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*Early Political  
Writings*

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On the other hand, the religious etc. man can find in Hegel his final affirmation.

At this point we should consider the *positive* elements of Hegelian dialectic – within the sphere of estrangement.

(a) The act of superseding, as the objective movement of reabsorbing the alienation back into itself. – This is the insight, expressed within estrangement, of the *appropriation* of the objective being by the superseding of its estrangement; the estranged insight into man's actual objectification in the actual appropriating of his objective being by annihilating the estranged character of the objective world, by superseding it in its estranged existence; just as atheism, as the superseding of God, is the coming-to-be of theoretical humanism, and communism, as the superseding of private property, is the vindication of actual human life as man's own property and thus the coming-to-be of practical humanism; or, atheism and communism – the first through its superseding of religion, the second through its superseding of private property – constitute self-mediated humanism. Only through the superseding of this mediation – which is itself, however, a necessary pre-condition – does positively self-originating humanism, *positive* humanism, come about.

But atheism and communism are no flight, no abstraction from, no loss of the humanly created world, or of the essential powers of man that have issued into that objectivity, no impoverished return to an unnatural, undeveloped simplicity. Rather they are for man the first actual becoming, the true actualisation of his being, or of the becoming of his being as actual being.

Thus, in grasping the *positive* sense of self-referring negation – although in estranged form – Hegel grasps man's self-estrangement, alienation of being, loss of objectivity and actuality as his self-discovery, expression of his being, his objectification and actualisation. In short, in his own abstract way, Hegel grasps labour – as man's act of self-creation, his relation to himself as an estranged being and manifesting of his being as estranged – to be the emergence of *species-consciousness* and *species-life*.

(b) However, in Hegel – apart from, or rather as a consequence of the inversion already described – this act seems at first to be *merely* formal because abstract, because the human being himself has the status only of an abstract thinking being, self-consciousness; and

second, [*sic*] because the conception is *formal* and *abstract*, the superseding of the alienation becomes a confirming of it, or for Hegel this

movement of *self-generation* and *self-objectification* as *self-alienation* and *self-estrangement* is the *absolute* and hence final *expression of human life*, having itself as its aim, and at peace with itself having achieved the fullness of its essence. This movement in its abstract form as dialectic is considered to be *truly human life*, and because it is nevertheless an abstraction, an estrangement of human life, it is considered to be a *divine process*, but a *divine process* of man, a process undergone by man's own essence – abstract, pure, absolute, and separated from him.

Third: This process must have a bearer, a subject; but the subject only comes to be as a result; this result, the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness, is therefore *God*, *absolute spirit*, the *self-knowing* and *self-manifesting Idea*. Actual man and actual nature become mere predicates, symbols of this hidden, unreal man and this unreal nature. Subject and predicate have therefore an absolutely reversed relationship to one another – a *mystical subject-object*, or a subjectivity overreaching the object, the *absolute subject* as a *process*, as self-alienation and returning to itself out of its alienation, but at the same time reabsorbing this alienation into itself as *subject*, and as subject of this process: pure, *unceasing* circular movement in itself.

[This is but the mystified] *formal* and *abstract* conception of man's self-creation or self-objectification. [ . . . ]

Society – in the view of the political economists – is *civil (bourgeois) society*, in which every individual is a totality of needs and exists for the other, as the other exists for him, only insofar as each becomes a means for the other. For the political economist, as for the political mentality expressed in *The Rights of Man*, everything is reduced to man the individual, stripped of all specific features so as to be treated either as capitalist or labourer. – The *division of labour* is the political economic expression of the *social character* [*Gesellschaftlichkeit*] of labour within its estranged condition. Or, because labour is but an expression of human activity in its estranged condition, externalisation of life as alienation of life, so too is the *division of labour* just the *estranged, alienated* position of human activity as a *real species-being* or as *activity of man as species-activity*.

[Human relations as complementarity]  
(from *Comments on James Mill*)

The essence or nature of money is not, in the first place, that property is alienated [*entaussert*] in it, but rather that the *mediating activity* or

movement, the *human* social act through which the products of men mutually complement each other, is *estranged* and becomes the attribute of a *material thing*, money. Because man alienates this mediating activity itself, he is active only as a man lost to himself, dehumanised; the very *relation* or *connection* to things, the human operation with them, becomes the operation of an entity external to and above man. Because of this *alien mediator*, instead of man himself being the mediator for men, man perceives his will, his activity, his relationship to others as a power independent of both him and them. His slavery thus reaches its peak. That this *mediator* now becomes an *actual god* is clear, for the mediator is the *actual power* over what it mediates to me. Its cult becomes an end in itself. Objects separated from this mediator have lost their value. Thus, only insofar as they *represent it* do they have value, whereas originally it seemed that it had value only insofar as it represented *them*. This reversal of the original relationship is necessary. This mediator is therefore the *essence* or *nature* of private property which has become lost to it, the *estranged essence* or *nature* of private property, it is private property external to itself, *alienated* private property, as it is also the *alienated mediation* of human production with human production; the *alienated* species-activity of man. All of the qualities and characteristics of man in the production of this activity are thus transferred to the mediator. And so man as man, i.e. as separated from this mediator, becomes all the poorer as this mediator becomes *richer*.

Christ originally *represents* (1) men before God; (2) God for men; (3) man to man.

So, according to its concept, money originally represents: (1) private property for private property; (2) society for private property; (3) private property for society.

But Christ is the *alienated* God and alienated *man*. God retains value insofar as he represents Christ, and man retains value only insofar as he represents Christ. Likewise with money.

Why must private property advance to the *form of money* [*Geldwesen*]? Because man as a sociable [*geselliges*] being must go on to exchange and because exchange – under the presupposition of private property – must go on to *value*. That is, the mediating movement of man who is exchanging is not a social, not a human movement, not a *human* relationship; it is the *abstract relationship* of private property to private property, and this abstract relationship is *value*,

whose actual existence as value is precisely *money*. Because men who are exchanging are not relating to one another as men, the *thing* loses the significance of human, of personal property. The social relationship of private property is estranged from itself. The independent [*für sich seiende*] existence of this relationship, money, is therefore the alienation of the private property, the abstraction of its *specific*, personal nature.

[ ... ]

The *communal being* [*Gemeinwesen*] of man, or men's self-activating and self-manifesting *human* being, their mutual complementing aimed at species-life, at authentic human being – all of this political economy comprehends only in the form of *exchange* and *trade*. *Society*, says Destutt de Tracy, is a *series of mutual exchanges*. It is exactly this movement of mutual integration. *Society*, says Adam Smith, is a *commercial society*. Each of its members is a *merchant*.

Thus does political economy *fix* on the *estranged* form of sociable interaction and take it to be the form that is *essential*, *original* and adequate to the nature and destiny of man.

[ ... ]

Just as the mutual exchange of the products of *human activity* takes the appearance of *barter* or *exchange-trade*, of *haggling* [*Schacher*], so too the mutual complementing and exchange of activity appear as: *division of labour*, which makes man so far as possible into an abstract being, a machine tool, etc. and transforms him into a spiritual and physical monster.

[ ... ]

Assume that we had produced as men: each of us in his production would have doubly affirmed himself and the other. I would have (1) in my *production* objectified my *individuality* and its *particular characteristics* and thus also enjoyed during the activity an individual *expression of life*, and in contemplating the object had the individual joy of knowing my personality to be *objective*, *sensibly perceptible* and thus a power raised *beyond all doubt*. (2) In your enjoyment or your use of my product I would *immediately* have had the enjoyment as well as the consciousness of having, in my labour, satisfied a *human* need, and thus of having objectified the *human* essence, and so of having pro-

vided an object that meets the need of another *human* being; (3) I would have been for you the *mediator* between you and the species, and so known and felt by you as a complement of your own being, as a necessary part of yourself, and so would know myself to be confirmed in your thought and in your love; (4) I would in my individual life-expression have directly provided your life-expression, and thus in my individual activity, have directly *affirmed* and *objectified* my true being, my *human*, my *communal being*.

Our productions would be just so many mirrors reflecting our being.

This relationship would be reciprocal: what occurs on my side would occur on yours.

To summarise the points under our assumption:

My labour would be a *free manifestation of life*, hence *enjoyment of life*; whereas under private property it is *alienation of life*, for labour is *in order to live*, in order to provide a *means* of life. My labour is *not* life.

Secondly, in labour it is the *particular characteristic* of my individuality that is affirmed, because it is my *individual* life that is affirmed. Labour here, therefore, would be *true, active property*.

'Critical Marginal Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian"'

*Vorwärts!*, no. 63 (7 Aug. 1844)  
& no. 64 (10 Aug. 1844):

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(Special reasons lead me to state that the following article is the first that I have submitted to *Vorwärts!* K.M.)

Issue no. 60 of '*Vorwärts!*' contains an article entitled 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform' and signed '*A Prussian*'.

The alleged Prussian begins by reporting the contents of the royal Prussian Cabinet order concerning the *Silesian workers' revolt* and the opinion of the French journal *La Réforme* about the Prussian Cabinet order. According to the *Réforme*, the Cabinet order had its source in the '*terror* and the *religious sentiment*' of the King. It even finds in this document the *presentiment* of the great reforms that await bourgeois society. The 'Prussian' instructs the *Réforme* as follows:

'The King and German society has [*sic*] not yet arrived at the "presentiment of their reform" (Note the stylistic and grammatical nonsense: 'The King of Prussia and society *has* not yet arrived at the presentiment of their (to whom does this "their" refer?) reform'.), and not even the Silesian and Bohemian revolts have generated this sentiment. It is impossible to bring an *unpolitical* country like Germany to regard the *partial* distress of the industrial districts as an affair of general interest, let alone as an injury to the whole civilised world. For the Germans the event had the same character as any *local* flood or famine. Thus the King considers it to be a *failure of administration or of charity*. For this reason, and because a few troops dealt with the feeble weavers, the demolition of the factories and machines also inspired no "terror" in the King or in his authorities. Neither, in fact, did *religious sentiment* dictate the Cabinet order: it is a very sober expression of Christian statecraft and of a doctrine which