Volume 2:** Letters by Marx and Engels between May 1846 and December 1848. (Bd. 2: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Mai 1846 bis Dezember 1848) 65 letters by Marx and Engels, and 227 letters written to Marx and Engels by a third party. Published in 1979.

1979. LIII, 1209 S., 33 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003384-6

Volume 3: Letters by Marx and Engels between January 1849 and December 1850. (Bd. 3: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Januar 1849 bis Dezember 1850) 62 letters by Marx and Engels, and 392 letters written to Marx and Engels by a third party. Published in 1981.

1981. LI, 1535 S., 43 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003385-3

Volume 4: Letters by Marx and Engels between January and December 1851. (Bd. 4: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Januar bis Dezember 1851) 112 letters by Marx and Engels, and 149 letters written to Marx and Engels by a third party. Published in 1984.

1984. XXXIX, 1108 S., 34 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003386-0

Volume 5: Letters by Marx and Engels between January and August 1852. (Bd. 5: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Januar bis August 1852) Published in 1987.

1987. XL, 1190 S., 33 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003387-7

Volume 6: Letters by Marx and Engels between September 1852 and August 1853. (Bd. 6: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, September 1852 bis August 1853) Published in 1987.

1987. XLVII, 1299 S., 32 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003388-4

Volume 7: Letters by Marx and Engels between September 1853 and March 1856. (Bd. 7: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, September 1853 bis März 1856) Published in 1989.

1989. L, 1240 S., 38 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003389-1

Volume 8: Letters by Marx and Engels between April 1856 and December 1857. (Bd. 8: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, April 1856 bis Dezember 1857) Published in 1990.

1990. XLIV, 1119 S., 33 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003390-7

Volume 9: Letters by Marx and Engels between January 1858 and August 1859. (Bd. 9: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Januar 1858 bis August 1859) Published in 2003.

2003. XVI, 1301 S., 32 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003463-8

Volume 10: Letters by Marx and Engels between September 1859 and May 1860. (Bd. 10: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, September 1859 bis Mai 1860) Published in 2000.

2000. XVII, 1269 S., 29 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003486-7

Volume 11: Letters by Marx and Engels between June 1860 and 1861. (Bd. 11: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Juni 1860 bis Dezember 1861) Published in 2005.

Rolf Dlubek, Vera Morozova (Bearbeiter), Galina Golovina, Elena Vaschenko (Mitarbeit). 2005. XXI, 1467 S., 42 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-004180-3

Volume 12: Letters by Marx and Engels between January 1862 and Septmeber 1864. (Bd. 12: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel, Januar 1862 bis September 1864) Published in 2013.

2013. ca. 1550 S., 30 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-004984-7

Volume 13: Letters by Marx and Engels between 1864 and 1865. (Bd. 13: Friedrich Engels / Karl Marx: Briefwechsel Oktober 1864 bis Dezember 1865) Published in 2002.

2002. XIX, 1443 S., 28 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003675-5

Volumes 14–29: Letters by Marx and Engels between 1866 and July, 1895.

Volumes 30: Letters by Marx and Engels between October, 1889 and November, 1890. (Bd. 30. Briefwechsel; Oktober 1889 bis November 1890) Published in 2013 ISBN: 978-3-05-006024-8

Volumes 31–35: Letters by Marx and Engels between 1866 and July, 1895.

Part Four: Excerpts, Notes, and Marginal Notes (*Abt. 4: Exzerpte, Notizen, Marginalien*)

32 volumes. Original plans called for three sections to this part: first would contain 40 volumes of excerpts and notes. Second, marginal notes and markings made in books read by Marx and Engels would be published separately in 30 volumes. Finally, it was planned that several volumes of the life history of Marx and Engels would be published, though the number of volumes was never determined. In the end, the first section was condensed to 31 volumes, the second section to one volume, and the third section was cancelled.

***Volume 1:** Excerpts before 1842. (Bd. 1: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen bis 1842) The first section includes Marx's *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy* (seven notebooks) written in Berlin; *Berlin Notes* (eight notebooks, including philosophical notes on Hume, Leibniz, Spinoza, Aristotle, Kant, and Rosenkranz); *Bonn Notes* (five notebooks, including notes on religious and art history). The second section includes Engels' writings on religious history, and the appendices include Engels' writings while in High School. Published in 1976.

1976. XXXI, 1047 S., 43 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003391-4

- *Volume 2:** Notes taken between 1843 and January 1845. (Bd. 2: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen, 1843 bis Januar 1845) Includes Marx's *Kreuznach Notes* (five notebooks), *Paris Notes* (seven notebooks), and portions of Engels' excerpts. Published in 1981.
1981. LII, 911 S., 27 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003392-1
- *Volume 3:** Notes taken between summer 1844 and early 1847. (Bd. 3: Karl Marx: Exzerpte und Notizen, Sommer 1844 bis Anfang 1847) Includes Marx's economics notes, such as *Brussels Notes* and others. The primary content is made up of Marx's economics notes written in two batches, one in February, the other between May and July. Includes notes on Boisguillebert, Lauderdale, Storch, Pecchio, Garnier, Blanqui, Girardin, Charles Babbage, Andrew Ure, Pellegrino Rossi, Sismondi, Ramon de la Sagra, Isaac Pereire, Say, A. de Laborde, etc.
1998. IX, 866 S., 18 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003398-3
- *Volume 4:** Notes taken between July and August, 1845. (Bd. 4: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen, Juli bis August 1845) Includes *Manchester Notes*, taken while Marx and Engels stayed there, and primarily includes excerpts from economists (first five notebooks of *Manchester Notes*: Aikin, Atkinson, Carlyle, Cobbett, Cooper, Davenant, Eden, McCulloch, Petty, Sadler, Senior, Thompson, Tooke, Wade, etc.). Published in 1988.
1988. LIV, 939 S., 39 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003393-8
- *Volume 5:** Notes taken between August 1845 and December 1850. Primarily includes the final four notebooks of Marx's *Manchester Notes* as well as Engels' excerpts and notes (Marx's 1845–1846 excerpts, including Alison, Bray, Hodgskin, McCulloch, Owen, Parkinson, Quesnay, etc.).
- Volume 6:** Notes taken between September 1846 and December 1847. (Bd. 6: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen, September 1846 bis Dezember 1847) Notes on statistics, land price, demand. Published in 1983.
1983. LIII, 1241 S., 20 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003394-5
- *Volume 7:** Notes taken between September 1849 and February 1851. (Bd. 7: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen, September 1849 bis Februar 1851) Consists of Marx's London Notes (notebooks 1–6). Notes touch on economic crises, theories of money and credit systems, history and actual circumstances, and concrete facts (excerpts from Tooke, Mill, Tyler, Garnier, Ricardo, Carey, and others).
1983. XLV, 916 S., 29 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003395-2

***Volume 8:** Notes taken between March and June, 1851. (Bd. 8: Karl Marx: Exzerpte und Notizen, März bis Juni 1851) Includes notebooks 7–10 of Marx’s *London Notes*. Marx first continues his study of money and credit theory, then focuses on the bourgeois system of political economy. This volume also includes the manuscript of “The Completed Money System.” Published in 1986.

1986. XLVII, 1118 S., 17 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003396-9

***Volume 9:** Notes taken between July and September, 1851. (Bd. 9: Karl Marx: Exzerpte und Notizen, Juli bis September 1851) Includes notebooks 11–14 of Marx’s *London Notes*, as well as his excerpts on agriculture/agricultural chemistry (Liebig) and the condition of the working class/population theory (Hodgskin, Owen). Also includes excerpts on the role of technology (Poppe, Ure), and the colonization policies of the European Powers. Published in 1991.

1991. LIV, 808 S., 20 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003397-6

***Volume 10:** Notes taken between September 1851 and June 1852. Includes notebooks 15–18 of Marx’s *London Notes*.

***Volume 11:** Notes taken between July 1852 and August 1853. Includes notebooks 19–24 of Marx’s *London Notes*.

Volume 12: Notes and excerpts taken between September 1853 and January 1855 by Marx. (Bd. 12: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Exzerpte und Notizen, September 1853 bis Januar 1855) Touches on the history of Spain and military affairs. Published in 2007.

Manfred Neuhaus, Claudia Reichel (Bearbeiter), Karl-Frieder Grube, Giesela Neuhaus, Klaus-Dieter Neumann, Hanno Strauß (Mitarbeit). 2007. ca. 1700 S., 38 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003488-1

Volume 13: Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between November 1854 and October 1857. Touches on economics, history of diplomacy, and military affairs.

Volume 14: Notes and excerpts taken by Marx between October 1857 and February 1858. Concerns the 1857 world economic crisis.

Volume 15: Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between October 1857 and February 1858. Concerns political economy and military affairs.

Volume 16: Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between March 1860 and December 1863. Includes notes for “Herr Vogt,” as well as notes on Poland and military affairs.

- Volume 17:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx between May and June 1863. Concerns economics.
- Volume 18:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx between February 1864 and August 1868. Concerns economics and agriculture.
- Volume 19:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx between September 1868 and September 1869. Concerns economics.
- Volume 20:** Notes and excerpts taken by Engels between April 1868 and September 1869. Concerns the history of Ireland and economics.
- Volume 21:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between September 1869 and December 1874. Concerns Ireland and the activities of the International Workingman's Association.
- Volume 22:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between January 1875 and February 1876. Concerns the history of Russia after its reforms.
- Volume 23:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between March and June 1876. Concerns physiology, the history of technology, the histories of Russia, England, and Greece.
- Volume 24:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between January and May 1876. Concerns the history of land ownership, the history of law and states.
- Volume 25:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between January 1877 and March 1879. Concerns the history of political economy.
- Volume 26:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between May and September 1878. (Bd. 26. Exzerpte und Notizen zur Geologie, Mineralogie und Agrikulturchemie März bis September 1878) Concerns geology, mineralogy, agricultural science, agricultural statistics, geology, and world trade. Published in 2011
2011. XII, 679 S. : Ill. + Diakritische Zeichen und Siglen (1 Bl.) ISBN: 978-3-05-004673-0
- Volume 27:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between 1879 and 1881. Concerns the study of nations, primitive history, and the history of land ownership.
- Volume 28:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between 1879 and 1882. Marx's notes on the histories of Russia and France. Engels notes on the history of the system of ownership.
- Volume 29:** Notes and excerpts taken by Marx and Engels between December 1881 and December 1882.
- Volume 30:** Mathematics notes taken by Marx in 1863, 1878, and 1881.

Volume 31: Notes and excerpts (primarily historical notes) taken by Marx and Engels between 1877 and 1883. (Bd. 31: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Naturwissenschaftliche Exzerpte und Notizen, Mitte 1877 bis Anfang 1883) Published in 1999.

1999. XV, 1055 S., 22 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003399-0

Volume 32: Bibliography of books owned by Marx and Engels. Annotated bibliography and marginal notes. (Bd. 32: Die Bibliotheken von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Annotiertes Verzeichnis des ermittelten Bestandes) Published in 1999.

1999. 738 S., 32 schwarz-weiße Abbildungen, gb. ISBN: 978-3-05-003440-9

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Afterword

As I finish verifying the last section of materials and stare at these few small computer floppy disks, it is long before my emotions come to rest. I have the feeling that I am completing a great work. This is because what I have just finished is an original, creative interpretation of the most important classical texts of Marxian philosophy, coming after Chinese scholars escaped the pull of the theories of Soviet and Eastern European scholars. As a matter of fact, my tireless quest over the past few years has been to historically revisit Marx's true philosophical context, separating it from the interpretive framework of traditional philosophy. What I have accomplished is a step forward, be that step big or small. Whether or not this attempt has been successful, my work is indelible proof that I have exerted myself to the fullest extent of my abilities.

I have always believed that true philosophy ought to be creative. A philosopher may sometimes take down a few notes or edit some historical materials, but his or her most basic purpose is to say things that other people did not think to say or did not know how to say. Therefore the sole criterion for evaluating a philosopher is whether or not he or she has contributed something worthwhile to the great vault of man's rational thought. This is the proof and evidence of scholarship.

More than 20 years ago, as I just barely stepped into the temple of philosophy, I dreamed of one day becoming a philosopher. My predecessors advised me, saying that "philosophy is the struggle to obtain freedom." This thought quietly excited me for a long time. However, I quickly came to understand the weight of what they had said, for I discovered that philosophy is actually a limitless black hole. One could sacrifice his or her whole life on the altar of philosophy only to find, ultimately, that he or she had not ever set one foot inside the gate of true thought. A person could recite numberless philosophical classics by heart and yet never truly experience enlightenment. This is not unlike the disciples of Buddhism, where the vast majority are merely monks who recite scripture, while those who truly grasp profound truths are as rare as phoenix pinions or unicorn horns. Such a state of affairs is not unusual. Philosophy is not simply the compounding and replication of knowledge; it is life, understanding, thought creation, the ultimate truth, ultimate good, ultimate beauty. Philosophy is the metaphysical "Tao," and although it cannot create bread, still it is a harbor for our souls, the highest and ultimate need of human existence, the purest question of the human heart. No matter the result, I have no regrets and no complaints to be able to offer up my greatest energy in the service of noble human rationality.

In China today, truly scientific philosophy is Marxian philosophy. This concept was consistently fortified through ideology from the day we entered the doors of university until today, both explicitly in the teachings of our elders and insinuated in the pages of our books. Over time, as I have repeatedly questioned this proposition and put it to the test, I can still say that I believe it in all honesty. But for me, the statement “Marxian philosophy is a scientific conception of the world” went through several stages of evolution, from “Marxian philosophy once was,” to “Marxian philosophy later became,” and then, finally and fully to “Marxian philosophy now is.” Only later in life did I understand that Soviet and Chinese textbooks were only a certain product of the new vision of Marxian philosophy under certain conditions of history (I refer to this as the “interpretative framework of traditional philosophy”). The development and existence of this framework was reasonable in its own way, but as soon as its historical reasonableness was enshrined as eternal truth, its mission came to an end. So-called eternal truth is nothing more than a frozen statue that appears to have a sacred and solemn place in people’s minds. At the same time as it becomes an eternal and indisputable display object, it declares that the sacred thing which had once existed is no longer really there.

In fact, when Marxian philosophy appeared 150 years ago, the underlying truth of the sudden change it introduced was its dismissal of the prehistoric notion that philosophy was an all-encompassing, ultimate system of truth. Marxian philosophy is science in that it is a movement of scientific thought which forces philosophy to continually progress along with social practice and extend itself into the future. Therefore, the scientific essence of Marxism can only be a dynamic cognitive logic constrained by the functional dimension of objective practice. It is well known that the classical Marxian authors left for us a great number of texts, a rich legacy that must be grasped by any self-denoted Marxist. However, in perusing the numberless Marxian documents that exist, we cannot allow the analyses of classical authors with regards to some specific issue — analyses which were made under certain historical conditions — to become our standard for evaluating practical reality today. We can only grasp the living spirit of Marxism, meaning the basic positions, views, and methods of classical writers as they analyzed and resolved real and theoretical problems. This is the “capitalized Logic” that Lenin described as a legacy of Marx. Sadly, for a relatively long period of history, the Marxian scientific conception of the world was severely emasculated. On the one hand, Marxian philosophy was no longer a social practice incorporated into historical reality. It was no longer a philosophical weapon that guided people to correctly understand and resolve problems. Rather, it mutated into so many petrified dogmas that existed only on the pages of books. As capitalism moved away from imperialism and towards national monopolistic capitalism and globalized capitalism, we continue to use some of the specific conclusions in Marx’s *Capital*, pitifully rejecting reality. Even as we have taken bold steps along China’s path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, there are still some who experience all kinds of doubt because they cannot find corresponding support for this path in Marx’s texts. On the other hand, a few people have based themselves on the new scientific depths revealed by improvements in natural science to arrogantly bellow out their “challenge” to Marxism. Or others, seeing the new conditions brought

about by modern capitalism and the problems with our socialist reforms today, “warn” of the “total obsolescence” of Marxism. It is worth noting that both the dogmatic, ossified ideas and the seemingly new “superior” theories all are based on the same “Marxian” source: the traditional philosophical interpretive framework, or the system of philosophical textbooks.

I believe that the classical Marxian writers are great enough without being made to suffer for the faults of others. Although the events of the 1930s had their own historical logic based on the traditional philosophical interpretive framework, at their core they did not truly reveal the essence of Marxian theoretical logic, which was scientific, practical materialism. For us to develop Marxian philosophy today, the first thing we must do is not to “break down,” anything else — especially in reference to the traditional philosophical interpretive framework that does not really equate with Marxian philosophy. Would it not be better for us to first historically revisit Marx? We must start with the true classical texts of Marxian philosophy, from the true, inherent theoretical logic of Marxism. We must thoroughly and profoundly get to the bottom of this thought. Of course, in revisiting Marx we are not merely returning to Marx’s books, nor are we simply repeating the words that Marx said. We take upon ourselves the heavy burden of historically merging together the fruits of all modern thought with Marx’s logical world view. In revisiting Marx, we must not only find a true starting point, but at the same time we must enrich and develop Marxism with the newest conclusions of today’s social practice and natural science. This is the basic guiding principle of this book.

In this philosophical work which has consumed many years of my energy and effort, I have only penetrated one logical level of the rich theoretical vault of Marxian philosophical science. That is, to re-experience the movement and shifts in Marx’s philosophical discourse from the perspective of Marx’s economics research. This is merely an attempt, an adventure, a summons, a new interpretation. I hope this will bring some enlightenment to those who have long been stalled within the traditional philosophical interpretive framework. Let us abandon all tangles and complications, let us directly come face to face with Marx!

Over the entire course of my writing for this book, Professor Sun Bokui has been the guide of my thinking. In most of the topics discussed in this book, Professor Sun provided detailed guidance and advice. In addition, Professors Tang Zhengdong and Yang Jianping, as well as graduate students such as Chen Shengyun, Hu Daping, Yang Haifeng, Zhang Liang, Wang Heng, and others all participated in the entirety of my thought experiment. In discussions and mutual exchanges, they also provided much valuable thought. In particular, with regards to my thoughts on economics, Professor Tang Zhengdong proposed many important ideas. Additionally, PhD student Zhu Jindong provided a great deal of assistance with the German and French materials, while Meng Mugui and Wang Haobin helped with the proofreading and editing of this book. Here allow me to express my full-hearted thanks to all of these individuals.

This book is a periodic achievement of the study directed by Professor Sun Bokui of the topic “Maintaining and developing Marxian philosophy and Deng Xiaoping philosophy” (under the critical programs of the National Social Science

Foundation of China in the ninth five-year plan). Furthermore, Jiangsu Province awarded funding for this book by designating it a critical item in its social science program under the ninth five-year plan. I hope that my efforts have not disappointed the support of the funding experts.

Finally, I dedicate this work on the basic theories of Marxism to my beloved father — Zhang Shicheng. I am dedicating this book to him first because Marxism was his lifelong belief, as well as the work he struggled to accomplish his whole life. In the 1950s, my father used what I have studied as the interpretive object of this book — the Chinese edition of the Complete Works of Marx and Engels — while he was a political professor at the Nanjing Military Affairs Academy. Second, my father's expectations for me were too high (he was a man with aspirations higher than the heavens). I believe myself that this is the best book written by a Chinese on Marxian thought in many years, and I think my father would have been proud of me. I finished a portion of the editing of the third manuscript of this book right before he passed away as I stayed by his side in the hospital. In those heartrending last few days, he kept asking me about my work. When I gave him an overview of the content of my book, he could only simply and with great difficulty say, "good! Good!"

Zhang Yibing
Nanjing University, November 30, 1998

Without a doubt Karl Marx' philosophical work had a fundamental impact on "western" concepts of society and economics that still reverberates in the philosophical discourse on Marx. When it comes to analyzing this ongoing discourse it should be noted that due to language barriers the work of Chinese scholars is underrepresented in this discourse. This book is a translation of Zhang Yibing's reference work «Back to Marx» first published in 1999 in the PRC. The book is a serious inquiry into the complex interrelationships between Marx's political and economic philosophy, based on a very careful and systematic reading of a wide range of textual sources, including—in particular—the newly published second edition of the Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA2), which collects a large amount of notes, drafts, manuscripts, and excerpts previously unavailable to the scholarly community. The analyses themselves are closely reasoned, subtle, and circumspect. It may best be described as a "dialectics of Marx's thought" from the first writings in the late 1830s through the 1840s and through the «Grundrisse» and «Capital». Other than the sharp breaks offered by "Western Marxist" commentators such as Althusser the author of this book reflects both on continuities and discontinuities, surface readings and deep structures, and the interplay of philosophy, history and economics in the various phases of an unfolding theoretical system based throughout on a critique of capitalism. The secondary literature on Marx covers works published in Western Europe and North America, Eastern Europe and Russia (Soviet Union), China and Japan. This kind of coverage is an important contribution in itself and allows non-chinese readers insights into the Chinese reception and interpretation of the international discourse on Marx.

The author Prof. Dr. Zhang Yibing teaches philosophy at the Nanjing University and is one of the foremost scholars of Marxism in China, a Marxist analyst of contemporary philosophical issues. At the same time he is the Chancellor of the Nanjing University.



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