

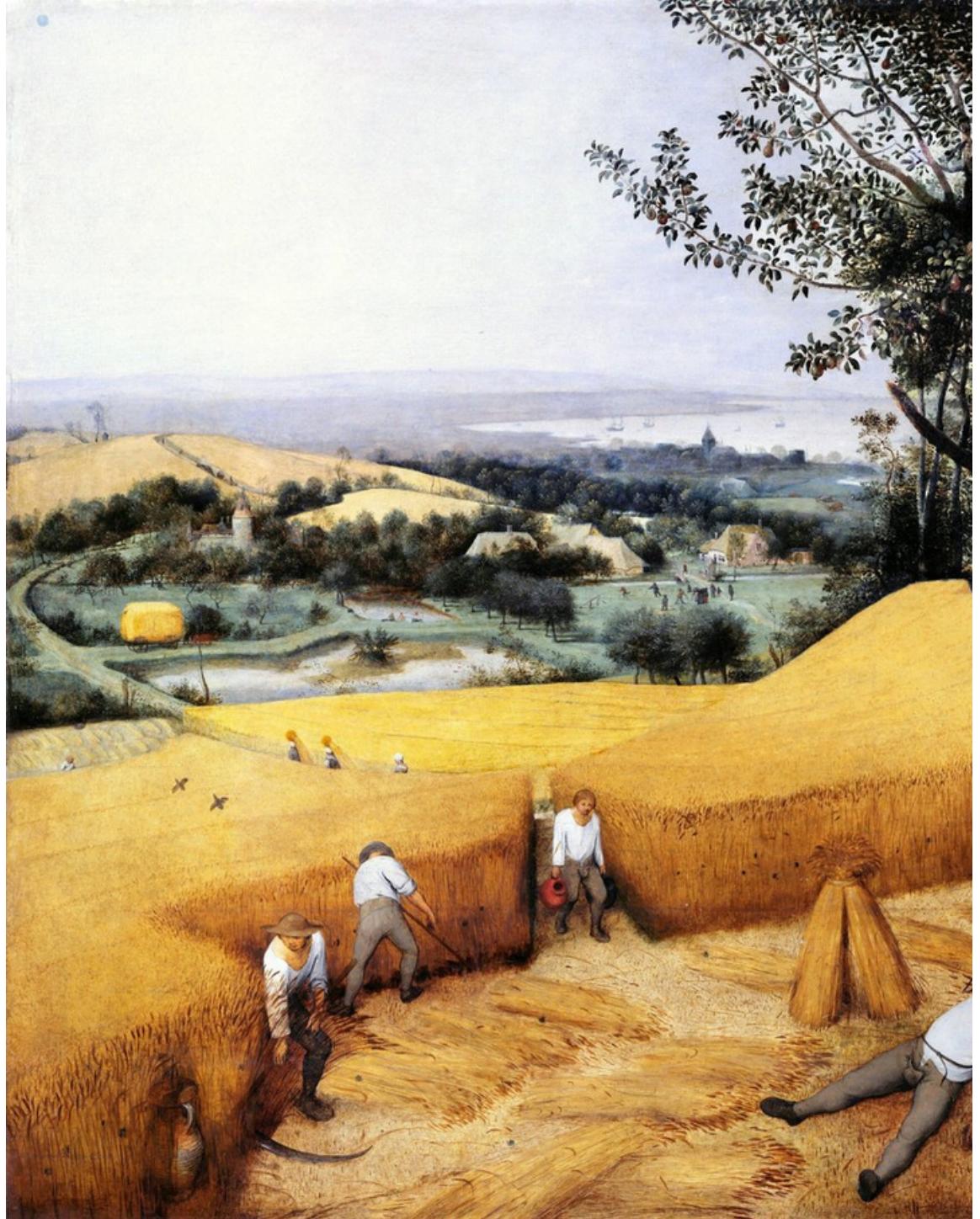
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Soren Mau's *Mute Compulsion* (2023)

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Soren Mau's debut monograph, *Mute Compulsion* (2023), deserves all the praise it has received. Synoptic and diligently researched, its singular contribution is to develop, as the subtitle relays, *A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*. For Mau, what is distinct in Marx's project is the elaboration of an account of power that does not conform to the classic violence-ideology couplet: capital's capacity to reproduce itself cannot be solely be attributed to the apparatuses of ideational control, nor to the periodic backstop exertions of force, nor even to the combination of these two, canonically present in Althusser's distinction between the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses, or Gramsci's appropriation of Machievelli's Centaur - half-man, half-beast - as representative of the two moments of coercion and consent in hegemony. While both these forms act directly on the subject, altering behaviour by interpellation or subjugation, Marx identifies a form of power that operates

indirectly by acting on the subject's environment. Economic power is thus the ability to 'reconfigure the material conditions of social reproduction', (5) [1] for instance, by dispossessing a class of people from access to the means of production and subsistence, thereby subjecting them to the necessity to valorise capital in order to survive. Indeed, it is from Marx's exposition of the proletariat's condition of vital dependence on capital that the title's peculiar turn of phrase, mute compulsion, derives.



Mau seizes upon this conceptual innovation and pushes it to a point of systematicity not yet developed in Marx's own work, elaborating both the synchronic and diachronic processes of impersonal economic power to great effect: on the one hand, the vertical domination of workers by capital in their 'double-freedom'; and the lateral domination of capitalists

themselves by capital, executed by the coercive laws of competition. On the other, the dynamics of real subsumption in the labour process, nature, and logistics, in which our dependence on capital is tightened by restructuring the material spatio-temporal logic of social life; and the tendency of repeating crises to maintain a fluctuating surplus population, which intensifies competition amongst the proletariat, thus ‘riveting the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock’ [2]. In doing so, Mau is able to intervene forcefully across the familiar debates of Marxist theory, offering profound insights and rigorous critiques on topics ranging from feminist dual-systems theory, the state debates, the New Reading of capital, Western Marxism, labour-process analysis, and so on. This is the first valence of the work as a specifically Marxist theory of the economic power of capital, i.e., that it develops this theory through submersion in and counterposition to various strands of Marxism. The second is that it is also positioned against the limits and obfuscations of certain non-Marxist theories of power. Special attention here is given to the aporias of Foucault’s micrological approach, the inability of models of power and domination in conventional political theory to capture impersonal processes, and the statist blinders of Agamben’s account of sovereignty.

As is to be expected of a work of such a scope, however, there are some issues. And my concern in this essay is solely to press on a particular set of them: first, Mau’s engagement with Lukacs; second, his discussion of subject-object relations in Marx; and, third, the associated debates around ‘humanism’ this raises. The core question that emerges from this is whether or not Mau is justified in extracting his theory of economic power from the themes of ‘inversion’,

'perversion', 'reification' that marks the expansive lineage of Frankfurt School thinking on capital's objectivity, from Lukacs to Werner Bonefeld; and whether or not some notion of the human can be retained to ground both the normative critique of capital and mark the historical specificity of a communist social formation.

I - Lukacs: Reification as Structural Domination

Let us begin with Lukacs. Mau deploys the relatively loose category of 'Western Marxism' to ascribe to Lukacs, Gramsci, Adorno, and Althusser a primary concern with ideology as the central means of capital's reproduction (59). 'Lukacs was,' he writes on page 61, 'not particularly interested in power', but in what is called "reified consciousness", that is, ideology.' Ideology is then defined as control over the 'concepts, imageries, myths, and narratives through which we (consciously or unconsciously) represent, interpret, and understand social reality.' Mau is not an unsophisticated critic of ideology here: he accepts that such ideas have real effectivity, that they cannot be conjured away by a mental sleight of hand, that they are illusions which are necessarily produced by a set of social relations and practices. The issue lies instead with such theories' tendency to present the reproduction of capitalist power-relations as occurring outside of economic processes - 'superimposed on them', as in Althusser's theory of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's), 'where the reproduction of property relations in the economic base occur outside of this base' (6) - rather than working through them. But this, as we shall see, is something that simply does not apply to Lukacs; and

indeed, that it does not do so has been cause for vociferous critique from, to just give one example, the British Althusserian Gareth Stedman Jones.

The image of Lukacs we receive from Mau is one in which ideology predominates over economic power, as if reification is in some sense separate from, its production differentially located from and primary over the processes of impersonal domination under capital. This has a subclaim, which is that Lukacs is not actually concerned with economic power. Both these claims are false, and in fact belie a crucial misunderstanding of what is unique to Lukacs' project, namely that it escapes the old dualism of ideas and materiality, or mind and body, by putting in its place a theory of practice as a dialectical unity of these two moments. The fetish character of commodities is both an 'objective form and a subjective stance corresponding to it' [3], and this objective form exists primarily as a kind of domination. Social phenomena actually are reduced to a world of commodity-things (see here Marx's comment that, in commodity fetishism, social relations 'appear as what they are') which are then governed not by reflective human action on the basis of use-value, but by the demands of their abstract quantitative properties (price-information). Both worker and capitalist assume a 'contemplative' stance toward this - the former's labour controlled by the mechanical imperatives of valorisation; the latter's entrepreneurial 'creativity' occurring only insofar as they can guarantee the 'inevitable chain of cause and effect' independent of that action [4] - with this subjective orientation being a necessary articulation of the objective practice of the commodity-structure. As Andrew Feenberg elucidates, the subjective and objective dimensions here are 'functional elements' in one 'basic substratum', social practice. Practice 'produces a

world of objects that, by their form, shape a consciousness that orients practice toward the reproduction of these same objects' [5]. What Lukacs terms the 'contemplative' stance is thus the subjective disposition, the complex of meaning and interpretations, required to perform the practices imposed by dominance of the commodity-form.

Note here that Lukacs is quite orthodox in his account of capitalism as a set of commodity-relations.

Following Marx, what is unique to capitalism is not the mere existence of exchange but the universalisation of the commodity-form as the mediator of social existence [6]. What this means, structurally speaking, is that processes of accumulation - what Mau would call the logic of capital or the value-form - dominate social life, which thus entails the forms of economic compulsion Mau explicates. Thus the worker's assumption of a 'fragmented' or an 'atomised' consciousness is not the product of an ideological manipulation external to the production process, but the form of subjectivity required by his subjection to capital. 'His specific situation is defined by the fact that his labour-power is his only possession', and it is this condition of dependence that ensures the worker 'must present himself as the "owner" of his labour-power' [7]. (Note the conjunction of the 'must' here, in which the assumption of this subjective disposition necessarily, i.e., as required for the successful completion of the practice, follows the worker's dependence on capital). Such 'self-objectification' is thus the couplet to Marx's recognition that the labourer is 'compelled to sell themselves voluntarily', or what Mau terms the vertical relation of economic power. By the same token, Lukacs' account of the passive procedures required by the 'entrepreneur' in fulfilment of his practice is perfectly amenable to Mau's exposition of the horizontal relations of

domination experienced by capitalists under the laws of market competition. He even quotes Marx to this effect: ‘The division of labour within society brings into contact independent commodity-producers who acknowledge no other authority than that of competition, of the coercion exerted by the pressure of their mutual interests’ [8]. It is for this reason that ‘man’s activity does not go beyond the correct calculation of the possible outcome of the sequence of events (the ‘laws’ of which he finds ‘ready-made’)’ [9].

This is not to say that other elements of Lukacs’ theoretical apparatus have to be retrieved and defended, but only that Mau misses or downplays the important affinities between the two theories. To return to the Stedman Jones essay raised earlier: ‘Lukacs whole account of [...] domination’, he objects in a 1971 hit-job, ‘is reduced to the invisible emanations of reification from commodities, which radiate out to bleach the consciousness of the inhabitants of capitalist society’ [10]. Absent here is the ‘whole institutional superstructure of bourgeois class power: parties, reformist trade unions, newspapers, schools, churches, families’, etc [11]- an omission which he apparently corrected in his 1924 work on Lenin, instead foregrounding the ‘State apparatus’ as the cause of ‘disintegration’ and ‘disorganization’ on the working-class [12]. Lukacs thus comes under sustained fire for doing precisely the thing Mau accuses him of not doing: rejecting the primacy of auxiliary processes of ideological interpellation or State domination to explain the power of capital. Indeed, it is this which distinguished his interventions from those of orthodox Social Democratic parties at the time, which pitted an effectively propagandist model of consciousness-raising against the distortions of bourgeois ideological

institutions [13]. For Lukacs, by contrast, proletarian revolution was not thwarted principally by external ideological manipulation, but by the inhibiting and blocking processes (competition; atomisation; passivity) internal to proletarian existence under capital.

Here Lukacs was unique in grasping the implications of Marx's own innovation on the category of the 'subject': in the move from ideology to fetishism, Marx recast 'subjectivity ... into a position of effect or result of the social process', such that the 'real and the imaginary ... are immediately combined or, alternatively, the *givenness* of the objects of experience is immediately combined with the *norm* of behaviour they call forth' [14]. It is Lukacs' fidelity to this discovery that makes the attribution to him a concern with ideology as external or an addendum to the process of economic power totally misplaced; as Balibar relays, the commodity, as one of the fetishised forms of value, is an 'object always already given in the form of a representation' [15]. In positing such a sharp break between ideology, on the one hand, and the imperatives and compulsions of value, on the other, Mau thus reverts to the same dualism that Lukacs, and Marx before him, sought to break. And while it is true that Lukacs was not particularly concerned with providing a thorough structural elaboration of the objective side of this impersonal domination, his resulting occupation with 'consciousness' is not, contra Stedman Jones, indicative of an idealism, nor, contra Mau, an ignorance of economic power - but of his militant concern with the challenge of communist revolution in the febrile conjuncture of post-War Europe. This political force, Zizek reminds us, is another reason why Lukacs' might need to be distinguished from other Western Marxists, often preoccupied with the terrain of the 'cultural' and the

'everyday'. 'What is this [book's] purpose?', Lukacs later reflected in his *Defence of History and Class Consciousness*: 'to demonstrate methodologically that the organisation and tactics of Bolshevism are the only possible consequence of Marxism' [16].

II - Capital as Subject?

The next point I wish to consider is Mau's position on the problem of subject-object inversion in Marx, and the question of the 'human' or philosophical anthropology that it raises. The dispute begins with Mau's rejection of arguments by the likes of Werner Bonefeld, Moishe Postone, and Chris Arthur that capital assumes the status of a 'subject'; and this, in turn, departs from Marx's characterisation of capital as an 'automatic subject' in Chapter Four of *Volume I*. Persisting through its 'different modes of existence' (money, commodity), it 'changes its own magnitude [...] and thus valorizes itself independently. For the movement in the course of which it adds surplus-value to its own movement, its valorization is therefore self-valorisation' [17]. Now Mau is correct that this description of capital's existence as a 'self-moving substance' that increases its magnitude through its various forms is nothing but the fetishised appearance of the extraction of surplus-value from living labour. It is this that underpins Marx's critique of bourgeois political economy, which cannot see beneath capital's 'occult ability to add value to itself', to 'lay golden eggs' [18], the process by which the labour-power of a class of dependent labourers is extracted above and beyond the cost of their reproduction. In this defetishising manoeuvre, Marx reveals the essence of capital as the constitutive powers of human subjects, which are - through a specific historical and political

process - appropriated and subordinated to capital and thus appear internal to it, a hidden moment in its self-reproduction. But what I disagree with is, first, Mau's contention that the notion of 'appearance' deployed here is one of simple ideological mystification, instead of 'a real and necessary - though potentially obscuring - reflection of essence' (40), which would justify retaining the notion of capital as subject (albeit in a properly dialectical form). And second, that the normative-ontological problematic this ascription anchors - the perverted appropriation of subject-powers by the object, and the concomitant objectification and domination of human subjects - can be dispensed with. On the contrary, I think this problematic is one that does not only structure Marx's early writings but is integral to his mature critique of political economy and the vision of communism to which it gives rise.

To be clear, then, the formula of capital as subject is both true and false, or a 'real appearance': true, because the thing of 'capital' does indeed take the throne, possessing subject-like powers to constitute social reality and dominate the (non)subjects of the proletariat and bourgeoisie alike; but also false, because such powers are only the emergent property of these internally coercive social relations, and thus dependent on the human practice from which it arises but which it reciprocally dominates. To defend this paradoxical proposition, we should follow Mau's engagement with Moishe Postone, who contends that Marx presents capital as the quasi-Hegelian 'self-moving substance that is Subject', constituting the totality of social relations as its own impervious self-unfolding. Geist's dynamic in which it 'posits itself by externalising itself, only in order to sublate this difference,' is mirrored by capital: as value-in-motion, it originates in the extraction of surplus-value, but

constantly transmutes itself into the other of money and commodities and, in a ‘spiral-like form,’ comes back to itself through the ‘spheres of circulation and production’ as accumulated capital [19]. To speak with Hegel, it is ‘actual only insofar as it is the movement of positing itself, or the mediation of the process of becoming different from itself with itself’ [20]. Such a process ‘constantly re-establishes the conditions of its own repetition’ or ‘posits its own presuppositions’ [21]. For value to valorise, it requires the reproduction of the commodity-form, exploitable labour-power, and competitive market-exchange - i.e., a whole set of relations of production - which are simultaneously the conditions for this valorisation and reproduced in it. It is the aforementioned internal coercion of economic relations - the way the circuit imposes a set of unchallengeable ‘structural imperatives and constraints’ [22] - which guarantees this reproduction.

But Postone might bend the stick too far. First, capital’s ‘subjectivity’ is distinct from Geist insofar as it ‘does not possess self-consciousness’; its pursuit of valorisation is ‘blind.’ Mau adds to this discrepancy that it is also ‘bound to do certain things in a way that a subject - at least in the Hegelian sense - is not.’ Despite displaying a ‘dynamic very similar to the self-relating negativity of the subject’, It cannot reflexively reconstitute its ends and is thus bound to the determinacy of valorisation, which contradicts the principle of detachment from ‘any determinate existence’ - not even ‘life’ - central to the transcendence of natural consciousness. Of course, the reason for these impediments is that capital simply cannot be a subject because of its ‘inextricable tie’ to ‘its underlying social relations and practices’. It is, as Mau borrows from Andreas Malm, an ‘emergent property’ of these practices, its powers ‘a property of

the system resulting from the organisation of its parts' [23]. It is the exercise of 'downward causation on its constituent parts' by the totality of social relations - the specific kind of impersonal domination by which capitalist society self-regulates - which gives the appearance of capital as subject. While Mau invokes this explanation to justify jettisoning the formula, I think that it is the peculiarity of the figure of emergent property - at once capable of executing its own causal/constitutive force and utterly dependent on something other than itself - that explains the true-false nature of capital as a subject, clearly displaying some of its qualities in one sense but totally absent them in others. Capital's subject-form is therefore not simply illusory – it has a form of social objectivity, as Marx wrote of commodity fetishism [24] – but an objectivity that is false or perverted to the extent it suppresses its own sociality, to the extent it negates its moment of subjective constitution and thus presents itself as a reified force outside the changeable nexus of human practices.

To say that capital assumes the status of a 'subject' is obviously not to say that it really does become a living, breathing, agentive subject, any more than to say that the worker becomes an object under capitalist relations of production is to equate them to the tools they wield. Instead theory must exploit precisely the moment of nonidentity presupposed by the process itself: labour, of course, can not be merely an object like any other, otherwise the extraction of surplus-value could not operate; and capital cannot be a subject like any other, because it's own causal powers are merely the coerced repetition of practices coordinated behind the backs of those involved. But is this all, as Mau himself acknowledges at one point, merely a matter of 'emphasis and terminological preferences' (44)? What is gained, theoretically, from a

retention of capital as ‘subject’? The key here lies in this term ‘perversion’ or ‘inversion’, which Marx himself repeatedly uses to categorise the objectionable ontology of capitalism; and which is ignored by the technical language of emergent property (a phrase cribbed from systems-theory and the natural sciences). But here the discussion is displaced onto the so-called ‘humanist controversy’, for it directly raises the question of whether or not Marx’s mature critique is dependent upon a certain understanding of ‘human nature’ or the subject for both descriptive and normative grounding, to which Mau’s position is, while refreshingly undogmatic, not without its faults.

III - Which ‘Humanism’?

Mau’s argument is as follows: the category of the human in Marxism is necessary for descriptive-explanatory purposes, but ‘cannot possibly function as the basis for a critique of capitalism’ (90), and the reason for this lies in the Romantic notions of wholeness and immediacy that he believes to be latent in any normative invocation of the human subject. Both contentions are rooted in a thesis about the specificity of human ‘corporeal organisation’ that Mau unravels from *The German Ideology*.

Humans are, like other animals, indissociably a moment ‘of a material totality, an organism ... inscribed in a flow of matter’; and this metabolism with nature involves the continuous satisfaction and production of needs. What is specifically human about this metabolism, however, derives from the aforementioned passage of the *German Ideology*, when Marx is said to drop the notion of ‘species-

being' in favour of 'production as the specific trait of the human being.' (94). Humans 'begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their corporeal organisation'^[25]. More specifically, it is 'the use of extra-somatic tools ... which is the most essential aspect of the corporeal organisation of the human being.' Why? Because tool-use, for Mau, is what underlies the sheer 'biological underdeterminacy' of human beings, i.e., the fact that their metabolism with nature, by which we mean their social relations of production (in an expansive sense), can take an essentially infinite variety of forms. Tools are at once part of the body 'and separate from it', and this means that the 'constitutive moments of the human metabolism are much easier to separate and temporarily dissolve than the metabolism of other animals', a fact which grounds the possibility of economic power as control over the material conditions of social reproduction (for instance, in control of land, machinery, productive forces. etc) (99). Such a necessary but plastic mediation by tool-use opens up an 'immense space of possibility: a metabolism must be established, but its social form is never given'; and this culminates in the contention that desires for a return to some original unity between humanity and nature in fact miss that the original state is one of disunity or cleavage (101). Quoting Postone, he concludes that Marx's critique is of specific 'forms of social mediation, not a critique of mediation from the standpoint of immediacy' ^[26]. This is what justifies Mau's rejection of humanism's normative purchase: precisely because of the indeterminacy of human existence, there is no single essence which can be thwarted by one form of social organisation and realised by another. To return to the problem of capital as subject, then, this disqualifies the critical sense of subject-object inversion, which

posits the alienation of human capacities which must be reappropriated in communism.

In short, Mau's position is quite Althusserian indeed: there is no essence that can be re-appropriated, no original wholeness to be returned to, such that the problematic of inversion or perversion itself has no real centre, and must be curtly dispensed with. Now I certainly agree with Mau, and Althusser before him, that Marx does indeed break with an idealist notion of the “Subject” as Origin, Essence, and Cause’ [27], and of the human essence as a ‘genus’, ‘inherent in each single individual ... which unites the many individuals in a *natural way*’ [28]. But what I am not so convinced of is the *impossibility* of reading Marx’s alternative - that the human essence, is, ‘in reality ... the ensemble of the social relations’ [29] - as the opening up of an ‘improved concept of the essence of the human being’ (85). Mau forecloses this path in two ways: first, with a reference to the *Manifesto*, where Marx pillories Karl Grun and Moses Hess for representing, ‘not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy’ (86). But this seems to me besides the point: to invoke some kind of human nature is not necessarily to dispense with all the historical mediations through which the human is given in the present, which condition the source and potentials of their agency, and which structure the relation between their particular interests and the universal. Insofar as Marx has a conception of the human, it is certainly not that of the Idealists or the Utopian’s he critiques. Second, Mau acknowledges, as I mention above, that the (clearly normatively laden) theme of inversion and alienation persists through Marx’s later works (e.g., *The Grundrisse*; *Capital Vol.1* and 3), but concludes that ‘these terms and

expressions no longer refer to human nature', but 'rather social relations that confront the proletarian as an alien power' (87). But here Mau - and he is not alone in this - begs the question, because one still has to unpack what is specifically *social* about these relations, by which we mean, what is specifically *human* about them, and what it means to say they can become alienated or inverted.

Here we can critically return to Mau's theorem on tool-use, for it is not at all clear that this aspect of our 'corporeal organisation' can do the theoretical heavy-lifting that Mau wants it to. This is evident in the unsatisfactory procession of his argument, which, first, recognises that tool-use is not something unique to humans, and second, that the mediation of the human metabolism by tools is further mediated by social relations themselves. To put it as directly as possible, what is significant in our use of tools is not their 'scale or complexity', but precisely our capacity to *reconstitute our forms of social reproduction*. And while it is true that this is enabled by the extra-somatic nature of tools, their existence as prosthesis that can be detached and reconfigured, that we can do so in an essentially infinite variety of ways is not a capacity given by the tools themselves, but by their relation to *reflective-linguistic consciousness*. What is peculiar is that, at the beginning of the next chapter, Mau points towards this specificity of the social: that the 'reason why Marx finds it important to underline the social nature of things [...] is, of course, that he wants to stress that they are not necessary - that is, that they fall within the domain of what can actually be changed by human beings' (105). Beavers can build dams at a relatively high level of complexity, but they cannot reflectively take their own forms of social organisation as the object of transformation. It is this, not tool-use, which fundamentally underlines our

biological undeterminacy.

What does this mean for the thesis of capital as subject, and the possibility of grounding this critique normatively? To say that capital's assumption of subject status is 'perverted', 'inverted' or 'deranged', on this count, is not to say that there is a human subject immediately present to itself in some original unity, but rather that capital dominates human subjects by denying our collective re-constitutive capacity; and it is this capacity that grounds the critical force of sociality for Marx. Here the invocation of social relations in place of the 'genus' in Marx's Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach displaces the human from a static object towards an open relational capacity rooted in our biological undeterminacy; an essence of non-essence which is foreclosed or suppressed by capital. To see this operating in Marx's mature works, look carefully at the fragment on communism he presents at the tail-end of the chapter on 'The Commodity' in *Capital: Volume I*: 'The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e., by the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control' [30]. The planned and democratic production of social life, defined by the coordination of concrete labour oriented toward use-values [31], is thus the political form in which the 'transparency' of social relations can replace both its obscurity under commodity-fetishism, its opaqueness as relations amongst things, and the 'immature' transparency of 'direct relations of dominance and servitude' [32]. What is alternatively transparent or opaque in these forms is precisely the social character of labour as a generative praxis - that it is human subjects that fundamentally produce the world, even if, as we shall see, it also produces them.

Two qualifications must be made here. The first is that this, of course, does not entail some free-floating vision of social construction that ignores the way human agency is conditioned by existing social relations of production and the demands of material reproduction. One does not simply 'construct society' for Marx but produces, and this theory of production as the necessary material reproduction of social life brings with it a whole set of contentions about what the relation is between different modes of practice within a social formation and the conflictual agency attributed to people by their position within it. The second is to say that Marx is under no illusions that communism does not entail its own set of relations of production, its own system of mediations, but argues that this 'process of production' should be mastered by humans, instead of the other way around [33]. We could go even further here and agree with Althusser that ideology, as the practical production of subjects selected to reproduce the given relations of production, will continue to exist in classless as it does in class society, even if this general (we could say socio-ontological) function is contingently overdetermined by the existence of class domination [34]. This would mean that the communist subject is just as much an 'effect' of its institutions and social relations, the given mode of objectivity, as the capitalist subject is - albeit with the crucial distinction that this mode of objectivity would operate through the democratic admission of subjective powers in the process of material reproduction, rather than their suppression or domination.

In any case, to say capital appears as an 'alien power' over and against the real subjects of the social process is not a romantic critique of mediation - on this Mau is absolutely correct - but a critique of

humans' loss of control over these mediations. Under capital, social relations are rigidified and hypostatised, made to appear outside of the sphere of human praxis by their forms of internal economic coercion. Here we can begin to re-open a distinction that Mau does not concern himself with - that between power and domination - in order to gesture towards the historical specificity of a communist social formation. If power is, to borrow from Foucault, fundamentally the 'conduct of conduct'; and if, at certain levels of social complexity, this conduction must occur through the relays of institutional mediations [35]; then what is distinctive to domination is the foreclosure of mass agency to transform and determine these mediations. Communism is thus not a return to an original wholeness but the realisation of a capacity immanent to human-social being, a capacity for collective self-mediation and the (re)constitution of social life which is disabled by the existence of capital and other forms of social domination. If this is a kind of humanism, and I am happy to call it so, it is an emphatically materialist and dialectical one.

- 1.** S. Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital* (Verso: 2023), 5. In-text page numbers refer to this text.
- 2.** K. Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin: 1990), 799
- 3.** G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Merlin Press: 1971), 84
- 4.** Ibid., 98
- 5.** A. Feenberg, *The Philosophy of Praxis* (Verso: 2014), 229
- 6.** G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, 84-85
- 7.** Ibid., 92
- 8.** Ibid., 102; quoting K. Marx, *Capital: Volume I*, 356
- 9.** Ibid., 98
- 10.** G. Stedman Jones, ‘The Marxism of the Early Lukacs: An Evaluation’, in *New Left Review* 1/70 (1971), 49
- 11.** Ibid., 49
- 12.** Ibid., 58
- 13.** J. Rees, ‘Introduction’ in G. Lukacs, *Tailism and the Dialectic: A Defence of History and Class Consciousness*, (Verso: 2000), 12, 14
- 14.** E. Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*, (Verso: 2017), 66
- 15.** Ibid., 67
- 16.** G. Lukacs, *Tailism and the Dialectic: A Defence of History and Class Consciousness*, 47
- 17.** K. Marx, *Capital: Volume I*, 255
- 18.** Ibid., 255
- 19.** S. Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Theory of the Economic Power of Capital* (PhD). (University of Southern Denmark: 2019), 46, 47
- 20.** G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Cambridge University Press: 2018), 12/§18

- 21.** S. Mau. *Mute Compulsion: A Theory of the Economic Power of Capital* (PhD), 47
- 22.** M. Postone. ‘The Subject and Social Theory: Marx and Lukacs on Hegel’ in *Karl Marx and Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. Andrew Chitty and Martin McIvor (Palgrave Macmillan: 2009), 216
- 23.** A. Malm, *The Progress of This Storm* (Verso: 2017) 70
- 24.** K. Marx, *Capital: Volume I*, 169
- 25.** See K. Marx, *The German Ideology*; quoted in S. Mau, *Mute Compulsion*, 94
- 26.** M. Postone, *Time, Labour, and Social Domination* (Cambridge University Press: 2003), 49; quoted in S. Mau, *Mute Compulsion*, 102
- 27.** L. Althusser, ‘Remark on the Category: “Process without a Subject or Goal(s)”, 95 in *Essays in Self Criticism* (New Left Books: 1976)
- 28.** K. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)
- 29.** Ibid.
- 30.** K. Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (173)
- 31.** Ibid., 172
- 32.** Ibid., 173
- 33.** Ibid., 175
- 34.** L. Althusser, ‘Theory, Theoretical Practice, and Theoretical Formation’, 28-9 in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of Scientists and Other Essays* (Verso: 1990)
- 35.** See F. Lordon, *Imperium* (Verso: 2015)

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