Work and totality:

A dialectical approach to the future of work narrative

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Abstract

Our current confluence of global crises points to the very real possibility of systems collapse. These crises will continue to accelerate under capitalism due to its inherent structural contradictions. Capitalism's profit motive creates its insatiable need for perpetual growth, a growth only achieved through the exploitation of man and nature. Radical systems change is therefore required and only a collective agent can affect this change. While the working class has so far failed to live up to its potential as that collective agent, the human drive to work—to contribute to society and to express itself creatively—will continue to play a primary role in bringing about the required change. Drawing from the philosophical tradition of German Idealism and its progenitors, this thesis positions the future of work in a way that breaks with the current alienated and reified experience of capitalist labour and replaces it with a vision of work that is autonomous, democratic, and part of a collective praxis. It draws upon the thinking of G.W.F. Hegel to show the mediating role that work plays in both subjective recognition and the progress of consciousness. It also draws upon insights from Friedrich Schiller, Herbert Marcuse and Karl Marx to show how work is key to our very being—a form of being that expresses its essence through work. This thesis contrasts labour under capitalism with a normative, post-capitalist vision of work. In doing so it utilizes the critical insights of Georg Lukács and his interlocutors Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Lukács' concept of reification and his bourgeois antimonies, as well as Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of the positivist worldview and instrumental reason are also brought to bear. Finally, Adorno's negative dialectics and his associated constellation approach are used in a combined methodological approach that examines key policy alternatives related to the future of work. Each policy option is judged upon its relative merits in terms of its ability to negate and replace the structural causes of our current state of crises. In doing so, this thesis presents a novel analytical tool for policy assessment.

Keywords: critical theory; negative dialectics; future of work; work and totality; praxis; post-capitalism

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The overarching concern of my thesis is to address the big issues of our day; the conjuncture of complex and interrelated crises each of which, when considered separately, represents a major challenge to the flourishing of humanity and non-human nature. When considered together, in all their mutually reinforcing destructiveness, it is not hyperbole to suggest that they pose an existential threat. The dangers posed by anthropogenic climate change are well known, but perhaps even more critical is the ecological breakdown of our planet, which is available for all to see: coral reefs dying throughout the world, ocean acidification and overfishing threatening the very existence of marine life, and biodiversity/biomass on a path to the sixth great extinction. The stability and health of our global support systems and natural cycles is also beginning to falter, and, in some cases, these systems are heading towards collapse. Inequality of income and wealth also threatens the stability of civilization and is undoubtedly one of the prime causes of the rise of authoritarianism, fundamentalist extremism, and the general malaise that define our times. Meanwhile, the persistence of global poverty in the face of a massive redistribution of wealth away from the lower and middle classes and towards the uppermost veneer of society not only threatens global political stability, but also threatens the survival of a great portion of humanity.

These issues are obviously too big and complex to address in a single thesis. Their global systemic nature demands systemic change at a global level. But the question arises: How do we effect that global change? If the interests of the holders of the world's wealth and political power are not served by this systemic (and necessarily radical) change—and, of course, they are not—then what group, or category of subjects, might we turn to effect this change? It has become increasingly difficult to identify, or even to imagine, who that revolutionary agent might be. Capitalism renders each of us as atomized and politically neutralized beings, and that which remains of our political being is marginalized in favour of our identity as consumers. This alienates us from what Marx called our "species being": our lives as social beings, co-constructed by our fellow humans and by our built-up institutional knowledge and culture (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844). It also alienates us from non-human nature.

We see nature in terms of its instrumental value, something to be conquered, plundered and exploited, and not as part of our very constitution necessary for survival.

This is the entry point for my thesis. While addressing these big issues of our time is my overarching concern, my research questions focus on who or what that agent of change might be and what might be required to awaken the consciousness of that change agent and ignite its members to collective action. No amount of deliberating and debating and no amount of tweaking of the current system will even begin to solve these problems. It is action, organized, willful, and persistent action that will affect the necessary change. This action needs a locus, a collective actor, and I wish to identify the group or groups having the greatest potential for building a powerful, organized and global force for revolutionary change. I will examine the potential of a number of collective categories, but my focus will be centred around the agency of the working class. This stands as an assumption in my thesis; however, I will back up the reasons why I believe it to be a justified assumption as the thesis progresses.

To be clear, the plight of the individual worker is also my concern. Indeed, as my thesis progresses the concerns of the individual will gain in importance as I transition to a normative vision of work: work as the source of our being, an unalienated aesthetic form of play, or in Immanuel Kant's words, a "purposiveness without a purpose"[1] (Kant and Walker, CoJ 51, 52, 57, 130) and, when I address work in its role in praxis[2], a "purposiveness with purpose"[3]. However, in our current state of existential crises, it is the political and economic agency of the working class that must bear the burden of the type and magnitude of agency necessary for the systemic changes mentioned above. On the surface, this may sound familiar and perhaps even antiquated to some, steeped as it is in the centrality of labour or what the Frankfurt School

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[1] " . . . 'subjective' purpose oriented to the play of our faculties independent of any theoretical cognitive interest." (Kant and Walker, CoJ xvii)

[2] I will grant this concept a more detailed explication throughout this thesis; however, as an introduction, I refer to the reader to Marx's concept of material social practice (i.e.,praxis). This is a form of activity that aims to put theory into practice with the aim of changing the totality of society. In his third, eighth and eleventh thesis in his *Thesis on Feuerbach*, Marx refers to this concept of praxis, with the eleventh summarizing the concept as follows: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it." (Marx, Theses on Feuerbach 144-145).

[3] "Objective purposiveness [purposiveness with purpose] can only be cognized by means of a reference of the manifold to a determinate end, and hence only through a concept." (Kant and Walker, CoJ 57)

philosopher Jurgen Habermas calls the dominance of the 'paradigm of production' (Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 78-80) in Marxist thought, but is missing from Marx's actual thought, according to Ingo Elbe (Elbe). Even for some progressive scholars and activists, the working class no longer represents the locus of change. Some may point to a vague 'multitude' of revolutionary subjects immanent to the imperial, global project of *Empire* who, despite its mobility and precarity, finally coalesces and integrates with other subject categories to form a resistance to capital (Hardt and Negri). Other scholars point to no particular agent of change, but rather to an almost disembodied (and thus mystical in its implications) working-through of the inherent contradictions of capitalism itself. This diverse group of 'accelerationists' and 'crises theorists' point toward such things as the drive towards full automation of the productive process (Srnicek and Williams), the increasing frequency and magnitude of financial crises due to de-regulation, the falling rate of profit, monopolization, etc. as each having the potential to bring about an inevitable and automatic collapse of capitalism by means of an even freer form of hyper, or accelerated, capitalism.

One must view such agent-less change with some scepticism given capitalism's proven power of transmutation and co-optation. After all, capital goes where and when it needs to go in order to reproduce and grow. It will morph into any shape required, and it will capture and integrate (or neutralize) any nascent movement that it sees as a threat. Capital is not ideologically bound to anything other than its reproduction and expansion. Even profits maintain a back seat next to these prerogatives. The inherent passiveness of the accelerationist and crisis theory schools is also morally troubling in its turn away from praxis and social struggle. Even more troubling than this passiveness of left Accelerationists and crisis theorists is the active, sometimes violent, embrace of these concepts by the far right in their efforts to legitimize a nihilistic politics of social breakdown, disorder and race war.

Still others view change as happening through the demos itself. On the one hand, there are calls for a deliberative, democratic process of consensus-building through rational, intersubjective communication, which works as a process of delineated, individual subjectivity, and specifically not as an integrated, all-inclusive agent, or meta-subject (Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere). On the other hand, some see political change as the outcome of a more agonistic, conflictual and radical democracy where differences persist but are

negotiated through the concept of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe). All of these theories are of revolutionary potential, and thus worthy of consideration, and they may indeed prove instrumental in the systemic change that is called for. However, what each of these alternatives fails to adequately provide is an identification of the specific agent of change (i.e., the 'revolutionary subject') along with the historical and theoretical foundation for its existence and agency.

These foundations are necessary if we wish to analyze the interests of this class as well as the prognosis of its power status and efficacy. Vague references to the immaterial labour worker or the multitude provide none of these foundational supports. Nor do any of the idealized versions of the demos—our current authoritarian moment in history is largely the result of a weakened and dysfunctional democratic process. Citizens around the world are expressing their frustration with the fallout of the neoliberal agenda. The progressive project of extending the benefits of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century bourgeois revolutions to all citizens is unravelling and a retrenchment of elitist power and wealth has once again taken hold (Piketty and Goldhammer). Much of this populist frustration has migrated over to authoritarian, and even fascistic, political expression.

I have purposely limited the scope of my research by making the very broad assumption that reforms of the current system are inadequate. This claim is, of course, subject to challenge, but I have left the reform question out of my thesis for two important reasons. First, reforms of the current system have not, and likely will not, do anything of lasting consequence to address the structural causes of our current problems—causes that are inherent to the capitalist system itself. Attempts in the past, such as Keynesian monetary theory after Bretton Woods and Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal', were successful in bringing about a certain measure of material improvements to the world economy. However, these improvements were temporary, and were largely dismantled with the advent of neoliberalism (a term that I will define in subsequent chapters). In the mid-1970's capital struck back in what has now become an enormously successful effort to regain its lost ground through a cooptation of the state. This resulted in de-regulation, tax reforms favouring the wealthy, privatization, and the expansion of both the military and the state surveillance apparatus (D. Harvey, Seventeen Contradictions 49, 93-94, 96, 220).

Second, reforms of the current system often offer little more than window dressing. By this I mean that the changes they effect are often only seen at the margins. Very little of substance is retained in terms of structural change. For example, proposed alternatives to our current GDP measure of national accounts, such as Gross National Happiness (GNH), may be well-intentioned; however, they suffer at present from a lack of accountability and rigorous auditing standards. While the financial/economic component has a long-standing and rigorous set of audit guidelines, the environmental and social elements do not. Corporate sustainability reporting has been criticized on similar grounds (Wilson) (Fleming and Jones). Financial reporting is deemed reliable, but environmental and social reporting is often used as another form of marketing, with reported projects or initiatives chosen for their 'sex appeal' rather than for an honest appraisable of the corporation's overall impact on, or positive contribution toward, these broad social concerns. Because of this, corporate sustainability reporting, or stakeholder capitalism as it is sometimes called, can actually be counterproductive as very real problems are papered over with well-curated stories in annual reports and advertising.

Third, I steer clear of policy options that might also double as financing options related to more fundamental policy options. By this I mean that I do not consider such policy options as a one-time confiscatory income tax on the wealthy, such as that put forward by Thomas Piketty in his book *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* (Piketty and Goldhammer) or an expansion of Pigouvian taxes. These tax policies might indeed carry with them effective and lasting social benefits and even present a normative stance that positively affects social consciousness. However, I wish to concentrate here on policy options that have the potential to bring about system change.

Finally, just as important as identifying the agent of change is the task of identifying the means by which the consciousness of that collective agent might expand and be redirected. Action moves in the direction of our intentionality; toward the object with which we pursue. If our consciousness is limited by the 'lifeworld' as now presented under neoliberal capitalism, we cannot expect action to be directed towards an emancipatory object—one that requires imagination to behold. It will instead be directed toward the very same objects that capital is directed.

My choice of policy options is open to challenges relating to a lack of diversity and comprehensiveness. Therefore, a brief defence of my choice is necessary. Basic income schemes, reduced working hours, and job guarantees are policy options that are currently in the mainstream in terms of possible solutions to our current crises of unemployment and underemployment. They are also increasingly demanded by the current generation of workers now entering the workforce as they demand greater autonomy and more free time. These issues are "in the air" and are debated vigorously in both academic and public venues. Admittedly, the option of worker co-operatives remains a much less discussed policy option. However, it continues to have both historical and contemporary relevance, and the public's awareness of it is growing. My primary concern in this thesis is my methodology and so, if it is found effective and illuminating for future researchers, other policy options may be considered using this methodology.

Methodology

In terms of my research methodology, I will be performing a textual analysis of key texts from within the Continental Philosophy tradition. I will draw upon the dialectical foundations of Marxist thought from Plato through to Hegel, Marx himself, George Lukács, and the early Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School, particularly Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. Supplementing these, I will draw upon the philosophical phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger through the interpretive lens of Herbert Marcuse and his 'Heideggarian Marxism' (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism). While phenomenology does not necessarily share the dialectical approach, what it does have in common with Critical Theory is a critique of positivism in the social sciences—a topic that will be fully articulated in subsequent chapters. The juxtaposition of these two seemingly at-odds approaches is meant to provide a dual, but yet complementary subject/object approach. The intention of this dual critical approach is to examine the question of working-class consciousness from the vantage points of individual and collective agency as well as the systemic determinants of consciousness. I will compare and contrast the above dual critical approach with the positivist worldview of contemporary social science (particularly economics). This comparison is of vital importance because the positivist approach represents the underpinnings of our lived reality today.

I have chosen the abovementioned figures from the tradition of German Ideology and Western Marxism for a very specific reason. If one assumes, as I do, that system change cannot be actuated by means of the epistemological and ontological worldviews, techniques, and tools of those very same systems needing radical change, then one must believe that a radical system of thought must be brought to the table. And this is true even if that radical system of thought is sought from the past. The first-generation Frankfurt School philosophers—Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse—as well as their intellectual progenitor Georg Lukács, present such a radical system of thought. They were deeply concerned with the alienating aspects of modernity, particularly capitalist modernity. As part of that concern, they analyzed the roots of alienation and showed how it is built into our social structures and institutions. Even more importantly, they outlined how these deep structural roots of alienation come to reside within our unconscious minds.

The early Frankfurt School's mix of Marxism, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Weberian social theory provides a formidable intellectual critique not only of capitalism, but also of the alienation within the Stalinist Soviet Union and other state communistic political ideologies. In my view, they successfully theorized an important approach to what I believe is the 'ur-problem' of humanity, namely the seemingly impossible task of reconciling individualism versus collectivity, of locating the source of subjectivity, and of defining the role that the object plays in the formation of subjectivity. Too much of an emphasis on the individual leaves you with a society incapable of addressing common pool problems: the rights of minorities; the rights of non-human nature; the problem of negative environmental externalities; the need for a species-level approach to the big problems of our day. Too much of an emphasis on the collective leaves society susceptible to authoritarianism and despotic rule. Too much of an emphasis on collectivism also means a nullification of the very source of novelty and creativity—the individual. In order to better understand the two critical sources (Frankfurt School and Lukács) for my objective analysis, I also present an extended discussion of their intellectual foundations in my treatment of their Idealist and Marxist roots through a discussion of Fichte, Hegel, Schiller, and Marx himself. I also use these sources for my analysis at the level of the subject.

Finally, I believe my choice of early Frankfurt School philosophers and Lukács is justified because of their dialectical approach. If one agrees with the statement that history is

replete with examples of massive, systemic change, and furthermore that history informs both the present and the future but does not limit the possibilities for future change, we can agree that change is not only possible but necessary. Therefore, only a philosophical outlook whose very epistemological foundations are built upon an *a priori* of change is appropriate. Systems of thought that assume fixity and seek simply to uncover a static truth are not appropriate. It is also true, of course, that positivist social science leaves room for evolutionary progress. However, as I will outline in this first chapter, these changes are self-limiting within capitalism. They are self-limiting due to the systemic necessity of capital to reproduce and grow. Profit-making requires unsustainable exponential growth in the economy, which is only accomplished through the commodification of man and nature. Capitalist profit-making also has a long and continuing history of exploitation; a history unlikely to change due to the structural necessity of value extraction from both man and nature.

I will restrict my methodology to textual analysis, philosophical critique, and when engaging with the normative dimension, speculative philosophy. This is not a sociological investigation. I have not engaged in qualitative or quantitative research methods. It is also important to state up front that this is an interdisciplinary research program and not a work of pure economics, philosophy or political science. It is, however, designed to draw upon all three of these disciplines in an attempt to identify points of commonality. It is also designed to view my research problems from different angles and different disciplinary standpoints. This approach is in keeping with the broad research goals of the phenomenological tradition and its notion of 'bracketing'[4].

In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of my research program, I will adhere to a style of writing that is appropriate to my target audience, namely not only academics from within the three disciplines that I draw upon, but also educated laypersons who may have an interest in

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[4] From the Oxford Companion to Philosophy (Honderich 104): "An essential part of Husserl's so-called phenomenological reduction. According to Husserl, and some of his followers, we can describe the objects of our minds *as phenomena* only after we have bracketed their existence. By bracketing the objective world, one *suspends* judgement about the existence of things around them . . .". Therefore, loosely interpreted, bracketing is a method of perceiving objects based upon the phenomenon that they project. It attempts to free our cognition of the pre-existing categories, ideologies, assumptions and biases that we often unconsciously apply to the interpretation of our perceived phenomenon.

this thesis for reasons of policy development, and/or academic study from unrelated disciplines at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Therefore, I make every attempt here to present arguments in a manner that is clear and straightforward. I will not assume that any of the technical terms or *terms of art* that I refer to are understood by all readers. Therefore, I will either draw the reader's attention to the fact that the new term will be fully explained in due course, or I will provide a brief explanation in a footnote.

Before I proceed to my research questions, a brief introduction to the dialectical method is in order since it will be mentioned throughout this thesis and will form the foundation of my methodology. As I proceed, I will expand on this definition as necessary and as warranted for the subject under discussion. The dialectic was a form of philosophical conversation originating with Socrates. It was an interrogatory form of dialogue that sought to expose the contradictions inherent to a stated conceptual position. Positions were put forward on a specific topic, which were then analyzed for their inherent contradictions and weaknesses. The aim was to elicit a resolution to the contradictions and gain a new understanding of the problem. The dialectic I use in my thesis is that based on the Hegelian tradition (i.e. from the German Idealist philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel) whose distinct form of dialectic contained the following three steps: (1) one or more categories are taken as fixed and each are distinct from the others; this is the stage of understanding; (2) on reflection, contradictions come to light in the comparison of the categories; this is the dialectical stage proper; and (3) the resolution of step two results in a new, higher category which embraces, but yet cancels and supersedes, the previous categories (Inwood 81-2). The Hegelian dialectic extends far beyond discussion and is meant to be applied to all of reality. It is based upon a view of reality, and of Being, that is in a constant state of flux– Being as Becoming. It is therefore the antithesis of the static worldview of the positivist.

Research Questions

My research questions are broad in scope, which poses dangers of both overreach and insufficient depth. However, this is a danger inherent in all interdisciplinary research. It is my sincere hope that what I present here is substantive and goes beyond the dilettantism that some interdisciplinary research has been accused of. I will let the reader judge me on that count.

What follows are the questions that I hope to answer:

Assuming that current conjuncture that ecological and social crises require radical system change:

1. What is the role of work in fostering the necessary changes in consciousness and subjectivity?
2. Does the working class still hold the greatest potential as the collective agent of change?
3. What progressive politically and economically feasible policy choices have the greatest potential in achieving a change in consciousness of the working class that would activate collective action toward system change?

Structure

My thesis is structured as follows. In this introductory chapter, I will examine three areas that affect the current state of work as well as its near-term future: precarity, automation and income inequality. These issues will be examined from the standpoint of assessing the suitability of the working class's ability to act as agent of change when measured by both its political and economic power.

In chapters two and three I will define labour and work so as to be clear on foundations. Chapter two will provide my philosophical foundations from the standpoint of the subject—individual and collective—and chapter three will do the same from the perspective of the object, or the societal, vantage point.

Chapter two will begin with an accounting of the views of labour from the standpoint of mainstream economics. Here I will discuss capitalism's view of labour as an antagonistic relationship with respect to both the internal conflict within the worker himself, and his balancing of the need for work versus the desire for leisure, as well as the capital versus labour class struggle. This will be sourced both from the standpoint of economic orthodoxy as well as Karl Marx's immanent critique of capitalism's views of labour. I will do so, first, by describing Hegel's dialectical but idealist view of consciousness formation with respect to work and Marx's later materialist 'correction' to Hegel's idealism. In both views, the mediating role of work is

central not only to the development of consciousness, but also to our subject formation, our socialization and then to our ability to cooperate in forming the objects of civilization.

Chapter three will provide an analysis of our current state first with the dialectical tools of critical theory. In this section, I will begin with a reading of Georg Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* to help uncover the continued relevance of his notion of reification; a concept describing the objectifying nature of capitalism's commodity form. Another key revelation from this text is detailed description of the antimonies of bourgeois thought. These antimonies[5] point not only to the impossibility of fulfilling the dreams of the Enlightenment within capitalism but also provide an analytical base upon which to measure the likely effectiveness of any proposed solutions to our crises. I will follow with a reading of Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* to uncover the administered world of instrumental reason in which we find ourselves in late capitalism, and now, even more acutely, under neoliberal capitalism. I will also discuss their views on culture and its role in the reproduction of capitalism through its palliative and noncritical form and its domination of inner and outer nature.

In chapter four I will examine the key policy alternatives related to work to assess their potential for fostering a renewed working class; one that not only gains in strength and numbers but also in self-consciousness. My guidepost in this investigation will be the philosophical foundations set out in chapters two and three. These foundations will then be used to construct a constellation of categories which represents those elements of modernity that negate the flourishing of life. I will then apply the principles of Adorno's negative dialectics in my analysis of these policy options. Adorno's approach begins with the negative. From that admittedly paradoxical foundation it then seeks to find ways of negating the negative. In other words, it avoids the temptation to provide a positive and fully-formed solution. To be sure, this does not present itself as a revolutionary strategy. However, radical change and praxis cannot be

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5 According to Immanuel Kant, the definition of an antimony is as follows: "The logical paralogism [i.e.,antimony] consists in the falsity of an inference of reason in respect of its form, be the content what it may…[i]n this manner the fallacy is grounded in the nature of human reason, and is the parent of an unavoidable, though not insoluble, illusion." (Kant and Politis 259). Therefore, an antimony is a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles aiming to explain the same objective phenomenon, but whose source of contradiction is not nature itself, but the failings of human reason.

successfully triggered, much less accomplished, without a sufficiently conscious theoretical foundation. The first element of change that must be addressed is the exponential growth of consciousness; of the need for, and the desire to work on, radical societal change. The policies I examine in chapter four are not, in and of themselves, radical. They will be examined instead for their ability to foster this exponential growth of consciousness.

Current Status of Work and the Working Class

Our first step in re-appraising the working class's future potential as a collective agent of change is to present an overview of the current status of the work environment itself and how the worker is situated within this environment. We are in the midst of a major shift in the structure of work, particularly the power dynamics of the worker in relation to the employer and to the economy as a whole. The relatively stable employment relationship between large firms and employees that existed after the Second World War is now being dismantled by de-unionization, automation and a return to external market relationships between capital and labour. The post-war period saw an internalization process related to labour, partially due to transaction cost savings and partially due to institutional factors (labour laws and unions) driven by social and political struggles. This internalization fostered an environment where individuals could 'rise through the ranks' within the firm. A deeper commitment to long-term stable employment was thus encouraged on both sides of the employer/employee relationship (Ruyter and Brown 19-20). With de-unionization, the savings on transactional costs were no longer sufficient to offset the savings obtained in returning to the external labour market.

Precarious Labour

One of the fallouts of this return to the external market for labour is an increase in the precarious nature of employment. Zero-hour contracts (i.e., the gig economy), chronic unemployment and underemployment, as well as overemployment (i.e., unpaid overtime) are all on the rise. Gig economy workers and other forms of precarious workers (the precariat) are increasing in numbers globally and threaten the stability of remaining long-term employment

contract work.[6] They do so, not so much because of their numbers (currently, still a relatively minor portion of the labour force), but more importantly because of the downward pressure their existence puts on wages, labour regulation, etc. applicable to all workers (Ruyter and Brown 50). Meanwhile, those workers who do remain in stable, full-time employment increasingly face the challenges of unpaid overtime, overwork and stress, mental health issues and substance abuse.

Guy Standing, a labour economist and co-founder of Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), has studied the emergent precariat class for several years and has published extensively on the subject. Standing sees the precariat as a rapidly growing class-in-the-making. Standing's view of contemporary class structure takes a cue from Marx but expands it to include a more detailed breakdown of the working class. Also, his class divisions focus not on the ownership of the means of production, and each class's relationship to this ownership, but rather, on wealth status and the ability to earn income and build wealth. On the surface, this scheme appears somewhat arbitrary; however, given the importance of the non-productive financial sector of today's capitalism, and its dominance as the source of new wealth creation, it has explanatory power. The elite in this scheme are those often colloquially referred to today as the 1%, or, more accurately, the 0.1%. These are the holders of global wealth and power, the billionaire and multi-millionaire class. Next is the salariat. This is a class of well-paid, permanently employed professionals and management employees who are part of the dwindling group of workers who still retain comfortable pension plans, medical benefits and ample paid vacation. Below the salariat are the proficians. This group, like the salariat, are high-income professionals or management class employees, however, they are distinguished from the salariat by their lack of long-term contracts and/or employment benefits. This group is small but growing. Below the proficians is the core working class. This is the remnant of the old working class whose jobs were relatively secure and stable and whose wages were sufficient to raise a family on a single income. The wages of the core working class of today have not kept up with inflation and are

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[6] In Britain: Between 1980 and 2004, workers on fixed-term contracts increased from 19% to 30%, firms using using temporary workers engaged through labour agencies rose from 20% to 27%, and the proportion of the workforce whose main job was self-employed went from 8% to 13% (C. F. Wright 282).

In South Korea: Proportion of precarious workers in total working population increased from 27.4% in 2002 to 37.0% in 2004. The absolute number of precarious workers increased from 3.8 million in 2002 to 6 million in 2011 (Kwang-Yeong 336).

stagnating relative to increases in GDP and productivity.[7] This class of workers is shrinking, and their power and influence has dwindled due to their reduced numbers and loss of collective power from de-unionization. The only mobility that most of the workers of the core working class have now is a downward mobility to the next class, the precariat. This class is the fastest growing and is of global reach. I will discuss this group in more detail below due to its de-stabilizing influence. Below the precariat are the unemployed, and below them is the lumpenprecariat: dropouts from the system who have succumbed to the pressures and stress and suffer from mental illness, drug addiction, listlessness and a general sense of hopelessness (Standing 588-600).

According to Standing, the growing precariat class presents us not only with structural challenges in terms of stable employment, far worse, its growth presents us with long-lasting, perhaps generational, problems with subject formation. Standing does not discount the precariat's ability to choose; some of the precariat class choose to be there for reasons of perceived improvements in freedom and work flexibility, for example. However, he summarizes the dangers inherent in the dynamics of this class's identity and lived reality as follows:

> Precarians do not have a means of drawing on and sustaining a social memory—a sense of belonging to a self-sustaining community grounded in a profession or craft. They also do not have a 'shadow of the future' hovering over their deliberations and dealings with others, who may be here today and gone tomorrow, in a series of passing relationships. The former situation deprives them of a secure anchor (or identity); the latter induces a morality of opportunism, which is ultimately amoral. (Standing 590)

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[7] In the case of the United States, economist William K. Tabb says the following: "For a quarter of a century, from 1980 to 2004, while U.S. gross domestic product per person rose by almost two-thirds, the wages of the average worker fell after adjusting for inflation. Over the three decades from 1972 to 2001, the wages and salaries of even those Americans at the 90th percentile (those doing better than 90 percent of their fellow citizens) experienced income gains of only 1 percent a year on average. Those at the 99.9th percentile saw their income rise by 181 percent over these years (to an income averaging almost $1.7 million). Those at the 99.99th percentile had income growth of 497 percent" (Tabb 20).

In the case of the EU, Thomas I. Palley says the following: "From 1960 to 1981 the wage share [of GDP] was roughly constant, but after 1981 it began a precipitous decline…between 1981 to 2010 the wage share declined 7.0 points of gross domestic product (GDP) in the EU-15; 9.4 points in France; 7.5 points in Germany; 10.2 points in Italy; and 11.9 points in Spain" (Palley 34-35).

While the moralistic tone here is somewhat off-putting, the core concept is, I think, on the mark. The contingent, detached and opportunist nature of precariat work, rather than opening up freedoms and forms of self-determination, serves only to further the atomization of the individual. The individual's real dependence on society and society's institutions is stripped away from consciousness and replaced with an apotheosized elevation of the mythic 'entrepreneur'; a cynical cloak by capital to hide the actuality of the gig economy worker and his or her truly precarious position.

This offer by capital of freedom through entrepreneurship is exposed for all its pretence in Ken Loach's 2019 film *Sorry We Missed You* (Loach). The story is set in the present-day Newcastle, England and focuses on the day-to-day struggles of a young working-class couple and their two children. The movie begins with Ricky, the husband who has struggled with chronic unemployment, being interviewed by the manager of a parcel delivery service company. Not long into the interview, Ricky realizes that he is not actually being offered a job, but rather a franchise in the company. Furthermore, he is told that the company does not supply vehicles; franchisees are required to either purchase their own vehicle or lease one from the company. Ricky is informed that benefits are not paid, nor are vacations granted. As the film progresses, we see Ricky struggling to make a go of it. Long days driving tired, and sometimes sick, always under the gun to get enough deliveries done in the day. A fellow 'franchisee' employee advises him to bring along a plastic Coke bottle so that he can relieve himself without having to stop. Ricky's wife Abbie is a home-care nurse. We see her throughout the film going from home to home using transit (she had to sell her car so that Ricky could put a down payment on his delivery van) and enduring all types of indignities in her work. She does all this while strategically making use of every spare moment of time to do chores, set up appointments, return home to make lunch for her children, and generally helping to keep the family together. The pressure of high stress, barely-above-minimum-wage work, and the toll that takes on their children and their marriage is portrayed with great sensitivity by the director. At the end of one of the day, while lying in bed together, Ricky and Abbie have the following exchange:

> Ricky (husband): "You know I never thought it would be this difficult Abbie. It just seems to me that everything is outa wack. You know what I mean?"

> Abbie (wife): "Ya. I have horrible dreams you know. I'm like sinkin' in quicksand and the kids are try'na pull us out with a branch, but it just seems like the more we work, and the more hours we do, we just sink further and further into this big hole. I have it all the time." (Loach)

Loach pulls no punches in his blunt assessment of contemporary working lives, yet he presents this in the context of an even-handed and fair appraisal of the personal motivations behind each character's actions. He lays the blame for these working life tragedies at the feet of the capitalist system itself and not on the individual actors within that system. In fact, it is in the scenes where Ricky's de facto supervisor explains his tough stance on his employees' performance expectations, hours of work and his policy of no time off—indeed, of his general lack of empathy—as the direct result of the pressures that he too faces at the hands of the system. One is left believing at the end of the film that Ricky and Abbie's situation will not improve and that their children were likely to follow in their parents' footsteps.

What stood out for me in this film was the exposé of the gig economy's new form of risk offloading and cost transfer. The risks and responsibilities of employing people, and of owning and maintaining assets, is offloaded to the so-called entrepreneur. Yet this is accomplished by the company without losing control over their de-facto employees. The entrepreneur-employee has only the one customer, namely the company employing them. Furthermore, the entrepreneur-employee's day is completely directed by the company's supervisor. The surplus value created by the employee is thus increased while the risks for the employer have decreased. It is not too harsh to declare this a cynical move on the part of capital. The gig economy's enhanced level of exploitation is cloaked in a manipulative appeal to the employee's desire for freedom and autonomy—those very same values that I argue in this thesis are essential to a new attitude towards work.

The ride-sharing company Uber is a case in point. The average Uber driver barely makes subsistence wages, particularly after expenses are deducted (Mishel). Uber's contractual relationship with their drivers is predominately in the form of on-demand contracts and is not an employer/employee relationship. Uber's stated business model is that they are simply providing drivers with their technology platform for which independent contract drivers may use to become 'entrepreneurs.' The rhetoric of "entrepreneurship", "flexibility", "freedom", "partnership" is used by Uber to foster a sense of autarky and power symmetry in their drivers. The reality of the

Uber driver experience, however, is quite different from this portrayal. In fact, numerous class action lawsuits have been filed over the past few years by drivers. Drivers are demanding employee status, paid vacations, guaranteed minimum wage, and regulators are demanding proper insurance, licensing and training for Uber drivers (Rosenblat and Stark).

Similar stories exist for other companies operating within the so-called 'sharing economy'. Airbnb, for example, operates under a platform business model similar to Uber. The common theme in these projects is their marketed attempt to "disrupt" the industries they enter in order to fill an untapped segment of the market (the old "move fast and break things" motto of Facebook). In reality, they rely on their detached platform technology to separate their businesses from the responsibilities toward regulators and the community at large, as well as to those whom, it is currently legally being argued (American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine e65), are their employees. This business model amounts to little more than a sophisticated maneuver to bypass labour laws, licensing bylaws and fees, minimum wage laws, etc.

Standing sees the precariat as being made up of a range of participants whose common attribute is their relative disconnectedness from society and, out of necessity, their opportunistic approach to labour. The youth of society are perhaps the largest contingent of this class. They face employment prospects that are dwindling in both number and quality. To prepare themselves for the job market many are incurring large student loan debt that burdens them for decades. Given the high cost of education, as well as the risks inherent in any commitment to a lengthy education program, many of which are increasingly susceptible to the quickly changing demand/supply profiles of occupations in the market, many youth are choosing to bypass higher education altogether (Dhakal, Connell and Burgess).

Older labourers are also increasingly part of the precariat class. Shrinking government and company pensions, 'ageism' in the workplace, and pressure from well-educated youth entering the workforce willing to work for lower wages, and who have higher energy levels, an up-to-date skill set, and a greater willingness to work long hours are all putting pressure on older workers. All of this leads to an increase in the number of older workers turning to precarious and often minimum wage work to survive. Due to eroding benefits the disabled are also now a

significant component of the precariat. Similarly, welfare recipients are entrants to the class, another symptom of the neoliberal agenda of dismantling social support systems in the name of economic efficiency. The criminalized are also a sizeable portion of the precariat. This is particularly acute to the United States where incarceration rates exceed that of the rest of the world (Kugler and et al.). Criminal records often leave these individuals with less than full citizenship rights. Their record becomes a permanent millstone making it almost impossible to find stable, quality work. Lastly, migrants form the largest growing sector of the precariat class. The migrant workers are those who are mobile by necessity in chasing labour opportunities wherever they may appear globally. China, India, Bangladesh, and other emerging economies are becoming exporters of workers who are shipped to other countries to work on short-term projects. The recipient nations of these migrant workers see them as an opportunity to bypass their own jurisdictional labour laws and as an opportunity to place downward pressure on labour rates for their own citizens. Migrant domestic, agricultural and construction workers face exploitation and abuses in addition to conditions considered 'forced labour' and are provided inadequate protection in law (Rodriguez 161) (Lewis and et al.). In fact, many nations of the global north maintain a tiered system of 'stratified rights' for immigrants and migrant workers (Morris 103-121); a system that privileges some migrants over others depending on the nation from which they originate, with nations of the global north being privileged (Lewis and et al. 591).

Standing views the precariat as the most important of his class hierarchy because of its dialectical nature. In other words, the precariat is a class that has contained within itself both a destructive and an emancipatory potential. Both of these possibilities reside in the precariat class primarily because of the subject formation aspect of their experiences. If stable, long-term employment is no longer a given, and if both physical and vocational mobility is required for reasons of self-preservation, then consciousness focuses on the here and now only, and on an inward turn. Personal narratives of the past and present, and dreams for the future fade as the necessities of daily survival move to the forefront. Social relations are attenuated. Trust in government is lost as social support structures fail while surveillance is heightened. Trust in our fellow human beings is also eroded as right-wing governments increasingly construct false narratives of blame upon the 'other'. These narratives feed upon inherent feelings of disgust as already vulnerable citizens (i.e., members of the precariat) turn to an authoritarian figure for

protection from the 'other' and as a source of identity (Gandesha). This fear, once established, becomes a justification for an authoritarian turn in governance as well as increases in military and surveillance spending at the expense of social investment. This produces a positive (i.e., mutually reinforcing) feedback loop of fear, militarization, surveillance and social disintegration. Our current trend toward proto-fascism in global politics is a symptom of this social disintegration. The inward turn of fear brings out the worst of humanity as we become tribal, nationalistic and xenophobic (Standing 599-600). Contained within this consciousness, however, is the dialectical potential of fear, anger and frustration, whose outlet is not for-ordained toward fascism. Progressive struggle too is an always-existing potential. Fear can trigger a need to draw upon the strength of the 'other'. It can feed off the equally human need for sociality thereby supporting a movement toward solidarity and a collective means of addressing the sources of fear—real or perceived.

It is important to qualify Standing's class categories, specifically their position as categories, because they are contentious. The sociologist Eric Olin Wright has challenged Standing for constructing class categories that are insufficiently theorized and that, as a consequence, lead to false conclusions regarding the subjectivity status of the precariat. In other words, he asks whether the precariat is a class in the sense that its material interests are significantly different from the working class. As Wright says class categories are defined by knowing which side of the fence you are on. Are the material interests of the precariat really qualitatively different from those of the working class? As Wright shows, using Standing's own *Precariat Charter* (his list of demands for improving the conditions of the precariat) none of his proposed twenty-nine articles are in disagreement with the material interests of the broad working class. The precariat, and indeed all of Standing's class categories, are useful in describing specific *conditions* of each class or subclass, but they do not have the ontological status of a stable *category*. This is an important point. If the precariat is a component of the working class, but one having less stability than others within that class, its common material interests in relation to the working class is an enlargement of its horizon of solidarity and political/economic power. Wright agrees that there is rhetorical power in positioning the precariat as a distinct class for reasons of legitimization and action (E. O. Wright, 2016). However, what Wright's response to Standing helps make clear is that the disparate responses to exploitation on the part of the global precariat are ad hoc and fragile. State-supported corporate

interests structure their precarity through lax labour laws, anti-unionization measures and surveillance (Pye 946-48), (Clawson and Clawson). Therefore, the precariat did not emerge organically out of the mystical workings of the market. It exists as the result of specific political strategies on the part of neoliberal political leaders working in concert with corporate interests and is thus a creature of their making—a creature intended to fragment and atomize the working class.

In an analysis of the precariat from a historical perspective, authors Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter make a convincing case that labour precarity is the norm in capitalism and is therefore not a new phenomenon unique to our particular age. They view the relative stability and security of labour seen during the latter half of the Fordist[8] era—from just after the Second World War to the beginning of today's neoliberal era (mid-1970's)—as the exception to the rule. This portion of the Fordist era was not only characterized by assembly-line production and Taylorist management techniques but was also a period of economic stability brought about by Keynesian demand management and stimulus policies. The Fordist era also was a period of "societalization" (Jessop 50), which fostered institutional integration and social cohesion through stable lifetime employment and social support systems. According to Neilson and Rossiter, our current period of labour precarity is a return to the norm (Nielson and Rossiter).

As further proof of a return to the harsher realities of pre-Fordist capitalism in the neoliberal era we can turn to David Harvey's notion of the 'dispossessed.' The 'dispossessed' is Harvey's way to name the precariat in a way that identifies the source of their precariousness. Harvey sees the 'dispossessed' as a symptom of the return to Marx's idea of 'primitive accumulation.' Primitive accumulation for Marx was a period of pre-capitalist history characterized by a colonial project of violent dispossession. Here is Marx's description from *Capital, Volume I*:

> The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial

[8] "The term Fordism signifies the importance…attributed to assembly-line production, managerial hierarchy, and technical control introduced by automobile magnate Henry Ford." (Antonio and Bonanno 34).

> hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation…[t]he different moments of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power. (Marx, Capital 915-16)

For Harvey, a similar profile of events and actors has re-emerged. Globalization has brought with it the free movement of capital, which searches the globe for cheap resources (raw materials and labour) in jurisdictions with the least onerous regulatory regimes (labour and environmental). Free trade agreements have inserted corporate-friendly rules that effectively tie the hands of governments in their ability to express their sovereignty, all in a bid to protect capital. At the same time, commodification (and systematic destruction) of the natural world has proceeded apace in what is now being described as the "sixth great extinction" (Kolbert). The actors in this version of the 'primitive accumulation' play are also the same, with the neoliberal pairing of corporate-interests and the state working hand-in-hand, just as they did during past colonial periods since the 15th century (D. Harvey, The New Imperialism 137-182).

Nick Dyer-Witheford has taken up this comparison of Fordist stability, relative to the precarity of labour in both pre-Fordist capitalism and today's neoliberal capitalism, and has applied this to the reciprocal nature of worker consciousness in these periods:

> In early capitalism, the proletariat is very much outside capital, a hostile and unruly force to be coercively subdued. As capital subsumes production an increasingly formalized working class is absorbed into capital, through the mediation of institutions such as trade unions, political parties and the welfare state. (Dyer-Witheford 31)

Even as Standing suggests, with his classification of the precariat as a class-in-the-making, we appear to be in a transition stage where remnants of the old Fordist environment of labour stability remain in some sectors of the economy, but are increasingly being replaced by the new, or perhaps 'renewed', precarious labour relationships. The remnants of the well-

organized and powerful labour unions that remain today have become an integral part of the 'productivist' commodity system. Workers sell their labour-power to employers and are thus part of the commodification chain. This is not at all conducive to the production of an autonomous subjectivity, but rather, is bound up and fully integrated with the interests of capital. Labour union negotiations bargain for a bigger share of the pie of the commodification process, and perhaps better working conditions, but they are not truly emancipatory. Rarely, for example, do they call for employee ownership and democratic participation in how the company is managed.

We are, however, seeing signs of a bourgeoning consciousness developing from resistance to the day-to-day experiences of exploitation and privation. We can see them in the organic collective action of many working groups within the precariat, most of whom do not have the benefit of institutional support in the form of labour unions. These experiences have shaped a subjectivity of spontaneity and an awareness of a life existing outside of the world of commodification and consumerism. This is the dialectic that I hope can be captured by the labour movement: a fostering of awareness within union membership of the possibilities of a life outside of capitalism through their exposure to the plight of precarious workers. This could even foster strategic alliances.

An instructive example of this precariat-labour union cooperation can be found in the 'recovered factories' movement in Argentina. This movement began in 2000 after almost twenty-five years of de-industrialization and state terrorism initiated by the military junta that came into power after the coup of 1976 (Aguilo 25-26). After decades of economic modernization, Argentina returned to its 19th century agro-export roots and became an extractive state relying on the export of raw materials for its economic growth (Vidosa and Rosa 226). Not long after the junta took control of the country, it began a long transition to American-style neoliberal policies: Chicago School economics and the 'Washington Consensus', neoliberal legal theory, and political Public Choice Theory. As a result of these neoliberal policies, the rights of citizenship shifted from an emphasis on socio-economic justice and human rights to consumer's rights (Aguilo 26-27). The ensuing decades saw an ever-increasing turn towards privatization, austerity, de-regulation, loss of national sovereignty and ballooning national debt. Despite a relatively short period of economic growth in the 1990's under the presidency of Carlos Menem, due to corruption and structural inequality, Argentinians saw the benefits of that growth going

primarily to the top echelon of society. Employment had fallen from 37.1% of the population in pre-coup Argentina to 28% in 2001. Poverty also greatly increased over the same period, going from just over 9% in 1975 to almost 38% in 2001 (Vidosa and Rosa 227). By 2000 spontaneous political action started to coalesce, which included the occupation of bankrupt factories and the more organized phenomenon of employee control and management of those same factories (i.e., 'recovered factories').

During the initial occupation phase of these factory takeovers, workers were often supported by the local community with food and shelter. University students and precarious workers also participated in the occupations, many of whom found employment in the factory. After gaining full control of the factory, the workers would often allow other groups, such as artists and activists, to make use of the factory space for their purposes. In one of the earliest, and most successful, examples of these recovered factories, the Metallurgical and Plastic Industries of Argentina (IMPA), workers, citizens of the local community, artists and educators came together to jointly develop a renewed factory where not only worker-operated and managed commodity production took place but community-led education, theatre productions, musical performance, and even opera performances! (Vidosa and Rosa 231-233)

This kind of spontaneous, collective action, involving unionized workers, precarious workers, artists, educators and the community-at-large, provided a strong counter to atomized subjectivity purpose-built by decades of neoliberal animus toward collective subjectivity and a re-focus of citizenship toward values other than consumer choice. In these recovered factories, each participating group benefited from the alliance: the precariat gained support and solidarity through the organization and solidarity that comes with large labour institutions, and the unionized worker gains a more expansive subjectivity and sense of solidarity. Indeed, this is a theme that I will take up in subsequent chapters when I deal with conscious-raising potential of another avenue of renewed subjectivity, namely participation in a global project of a praxis of emancipation through freely chosen and autonomous work.

Automation

Another aspect of the contemporary work environment is the ever-increasing threat of long-term, structural decline in employment opportunities due to automation. Automation, or at

least some form of machinic supplementation of the work process, has been with us since the Industrial Revolution, and even prior to that (e.g. the medieval water mill). However, what we face today is a form of labour supplementation that is fundamentally different in character because it offers not only *supplementation* but *replacement*. Previous forms of machinic supplementation were designed to assist the worker with physical work processes: the spinning jenny and power loom, the steam engine, mechanized agricultural machinery, and later, factory machinery, electrical tools, etc. These provided raw kinetic energy to physical processes that enabled large gains in productivity. The worker became the controller of these machines freeing him or her from much of the exhausting and destructive aspects of hard physical labour. However, these machines still required the supervision and/or intervention of the worker. The worker still had an edge over the machine due to his or her cognitive power. Today's automation is fundamentally different for this very reason: even cognitive processes are being taken over by the 'machine'. Artificial intelligence and expert systems, when combined with robotics, threatens to remove the last vestige of human supremacy in the labour process.

There are likely no predictive accounts of the effects of machinery and automation on the worker and on society as a whole quite as insightful as Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' from his *Grundrisse*. Marx's *Grundrisse* is a collection of his notebooks written between 1857 and 1858. They went on to become part of the source material for his three volume *Das Kapital*. This section of *Grundrisse* remains highly relevant to our times. Marx wrote *Grundrisse* during the height of the Industrial Revolution. Industrial machinery was certainly finding its way into the production process, but automation as a system was in its infancy. Marx's definition of automation related to the emergent properties of machines that were designed to coordinate actions of several machines as well as human labour. This emergent property is what he refers to as "automatic system of machinery":

> But, once adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the *machine,* or rather, an *automatic system of machinery* (system of machinery: the *automatic* one is merely its most complete, most adequate form, and alone transforms machinery into a system), set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages. […] In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker's means of labour. Its distinguishing characteristic is not in the least, as with the means of labour, to transmit the worker's

> activity to the object; this activity, rather, is posited in such a way that it merely transmits the machine's work, the machine's action, on to the raw material—supervises it and guards against interruptions. (Marx, Grundrisse 692).

Marx knew of Charles Babbage's writings (e.g., *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*) and so he was aware of Babbage's work not only on the mechanics of computing but its general informational and algorithmic concepts as well. His Difference Engine, and later his Analytical Engine, despite their analogue and mechanical designs, contained all of the core principles of contemporary computing. Therefore, full scale automation would not have been out of the range of imagination at the time of *Grundrisse's* writing. This would have undoubtedly influenced his prediction of full-scale automation in the future, and indeed of the "automaton" (an early conceptualization of robotics, or at least machinic replications of humanoid attributes and analytical abilities). Nevertheless, Marx's theorizing of both the motivation behind this move to automation, and of its probable future direction, was based on his critical analysis of the logic of capitalist development itself. Capital must always move towards increased returns on capital (fixed and variable). The human side of this equation, the variable form of capital represented by human labour, is seen as both the source of value by Marx and yet the most difficult to control and predict by capital. Capital therefore seeks to subsume (include or absorb) labour in any way that it can. Furthermore, it uses labour itself in this very process of subsumption:

> The transformation of the means of labour into machinery, and of living labour into a mere living accessory of this machinery, as the means of its action, also posits the absorption of the labour process in its material character as a mere moment of the realization process of capital. The increase of the productive force of labour and the greatest possible negation of necessary labour is the necessary tendency of capital, as we have seen. […] The accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of *fixed capital,* in so far as it enters into the production process as a means of production proper. (Grundrisse 693).

In earlier applications of machinery in the production process, the machine was designed as an extension of the human body, a 'machinic supplement'. It was, at this early stage, one of the worker's "means of labour." But Marx is getting at something quite different here: the

machine and the worker experience a subject-object[9] role reversal. When machines are the 'means of labour' they are fully objectified. The worker uses them to extend and supplement his or her bodily power. The worker controls every aspect of the machine's movement and retains the power of agency and subjectivity. As machines advance and are increasingly fit into higher levels of system production, the worker takes a back seat. Her agency is diminished, and the cognitive and physical aspects of her work are now realigned to the design of the machine system. The worker is de-skilled, thereby losing a sense of autonomy and pride. The machine takes on the role of the subject as it dictates the range of action of the worker, whose primary role now becomes one of oversight. Note, too, the references to the "alien power of the machine":

> The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite. The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself. (Grundrisse 693).

Marx is speaking here of the cumulative knowledge of workers, including tacit knowledge, that is embodied in the design of the machine and its associated systems (i.e., the "social brain"). This is a free contribution of knowledge over time from labour to capital (i.e., the abovementioned subsumption of concrete labour by abstract labour). It is therefore the embodiment of alienated knowledge. In this sense, the machine system contains within itself a form of cognition[10] not present in the individual worker! This role reversal is gradual, but it continues apace today.

Marx proceeds with a discussion of the implications of the continued subsumption of labour under capitalism by outlining the internal contradiction of an ever-increasing machine

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[9] Recalling grade school grammar, the subject of a sentence is the noun that represents that which has agency; it initiates and performs an action. The object of a sentence is that noun that represents the passive receiver of the subject's action. The philosophical rendering of this relationship is one of the foundational concepts of western philosophy and one that I will address in chapters two and three.

10 In this case, an abstract form of cognition represented by the activation of embodied knowledge in the machine system, not just the storage of that knowledge by the machine system.

system (i.e., technology) efficiency. This efficiency inevitably leads to an ever-decreasing need for labour:

> Capital employs machinery, rather, only to the extent that it enables the worker to work a larger part of his time for capital, to relate to a larger part of his time as time which does not belong to him, to work longer for another. Through this process, the amount of labour necessary for the production of a given object is indeed reduced to a minimum, but only in order to realize a maximum of labour in the maximum number of such objects. The first aspect is important, because capital here—quite unintentionally—reduces human labour, expenditure of energy, to a minimum. (Grundrisse 701).

This, in turn, leads to a lack of effective demand. Effective demand is the subset of overall demand for goods and services that can actually be met given the overall level of employment (and therefore income) in the economy. You cannot effectively demand that which you cannot afford, in other words. The residual between demand and effective demand represents unmet needs. Thus, according to Marx, capitalists must, by the very nature of their constant drive to increase profits, automate themselves out of existence. This is controversial because while we have most definitely witnessed several capitalist crises in modern times –1929 Crash and the ensuing Great Depression, the Great Recession, and many others throughout its history—capitalism has come through the other side of each crisis seemingly stronger than ever. It has done so due to its amazing flexibility in terms of establishing new needs, and in many cases, new false needs, which leads to new markets. Through advertising, the commodification of almost every corner of human existence, and the entry into all corners of the globe, capitalism has so far been successful in avoiding, or at least delaying, the crisis of the full subsumption of labour. Indeed, the need for constant, exponential economic growth—which is at the core of our environmental problems today—is partly driven by the need to replace the jobs lost through technological advances (Arndt 35). This theme was taken up by the French economist Thomas Piketty in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* where he discusses Marx's subsumption of labour:

> The dynamic inconsistency that Marx pointed out thus corresponds to a real difficulty, from which the only logical exit is structural growth, which is the only way of balancing the process of capital accumulation (to a certain extent). Only permanent growth of productivity and population can compensate for the permanent addition of new units of capital . . . [o]therwise, capitalists do indeed dig their own grave: either they tear each other apart in a desperate attempt to combat

> the falling rate of profit (for instance, by waging war over the best colonial investments, as Germany and France did in the Moroccan crises of 1905 and 1911), or they force labor to accept a smaller and smaller share of national income, which ultimately leads to a proletarian revolution and general expropriation. In any event, capital is undermined by its internal contradictions. (228-229)

Note the reference here of the need not only to increase the permanent growth of productivity, but also of population**,** in order to keep the total subsumption of labour at bay. Marx might have underestimated capital's ability to extend its life through this nexus of higher consumption and population growth, but his analysis of the internal contradiction of capitalist production is still on target. In our age of ecological crises, it has become clear that growth in consumption and population cannot continue indefinitely. Technological innovation must serve the needs of humanity first and foremost. Of course, it would be unfair of me to suggest that technological innovation under capitalism has not brought about important advances for the betterment of humanity. Even Marx and Engels recognized this; *The Communist Manifesto* is a paean to the bourgeoisie and its innovations (Marx and Engels). However, these are often by-products of a dynamic whose primary focus is the need of capital to fend off the natural tendency of the rate of profit to fall. We must remember that the world is also replete with examples of harmful technologies. Therefore, I believe that technology must be democratically directed, not foisted upon us a means to create new markets of (mostly) false needs. While this concept of exponential economic growth and its harms is beyond the scope of my thesis to address in any detail, it is a topic that I will return to in my final chapter.

Notwithstanding this delay in the full subsumption of labour, if it were to come to fruition in the future, Marx sees that possibility as a unique moment in history, one ripe with utopian hope: "This will redound to the benefit of emancipated labour and is the condition of its emancipation." (Grundrisse 701). So, for Marx, out of the ashes of capitalism's demise, rises the Phoenix of an emancipated, non-alienated citizenry where he speaks of "…the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them." (Grundrisse 706). Lastly, Marx refers to a new measure of wealth after the emancipation of labour, namely free time: "The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labour time, but rather disposable time." (Grundrisse 708).

So, let us now turn this back to our time to see if the signs of Marx's total subsumption of labour might now be coming to fruition. In 2016 a paper entitled "The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerization?" was published written by two Oxford University scientists: Carl Benedikt Frey, an economist, and Michael A. Osborn, an expert in machine learning. This was an ambitious paper that sought to categorize 702 detailed occupations according to how susceptible each was to computerization (broadly defined as "job automation by means of computer-controlled equipment") (Frey and Osborne). Frey and Osborne referenced a broad range of research implicating computerization as one of the leading factors in the current environment of "jobless growth." Frey and Osborne were motivated by the desire to determine whether this trend would continue into the future, and if so, to determine which occupations were the most susceptible to computerization. Their methodology utilized data on the specific task content of the occupations studied. Next, they assessed each task from an engineering perspective to determine how susceptible each task was to computerization. In making this latter assessment, they took a forward-looking approach and assigned a value based not upon current technology but on what the most recent forecasts (for example, they gave a higher weight to the use of Machine Learning) were with regards to how susceptible a given task will be to computerization. In making this assessment they recognized three engineering "bottlenecks" that might serve to slow down the computerization of a given task: (1) perception and manipulation tasks; (2) creative intelligence tasks; and (3) social intelligence tasks. They viewed these types of tasks as being relatively 'safe' from computerization for at least next decade or two. However, beyond these "bottleneck" tasks, they argued that almost any task is susceptible to computerization ". . . provided that sufficient amounts of data are gathered for pattern recognition." (Frey and Osborne 261). This general statement was said to be true regardless of whether the task was routine or non-routine. Their conclusions were perhaps predictable and not far from what a 'common sense' analysis of the trends in technology would arrive at: highly routine jobs in manufacturing, office and administration, transportation and logistics and even service occupations are all the most susceptible to computerization and job loss. Their concluding recommendation was a simple call for workers to acquire the necessary creative and social intelligence skills in order to "win the race." This exhortation betrayed what I believe to be a bias in the business world and in economics toward the long-held assumption that job losses

due to technological innovation in one area of the economy will always be replaced by new jobs that service the new markets opened up by those very same innovations.

There is, of course, plenty of evidence from history pointing to just that conclusion. A 2015 study by the consulting firm Deloitte entitled "Technology and people: The great job-creating machine" referenced the history of job loss and subsequent job creation in England and Wales from 1871 to the present and concluded that job losses in the past due to automation were always compensated, and indeed increased, by the new markets opened up. They concluded that there is no reason to assume this historical trend will not continue into the future (Stewart, Debapratim and Cole). This narrative is understandable given the historical record. However, this narrative may no longer apply. There is reason to believe that we may be entering a new period of technological development where this historical trend may no longer be relevant. In the past, technological innovations have addressed some aspect or another of physical and routine cognitive labour. At each stage in innovation new jobs were created that utilized untapped human abilities: machines that replaced brute force led to an emphasis on subtle human dexterity; computers that took over the more routine cognitive tasks of professions and trades led to new jobs requiring more analytical and computing skills.

The innovations now arriving, and soon to arrive, from developments in artificial intelligence (AI), advanced robotics, and expert systems, threaten to replace those few holdouts of untapped human abilities. This seems to be born out in a number of studies. One study of the U.S. labour market since the year 2000 found evidence of a structural decline in the demand for skilled workers. Furthermore, they found evidence that highly-skilled workers adapted by moving down the occupational ladder displacing lower-educated workers (Beaudry, Green and Sand). Another influential paper by Daren Acemoglu of MIT and Pascual Restrepo of Boston University studied the effects of robotization on the job market in the U.S. from 1990 to 2007 and found that the job losses from increased roboticization affected all occupations except managers. Furthermore, these job losses were not fully offset by replacement jobs in other sectors (Acemoglu and Restrepo).

The Oxford economist Daniel Susskind explains in his recent book *A World Without Work* (Susskind) that one of the most influential responses to the recent findings of structural job

loss due to automation is the work done by MIT economists David Autor, Frank Levy and Richard Murnane. Together, they developed the 'Autor-Levy-Murnane hypothesis' (ALM), which posits that jobs will continue to be created in the economy because automation affects tasks not jobs (see above comments on the Frey and Osborne study). Furthermore, there is a distinction between 'routine' and 'non-routine' tasks. The assumption here is that non-routine tasks are those characterized by their 'tacit knowledge' as opposed to 'explicit knowledge'. In other words, tasks that are relatively easy to describe by workers (and thus codify in algorithms) are those tasks that are understood through explicit knowledge. Non-routine tasks (i.e., those employing tacit knowledge) are much more difficult to explain and thus more difficult to codify. The ALM hypothesis concludes that for the foreseeable future there will continue to be non-routine tasks that will provide stable employment. Susskind's response to the ALM hypothesis is that it fails to take into consideration the second wave of AI development. He claims that those who continue to hold to the old view are missing a fundamental reality regarding the nature of the latest wave of AI development. The first wave of AI and roboticization—and indeed of all mechanization—employed a top-down process of copying the physical and cognitive processes that humans engaged in to complete their tasks and then codified them into the design of the machine or in algorithmic instructions of the software code. When one continues to envision the future of AI or robotics development in this way, it is perhaps understandable that non-routine tasks founded upon the tacit knowledge of the worker would continue to be viewed as safe from automation. But this is not how the latest wave of AI is being developed. As Susskind describes, today's AI development is based upon a Darwinian, bottom-up approach that requires less up-front coding. It relies, instead, on Machine Learning techniques and programming that together create a system that recursively teaches itself (and reprograms itself) through trial-and-error. It can bypass human logic altogether to find solutions to problems that were considered intractable in the first wave of AI development. We have thus moved beyond the 'Expert System' phase, which is actually just a sophisticated database of encoded human knowledge of a given subject. This recent wave of AI changes the rules of game and seriously calls into question the old wisdom of continued job creation in the wake of job loss due to automation. As I mention above, there is no fallback of uniquely human skills to draw upon.

This outlook for the future of jobs may sound bleak to some, particularly those committed to the income-determining nature of scarcity and meritocracy and its inevitable

inequality. If there are no jobs demanded by the market, but yet the world is flush with wealth, how would we determine how that wealth is distributed? The current means by which capitalist society registers our 'worth' or our 'merit', namely our wages, salaries, business income, etc., would no longer be available. We would have to collectively arrive at another arbitrary measure if we wished to maintain our current system of unequal outcomes. This would expose the arbitrariness of our current labour commodity approach (known as 'marginal productivity' in economics). To others, however, this future is one of optimism. Like Marx, one could look upon this potential as one of emancipation: an emancipation from alienated labour towards more free time and work that is of our own choosing and is constitutive of our essence. This choice would also extend to the democratic selection and design of society's technological development. This would require a radical refiguring of our political and economic systems, a point to which I will return.

Income Inequality

I will outline the causes of income inequality, and its theoretical underpinnings in chapter two, however, in this section I will limit my discussion to its effects on individuals and society as a whole. To begin, we need to determine the extent of the problem. Furthermore, we need to determine whether income inequality is actually harmful for society. In a U.S. context, economist Emmanuel Saez, from UC Berkeley, published a report based on his analysis of US tax data going back to 1913. His findings confirm a story I alluded to above in discussing the precariat, namely that since the dawn of neoliberalism in the 1970's, a return to the 'Gilded Age' of capitalism in the U.S. (from late nineteenth century to just before the Great Depression) has made a comeback. This was a time where capitalism had free reign in the economy and inequality was rampant. Saez's findings show that in 1928, the top 1% of families received 23.9% of all pre-tax income, while the bottom 90% received 50.7%. By 1944, however, the share of pre-tax income for the top 1% was down to 11.3%, while the bottom 90% were receiving 67.5%. These levels stayed relatively constant throughout the post-war New Deal period. Beginning in the mid -1970's, however, the tide turned, and income inequality started to rise again. By 2012, the top 1%'s share of all pre-tax income was back up to 22.5% and the bottom 90%'s share was below 50% (Saez).

Where similar data exists, in countries and regions throughout the world, a similar pattern of high inequality (measured either by the Gini coefficient, or by a percentage share of total income by the top 1% or top 10%), from about 1920 to 1945, was followed by a sharp reduction in inequality, bottoming out in the 1950's and 1960's. However, again, by the mid to late 1970's inequality began its steep return and shows very few signs of abating (Alvaredo, Chancel and Piketty). This data includes income from both capital (capital gains, dividends, etc.) and labour income (wages, salaries and benefits). However, when the two sources of income are delineated, it has been discovered that the increases in income since the late 1970's have gone largely to capital (Tali). Tali Kristal, a sociologist from Haifa University studying income inequality, published a paper studying postwar labour's share of income in sixteen OECD countries. The same pattern that I note above of a postwar increase in labour's share of national income followed by a sharp decline starting in the early 1980's was observed in this study. Kristal's hypothesis that labour-friendly governments, unionization, strike activity, and government spending on social programs explained most of the variation in labour's share of national income. The standard explanation arising out of the marginal productivity theory to account for this phenomenon is to say that technological progress fully accounts for the rise in productivity, and the concomitant rise in income to capital, if labour income is observed to have remained static or lowered. However, Kristal notes that this factor alone cannot explain the decline in labour's share of income. As she notes: "CBTC [capital-biased technological change] also fails to explain why countries that are relatively similar from a technological point of view differ in the scope of decline [i.e., labour's portion of national income]." (Tali 737). Let us refresh our memory at this point and refer back to Marx's comments (noted above) in his 'Fragment on Machines' and see how they might apply to this notion of labour's versus capital's share of productivity:

> The accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of *fixed capital,* in so far as it enters into the production process as a means of production proper . . . (Grundrisse 694).

Even if all of the increases in productivity were due to technological advances, Marx makes a good argument for labour staking a claim to a good portion of the capital's share of income from

those very same increases in productivity due to technology. Much of this technological advance could not have occurred without the input of labour in the form of tacit knowledge!

In 2009, two British epidemiologists, Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett published the results of their study of income inequality and its relationship to several metrics of health and social outcomes (Wilkinson and Pickett). To measure income inequality, they used a commonly accepted metric, namely, the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient measures inequality across the whole of society rather than simply comparing different income groups (i.e., the method used by Piketty and Saez noted above). The Gini coefficient is calculated using statistical measures of income levels to create that jurisdiction's cumulative income distribution curve (a 'Lorenz Curve'). The area of that curve is then subtracted from the larger area of the curve representing the theoretically perfect state of equality. The area that represents the difference between the two curves is then divided by the perfect state of equality curve to arrive at a coefficient. A Gini coefficient of 0 would mean perfect equality: everyone earns exactly the same income. If one person received all the income and everyone else received nothing the Gini coefficient would be 1: perfect inequality. Therefore, the lower the Gini coefficient, the more equal a society. Wilkinson and Pickett then analyzed the relationship between a nation's (or a state's, in the case of their U.S. data) Gini coefficient and specific metrics of health and social well-being. The latter metrics were measured using objective measures rather than the subjective measures used in behavioral economics (e.g. studies linking income levels to 'life satisfaction', for example). Their results were unambiguous.

Wilkinson and Pickett performed a number of regression analysis to determine whether their presumed link between inequality—as measured by the Gini coefficient—and objective measures of health and social wellbeing were affected. They compared the Gini coefficients of a selection of 23 rich countries[11], and all 50 U.S. states, to the following list health and social wellbeing measures:

[11] They first obtained a list of the 50 richest countries in the world from the World Bank, which was published in 2004 but based on data from 2002. Then they excluded countries with populations below 3 million, because they wanted to exclude tax havens like the Cayman Islands and Monaco. They also excluded countries without comparable data on income inequality, such as Iceland. Their list of countries chosen was as follows: Australia,

- level of trust
- mental illness (including drug and alcohol addiction)
- life expectancy and infant mortality
- obesity
- children's educational performance
- teenage births
- homicides
- imprisonment rates
- social mobility (not available for US states)

To ensure that higher average incomes in these countries might not actually be the causal factor for observed differences in the above wellbeing measures, Wilkinson and Picket performed the same regression analyses but against average income. They discovered no clear statistical causal correlation (Wilkinson and Pickett 20-21) for average income. However, when using the Gini coefficients in their regressions, clear causal correlations were observed in all of the above measures of wellbeing. In other words, high Gini coefficients (high levels of inequality) led to more negative results in the abovementioned measures of well-being. In summarizing the results of their study at the beginning of the book, they had this to say:

> We shall start by outlining the evidence which shows that we have got close to the end of what economic growth can do for us. For thousands of years the best way of improving the quality of human life was to raise material living standards. When the wolf was never far from the door, good times were simply times of plenty. But for the vast majority of people in affluent countries the difficulties of life are no longer about filling our stomachs, having clean water and keeping warm. Most of us now wish we could eat less rather than more. And, for the first time in history, the poor are—on average—fatter than the rich. Economic growth, for so long the great engine of progress, has, in the rich countries, largely finished its work. Not only have measures of wellbeing and happiness ceased to rise with economic growth but, as affluent societies have grown richer, there have been long-term rises in rates of anxiety, depression and numerous other social problems. The populations

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Greece, Portugal, Austria, Ireland, Singapore, Belgium, Israel, Spain, Canada, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Switzerland, Finland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, United States of America, Germany and Norway (Wilkinson and Pickett 301)

> of rich countries have got to the end of a long historical journey. (Wilkinson and Pickett 5-6)

Wilkinson and Picket reference subjective measures of happiness in the above quote, even though these measures were not included in their analysis. This was drawn from a large body of research on this topic. The measure of something as subjective as 'happiness' does not come without its inherent difficulties of measurement and opportunity for bias. However, since the 1970's there have been a number of studies by psychologists and behavioral economists on the effects of income on one's happiness. Starting in the 1970's, with the work of Richard Easterlin, and more recently, Daniel Kahneman and others, it has become apparent that, beyond a certain point, increases in income (or in the case of Easterlin's work, the GDP of a nation) do not improve a person's (or a nation's) happiness. There has been much back and forth on this debate since Easterlin published his first paper on this topic (Easterlin), with many attempts having been made since that time to debunk its findings. It is, after all, a direct challenge to one of the behavioral assumptions of mainstream economic theory; namely, the human insatiability of demand and consumption. However, there have been countless follow-up studies since that time, using a range of psychometric measures, (including several by Easterlin himself) that have generally confirmed his original findings. In a paper from 2010 by Daniel Kahneman and Angus Deaton, entitled "High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being", the findings are confirmed as follows:

> More money does not necessarily buy more happiness, but less money is associated with emotional pain. Perhaps $75,000 is a threshold beyond which further increases in income no longer improve individuals' ability to do what matters most to their emotional well-being, such as spending time with people they like, avoiding pain and disease, and enjoying leisure. According to the ACS, mean (median) US household income was $71,500 ($52,000) in 2008, and about a third of households were above the $75,000 threshold. It also is likely that when income rises beyond this value, the increased ability to purchase positive experiences is balanced, on average, by some negative effects. A recent psychological study using priming methods provided suggestive evidence of a possible association between high income and a reduced ability to savor small pleasures." (Kahneman and Deaton 16492)

The key observation from these objective and subjective measures of well-being is the threshold concept. In other words, lowered incomes due to falling or stagnant wages amongst the working class and those in poverty have a much greater amplitude of negative effects than does a

lowering of income on the wealthy. Conversely, rises in income have a much greater positive impact for those at the lower end of the income scale than they do for the wealthy. The relationship between income and utility is therefore not a one-to-one relationship, but rather one of a weakening relationship, and even in some cases of a negative turn, once income levels exceed a certain threshold point.

Universality of Change Agent

Since the late 1960's the world has seen an impressive advancement of individual rights. The rights of women, of LGBTQ+ sexual and gender identities and their associated rights (e.g. marriage equality), racial equality, etc. This is not to suggest that there is not still a great deal of work to do on these issues, but it is to acknowledge their entry into mainstream political dialogue and the very real advancements that have been codified into law. With respect to the subject of this thesis, we might ask whether these progressive groups could coalesce into a global subject, or a global change agent. These groups have shown a great ability to organize and mobilize. They have done so while having to withstand prejudice and hardships, and even violence and death. Perhaps our search for a political agent capable of leading us out of our current crises could be located here.

The political theorist Asad Haider, who is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Consciousness program at UC Santa Cruz, addresses this very question in his book *Mistaken Identity* (Haider). He begins his argument with an overview of the philosophical debate over subjectivity itself and whether we should attribute any agency to the subject. This is a long and complex debate amongst political philosophers which would extend well beyond my scope, however, a brief summary is warranted. The argument from those who give primacy to the object—in its extreme form—is that the subject is also an object itself, an object that it is shaped by the systems, institutions and lifeworlds that it finds itself from birth. If this extreme view is taken to its logical conclusion, this means that all agency expressed by the subject is a form of agency predetermined by the object. In this sense, true agency exists only in the object. As this admittedly simplistic summary borders on the setting up of a straw man, let me add that this extreme view is not actually seriously held by anyone. Various degrees of agency are normally granted to the subject (e.g. Adorno's 'non-identity' concept, Heidegger's 'authenticity', Sartre's

'good faith' versus 'bad faith'). While the subject is, of course, influenced by the society it is thrown into, it is also capable of reflection, and more importantly, it is capable of reflexively circling back to the object to exert action and bring forth change. In other words, the subject is capable of influencing and changing the very object by which it is shaped. To be clear, this latter view is more in line with the normative approach I will be presenting in chapters two and three.

This digression is important because it helps to illuminate the main problem with identity politics: its foundation in liberal, individualistic, rights-based subjectivity. Haider draws from the philosophers Michael Foucault and Judith Butler to help clarify this individualist view of subjectivity:

> In these institutions [e.g., factory, classrooms, prisons] collectivities of people are separated into individuals who are subordinated to a dominating power. But this "individualization" also constitutes them as political subjects—the basic political unit of liberalism, after all, is the individual. Within this framework, Butler argues, "the assertion of rights and claims to entitlement can only be made on the basis of a singular and injured identity." (Haider 10)

What is clear from this analysis is that singular identities fall in line with the atomistic philosophy of liberalism. Furthermore, because each identity must exert its recognition and independence using the tools of rights-based juridical action, it is an "injured identity", an identity that begins its recognition process in a weakened position. Haider goes on to relate Butler's prescient reminder that the word 'subject' has a double meaning: (1) an entity having agency and is able to exert power, and (2) an entity that is 'subject-to' an outside force (Haider 10). This reliance on the state and its existing juridical institutions for recognition of one's identity hamstrings the political actor in a way that actually removes some of its agency. In weakening the collective approach to political action, and relying upon the tools of the state, the prospects for radical change at the system level are greatly diminished, if not completely neutralized. By allowing ourselves to be identified primarily by reference to one particular anthropological, biological or cultural expression of humanity we are in danger of devaluing our full humanity. We cut off links to the rest of our species, and even our links to non-human nature. Without this outward focus on connections and solidarity, there is a danger that once a political identity has succeeded in winning its recognition in legal rights, it shuts down its critical

stance towards power. It melts into the mainstream and perhaps even takes a defensive position in support of the status quo. This is hardly the foundation for a global change agent.

Haider limits his discussion of identity politics to the issue of race; however, his conclusions are applicable to all identity categories. He traces the history of race relations between the Black community and the white majority of America, from Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, to the Black Panther movement, and Martin Luther King Jr. He argues for a movement that seeks not only to recruit members beyond Black identity but expands out to the broader causal relationship of class difference. With respect to the Nation of Islam, Haider blames their failure on their reactionary and singular motivation to promote Black nationalism. In contrast, the Black Panther movement extended their reach out to all racial minorities and were grounded in a materialist, socialist political philosophy. Martin Luther King Jr. pursued a more conciliatory reconciliation through a pacifist, Democratic Socialism orientation. A detailed recounting of Haider's discussion is not warranted here; however, to summarize, Haider contrasts those groups within the Black community that fought for racial justice in the broader context of class antagonisms, and with an inclusive 'big tent' approach, with those taking a singular and highly specific identity approach, such as the Nation of Islam. Haider succinctly summarizes the difference between these two approaches by referring to the difference between an 'ethnos' and a 'demos.' An ethnos categorizes a group according to an "imagined community of membership and filiation", whereas a demos is a "…collective subject of representation, decision making, and rights." (Haider 104). The ethnos demands walls around the "imaginary" category to retain its distinction and exclusive "membership." In contrast, the demos is "collective." Note too, the implication of a praxis that takes place within the demos in its collective "decision making."

Another problematic aspect of identity politics relates to the fight for rights that are tied to a particular identity. According to Haider, these can lead to a victim mentality as well as a delimiting of personal and group identity. Some clinical psychologists and psychiatrists are aware of the problematic nature of diagnosing their patients/clients with a singular term for their disorder. This is because there is a tendency for patients to essentialize themselves through their named diagnosis (e.g. bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, etc.). Their diagnosis might be perfectly reasonable in that it aligns with the symptoms they present. However, if the

patient personifies the label, they can fall prey to excluding from their very being all those aspects of themselves that are beyond their disorder. In doing so, they self-limit the very tools and personality traits that could help them cope and thrive despite their disorder.

The historian Dipesh Chakrabarty comes at this question of universalism from a different perspective, although one that is also historically linked to racism. He too recognizes the need to locate a universal change agent. In his book *The Crises of Civilization* (Chakrabarty) Chakrabarty points to the invaluable insights that post-colonial and subaltern studies, as well as anti-colonial activism[12] have provided us in terms of uncovering and addressing the colonial sources of exploitation. However, while he acknowledges their continued relevance to political analysis and action, he challenges their continued relevance in fostering the kind of universal subject formation that is clearly required in our current situation. Chakrabarty has established himself as one of the leading scholars of the subaltern and their history, particularly as they relate to India. He is critical of postcolonial and subaltern studies, but his position is less a critique than it is a call for the expansion of their application and scope.

According to Chakrabarty, two political realities must be faced for all those wishing to address the various 'sectionalities', or identities, of progressive political concern (e.g. sexuality, gender, race, environmental, animal rights). These two issues are globalism and global warming. As he phrases it: "…the current conjuncture of globalization and global warming leaves us with the challenge of having to think of human agency over multiple and incommensurable scales at once." (223). So while the abovementioned sectional issues likely have a strong link to today's global capitalism (although some long pre-date capitalism), the key now is to focus on how we address these existential issues collectively. Full and equal recognition of these individual sectionalities, or identities, are of vital importance. However, to address global warming and the

[12] Anti-colonialism and post-colonial/subaltern studies: the main focus of these academic sub-disciplines is the history, sociology and anthropology of the (primarily) European exploitation of African and Asian peoples, as well as the indigenous peoples of the Americas. This era of colonialism began during the Renaissance *Age of Discovery* and is tied closely to the history of capitalism. As European nations such as Holland, England, France, Spain and Belgium began their overseas explorations to find resources and to engage in trade, they also established colonial settlements. In the process, they enslaved the local population and imposed their culture, laws and religion on them. The effects of this colonialism are still being experienced throughout the world today. (Kohn and Reddy). The extraction of wealth in terms of resources and labour also links to Marx's concept of capitalism's beginnings in 'primitive accumulation.'

inequalities and injustices associated with globalization and class differences, we need to think and act as a species! I would add further that we need to think and act in the broader interests of non-human nature as these too are implicated in our existential crises.

In focussing too distinctly on issues of identity, the Left has endangered this 'species-level' approach. While important gains have been won with regards to sexual, gender and racial identities, if these gains are not then tied to the broader 'species-level' approach, identity politics is a fracturing strategy that is out of step with the truly global scale of our present situation. As Chakrabarty suggests, the incommensurability of the Enlightenment's focus on the subject as a rights-bearing entity versus that of today's post-colonial and post-modernist critique of the subject does not mean that one has to choose one over the other. They are contradictory but simultaneously true, as all dialectical concepts are. We can, in other words (which we'll discuss in greater detail in chapter three when we discuss Horkheimer and Adorno) maintain our non-identical selves—meaning our position as independent subjects in a world pressuring us to fall in line with the established worldview—while also recognizing the importance of reconciling that non-identity with our dependence on, and interrelationship with, the objective world. Singular identities can fall prey to a denial of the mutability of our essences as well as the intersubjectivity of identities (i.e., the connectedness) to the whole (Chakrabarty 228).

The reason why I focus here on the subaltern and identity politics is that these separate identities have, in some circles, been seen as having the potential to form an emergent agent of change. The post-Marxist philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have theorized that a revolutionary "multitude" might arise out of the nomadic and stateless peoples of the Earth. This multitude would consist of such groups as migrant workers, undocumented immigrants and refugees, asylum seekers, etc. What these groups have in common, according to Hardt and Negri, is their desire for non-conformism and anti-authoritarianism. According to their description: "[m]obility and mass worker nomadism always express a refusal and a search for liberation: the resistance against the horrible conditions of exploitation and the search for freedom and new conditions of life." (Hardt and Negri 212). They also refer to desertion and exodus as a " . . .powerful form of class struggle within and against imperial post-modernity." (Hardt and Negri 213). For Hardt and Negri, these qualities of "nomadism" and "exodus from capital" are virtuous and normative. Chakrabarty cites his fellow post-colonial theorist, Homi K. Bhabha, in

challenging Hardt and Negri's ambiguous multitude and their romanticized notions of emancipatory statelessness. The conditions of statelessness and nomadism are actually survivalist modes of being. They should not be mistaken for a state of pre-figured utopia. Given the choice, Bhabha states, these individuals would rather settle into a state of stasis so as to engage as citizens and live a life beyond that of simple survival. Given that reality, it is difficult to see how Hardt and Negri's multitude could ever organize and coalesce into a formidable global force of resistance (Chakrabarty 230). They undoubtedly could and should be targets for association, support and comradeship with any real global agent of change, but it is difficult to imagine how they could represent the founding source of such an agent. As mentioned, their first priority is survival. In addition, humans generally want to be situated in time and place. They need a sense of temporal continuity, a link to the past through the traditions of place. They want to participate in cultural and linguistic practices and be a part of the evolution of that tradition through their own creative acts of interpretation. It is only from this situated place that conversation and action toward internationalism and global solidarity can even begin, and it is only from this groundedness that citizens can "…pursue precisely those diverse 'meanings of life' that make history of one part of the world debate issue that may not resonate in another corner of humanity." (Chakrabarty 50).

The identities of race, sexuality and gender are similar to the subaltern groups in that they are (or have been) unrecognized in terms of having access to the same set of human rights accorded to those in power. Often, and as part of that lack of full human rights, they are also economically and politically disenfranchised. In fairness, many individuals within these groups, as well as the theoreticians representing their interests, have acknowledged the importance of intersectionality, and more importantly, the importance of class struggle in addressing these inequalities and injustices. To the extent that these groups align themselves and their struggles with the larger movement for political and economic justice and equality, they gain even more relevance. As Chakrabarty notes, the desire for full civic participation is common to both the nomadic, subaltern and the race, sexuality and gender-centric identities, and it is this desire for full membership, for recognition and participation, that drives both groups. Contrary to Hardt and Negri's multitude concept, they are not driven by some vague desire for non-conformism and mobility.

The philosopher Nancy Fraser has also dealt with the problem of identity politics specifically in the context of recognition. She sees the contemporary focus of the Left on recognition as an important issue but is misplaced in terms of its analysis of cause and solution. She categorizes these problems in terms of *displacement* and *reification*. By displacement she is referring to the misidentification of the cause of misrecognition when it is located in a "free-standing cultural harm" rather than it being sourced as an issue of status (and I would add class). Furthermore, "free-standing cultural harm" implies that the source of misrecognition is a lack of proper discourse in society rather than being sourced in the very structures and institutions of society. This misidentification of causes and sources leads to false or ineffective action. What is being displaced in this misrecognition, according to Fraser, is the focus on inequality and redistribution in general; in other words, the economic structure of society and the inequalities arising out of its property regimes, labour markets, etc. Fraser notes that reification is also a problem associated with identity politics as it tends to: "…impose a single, drastically simplified group-identity which denies the complexity of people's lives, the multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations." (Fraser 110). As Fraser adds, this singular approach to identity ends up misidentifying by its very act of identity reductionism (i.e., her identity 'reification'). It also, as I mention above, fails to encourage an intersubjective reaching out—the "species-level" connection.

To conclude this discussion on identity, let us now return to Chakrabarty. While he evades the question of who might serve as the agent of change, he does, in taking us back to global warming, remind us of the revolutionary force—one might even say geological force—that humanity has proven to be. Through the burning of fossil fuels we are releasing back into the atmosphere a carbon store that took 500 million years to accumulate. Much of the growth of our economy and the human population since the Industrial Revolution has been fueled by this cheap and abundant source of energy and, according to the philosopher Jason W. Moore, cheap and abundant labour-power, food and raw materials (Moore). Capitalist economies demand constant, exponential growth, which in turn requires more and more resources, consumption, waste sinking ability and capacity, not to mention more space. Unlike any other time in the human history, our species is now a geological force living in its own, self-created geological era. When I talk of praxis in later chapters, I will speak of it in terms of the human potential for collective autonomous work to create the society we wish for and to do so democratically. The argument

that we do not have this capacity, that it is too utopian, is at least partially negated by the evidence of our species' agency in the negative form of praxis I just described above. We have already created a society through our collective effort. It was created by means of instrumental reason, alienated and undemocratic labour, and structural myopia, but a human society capable of changing the geological direction of the planet has been created. If nothing else, this proves our power to alter our trajectory in history. To change course in the positive form of praxis I am putting forward, we need a more representative, global, and organized force for change. In the end, a collective politics of inclusion is an inviting one. Its universalism attracts not only those who are victims of a particular prejudice, misrecognition, or injustice but also attracts those who are in a relatively privileged position but wish to act in solidarity.

If not a global multitude, then what? Or if not a coalescent gathering of particular identities, then who? The agent of change must be large enough to counter the power of global capital and nation states. It must be organized yet nimble enough to the alter its course and tactics quickly so as to match the dynamism of capital. The agent of change must be active in its approach and outlook, not passive. It must also be prepared to offer not just criticism and a tearing down of systems, but a theoretically sound basis for alternative systems and a capability to build them. As noted above, it must also be based on more than just recognition because the desire for recognition implies a desire for an acknowledgement of one's particular identity *from an existing entity of authority*. This is a passive recognition in that it does not strive to replace those systems and entities of authority that were structured *not* to recognize these subaltern identities. What is needed from a global agent of change then is an institution that simultaneously allows its members to express their individual subjectivities while also allowing them to participate in a group subjectivity that recognizes universal needs and works to build a system that provides for those needs.

Workers, and the institutions that workers build, still show the greatest potential to act as this agent of change. Workers are primed to engage in praxis. While work under capitalism is alienated, workers are still often proud of their work and their participation in civil society. The efforts throughout the history of the labour movement to reduce the alienated aspects of work are meant to bring justice and autonomy to their working lives, not to avoid work. As I will discuss in chapter two when defining work, the objects of a worker's production become a mediating

force in the formation of individual subjectivity and self-consciousness by means of the mutual recognition of the 'other.' In other words, work is essential to human *Being*. Other aspects of human interaction do not carry the same degree of commitment from the whole person. Speech and other forms of communication (*logos*) are abstract and cognitive and thus, on their own, lack the physical aspect of our humanity. Work, on the other hand, has the potential of simultaneously joining together both embodied expression (manual labour) and cognitive expression (intellectual labour) of human potential. The worker provides the foundation for praxis and thus for political agency.

With the above in mind, let me provide some clarification of the definition of 'working class' as I intend it to be represented in this thesis. I refer back to Erik Olin Wright for this exercise because I believe that his combination of philosophical sophistication, along with his rigorous empirical research into the sociology of class, provides a balanced and reliable approach. Under Wright's definition of working class there are three dimensions of permeability: property, authority, and expertise (i.e. skills and education) (E. O. Wright, Understanding Class 146-147). By permeability Wright is referring to the degree to which a member of one class can move to the next class (or move between classes) given their level of property ownership, the degree of authority (i.e. power) that they hold over others, and their education level and skill set. This mobility of class refers not only to the actual ability to move within and between classes for work, but also refers to the likelihood of maintaining close personal friendships with non-family members of another class. Ownership of property refers to capital assets, which not only includes the traditional Marxist concern over the ownership of the means of production (i.e. net business assets) but also includes assets such as stocks and bonds (i.e. those that are frequently held in retirement or investment funds) and real property. As I discussed in chapter one in my discussion of income inequality, wealth inequality, to which this property dimension is directly related, is also a critical and growing problem. Access to the other two dimensions—power and education—is directly related to the permeability of property, and Wright's research indicates that this dimension is the least permeable of the three.

The above describes my definition of the working class from a present-state perspective. These current constituents of the working class serve as the foundations of my *normative* definition, which calls for an expansion of participants, and a broadening of scope for political

action. The ability to confront alienation head on and bring about social change is best entered through the dimension of authority or power. It is here in the expression of associational power through labour unions, civil and environmental rights organizations, etc. that organized collective action can confront the agents and institutions of capitalist power. This associational power is also the source of collective political power when scaled up. Associational power addresses specific sources of alienation and exploitation (e.g. LGBTQ rights groups, labour unions, environmental groups), but political power has the potential to universalize the various interests of collective consciousness. This allows the necessary regulatory and fiscal policies to be put in place to enable progressive action across a broad range of interests and demands.

It is here, in this notion of a broad coalition of interest groups who have the potential to collectively work together towards a progressive re-envisioning of society that I locate my *normative* definition of the working class. I arrive at this definition through a focus on work itself, but I do not limit my scope to the traditional labourer within the capitalist waged-labour relationship. With this normative re-definition of the working class, those who work unpaid in the home cleaning, cooking, and raising children are part of the working class. The precariat is part of this class, as are independent small business owners and short-term contractors. Furthermore, since my definition of the working class is built upon a definition of work that relates directly to praxis, it also includes those who perform volunteer work for organizations fighting for progressive causes. This is why I assert that the working class must be both aspirational and expansive. Labour unions must reinvent themselves to become organizations that view work from a praxis standpoint rather than from the narrow scope of activities defined by capitalists themselves. Broad coalitions must be sought to expand the effectiveness of associational power and to form even stronger forces in the arena of politics.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have shown evidence for a contemporary reality of work which is increasingly one of precarity and inequality, a trend that will only get worse in the future. This threatens not only the individual worker, but also society's ability to build a healthy and sustainable society for all. Immanent to this problem, however, is the opportunity for a united resistance to build amongst an expanded working class might coalesce to demand radical

political and economic change. In order to proceed with this line of reasoning though I must first define labour and work so as to be clear who and what our potential agent of change really is. This is the topic for the next two chapters.

Chapter 2: Defining Labour and Work: The Subjective View

In this chapter I will provide a survey of how we define work and labour. I will also define their related concepts of leisure, idleness and free time with a view to allowing opposing concepts to assist in the defining process. The definitions of these concepts are varied and often contested. They also change depending on the context in which they are applied. However, if we are to understand the how and why of work's continued importance for human emancipation, we must be clear on our terms of reference: what forms does work take and what is its significance in relation to the overall human condition? I will draw upon a number of traditions, including that of mainstream economics, German Idealism, and two heterodox views (i.e., those of Hannah Arendt and Friedrich Schiller) to draw out these definitions. Along the way, I will highlight the tensions within and between these traditions in a bid to illuminate the meaning of work.

Labour According to Mainstream Economics

The entry point into the discussion of the mainstream economics definition of labour is to discuss its *a priori* foundations. There are two foundational concepts within mainstream economics that have application to labour: human wants and productive abilities. The second concept relates to the production function and marginal productivity and has a direct link to questions of income inequality. Human wants include tastes, preferences and choices. They are assumed to be insatiable and driven by a rational motivation to 'maximize utility.' This core assumption views human behavior as a static (i.e., ahistorical) and 'essentialist' essence (Wolff and Resnick 59). The mainstream economics view of the world is highly individualistic and subject-focussed. Furthermore, the direction of influence is one-way: individual human needs drive production, which in turn establishes the economy of a nation or society. According to mainstream economic theory, there is no backward influence operating here. In other words, society at large does not, and cannot, effect human needs. Any attempt to install institutions or policies (human rights, regulations, etc.) that put controls or limits on the economy is seen as coercive and inefficient. Therefore, economics today is a highly reductionist social science. In order to explain human nature and the workings of society, it attempts to reduce humans to the bare essentials of need fulfillment.

Furthermore, in order to give economics an "aura" of scientific rigour and certainty akin to that received by the core natural sciences, it borrows the mathematical tools of mechanical physics[13]. However, in doing so, it must attempt to describe the complex interactions of countless human subjects with these tools. This necessitates a singular metric to measure the success of an economy in meeting that primary source of movement in the economy, namely, human needs fulfillment (i.e., utility). This analytical requirement led mainstream economists to borrow a form of utilitarianism best identified with the eighteenth-century English philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham. To describe his singular form of utility I quote from his book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*:

> Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. . .. By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, . . . or . . . to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness. (Bentham 14-15)

The value of pleasure is measured by reference to itself alone, and not in relation to some other end. For Bentham, pleasure is an end in itself and not a means to another end. In terms of measuring that value, Bentham uses a simple quantitative system that has two main components: intensity and duration. He adds two others, certainty/uncertainty and propinquity/remoteness, but these are qualifiers of the first two (Bentham). What is omitted from this account of utility is Bentham's belief that all forms of pleasure are qualitatively the same and thus commensurable. By valuing pleasure on quantitative terms, and omitting qualitative measures and alternative value systems, Bentham is saying that all forms of pleasure are alike and thus fungible; only quantitative relationships between forms of pleasure (or utility) matter.

If we recall that the core behavioural assumption that underlies all mainstream economics, an assumption that is necessary to fulfill its analytical and formulaic requirements, we begin to see its foundational flaw. The English nineteenth-century economist and polymath John Stuart Mill was also a utilitarian philosopher. However, he was a critic of Bentham. He

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[13] According to the economic historian Philip Mirowski, the conceptual and mathematical foundations of value theory in neoclassical economics is to be located in the mathematical models of 19th century physics, specifically classical mechanics (with energy conservation serving as the analogy to economic utility and value) (Mirowski, More Heat than Light).

believed that Bentham's version of utilitarianism contained a fatal flaw. According to Mill, utility does not come in one flavour. Rather, it is heterogeneous and incommensurable (Mill). If no one measure of utility can be attached to the quantitative measure of needs fulfillment, then the models utilizing a presupposed singular measure become suspect.

This observation has been noted by many within the economics profession as well. The American economist Lawrence Summers published a paper in 1991 entitled "The scientific illusion in empirical macroeconomics." In this paper, Summers exposes the tendency in mainstream economics to mythologize the status of mathematical and statistical methods over and above the conceptual and empirical work that should constitute the core of any social science. According to Summers, mainstream economics has fetishized method over content. When failures of economic models become evident compared to empirical data, it is the empirical data that is challenged, not the method. Here is one of Summers' concluding comments:

> Just as not all demonstrations of virtuosity contribute to knowledge, most empirical work that actually contributes to knowledge does not display the author's capacity for statistical pyrotechnics. Good empirical evidence tells its story regardless of the precise way in which it is analyzed. In large part, it is its simplicity that makes it persuasive. Physicists do not compete to find more and more elaborate ways to observe falling apples. Instead, they have made so much progress because theory has sought inspiration from a wide range of empirical phenomena.
>
> Macroeconomics could progress in the same way. But progress is unlikely as long as macroeconomics require the armor of a stochastic pseudo-world before doing battle with evidence from the real one. (Summers 146)

At this point, the question arises as to how these foundational concepts apply to labour within mainstream economics. The answer is that the same core principles of human needs fulfillment, or utility maximization, apply. Each individual has a certain set of preferences with regards to their needs, and this includes a set of preferences relating to working hours versus leisure time. Depending upon the skill set of any given individual, as well as their levels of energy and ambition for earning income, a trade-off between work and leisure occurs where the individual weighs the benefits of working longer hours versus the benefits of more leisure time. Note the assumed antagonistic relationship between labour and leisure. The benefits of labour under this economic definition do not accrue directly from labour itself. Rather, they accrue from

the fruits of that labour in the form of the additional goods and services that can purchased with the earned wages or salary. A marginal approach applies here as well. In other words, as each additional hour (i.e., marginal hour) is added to a weekly measure of hours worked, the gain in utility for the worker may be progressively reduced as their income get closer to, or exceeds, the minimum target set by the specific preferences of that individual (Wolff and Resnick 73). The value of each marginal lost leisure hour increases as the hours worked in a week increase. The individual is assumed to choose a level of working hours where the marginal benefit of increased wages/salary (or, more accurately, the marginal benefit of the increased consumption of goods and services made possible by the additional hours worked) equals the marginal disutility of lost leisure consumption. To reiterate, mainstream economics assumes a one-way direction of influence. First, the individual consumer (or the combined category of 'consumers') pushes overall production in the economy to a level and profile that meets the demands (needs) of consumers. The skill set offered by the individual worker to the production process defines his or her marketable wage in conjunction with the supply of work, which is driven by this very same production level. Note the commodified nature of both labour and leisure time that is assumed under this definition. Note too, the apolitical nature of this one-way influence. Only the representation of utility, in the form of money, matters to mainstream economics. It is the fungible, or commensurable, measure of all human needs and values. The existence of the non-commodified aspects of human endeavor—politics, art, philosophy, natural science, spirituality, etc.—pose a threat to capitalism. Capitalism's solution to this threat of pluralist values is either to isolate and silo these values outside of the realm of economics (ideally, to be left within the confines of the home and family), or work towards their eventual commodification.

Marx also defined labour under capitalism. However, he did so by utilizing the methodology of 'immanent critique.' By immanent critique I mean a method of critique that seeks to uncover the hidden contradictions in a social system or cultural worldview using the assumptions, claims and even norms (i.e., the norm of 'free and equal exchange' between possessors of money and possessor of labour) inherent to the system or worldview being critiqued. In other words, no external set of assumptions or claims are introduced. This avoids introducing antimonies to the critical process.

Marx views labour under capitalism as a profoundly alienating experience for the worker. This alienation is more than an objective, material alienation though; it is subjective and affects the very core of the worker's subjectivity[14]. In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844), Marx outlines four specific "moments" of alienation: (1) alienation of the worker's labour vis-à-vis the product of his labour; (2) alienation of the worker from the activity of work and the production process itself; (3) alienation from one's species-being; and (4) alienation of man from man; an alienation from society.

The first form of alienation that Marx outlines is the objective alienation of labour's product. In the act of labouring, the worker literally objectifies his labour. This objectified labour expresses itself not only in the object that the worker produces, but also in the reproduction of the capitalist's means of production. Both the direct object of production (i.e., the commodity or the service) and the means of production are alien to the worker. Both are owned by the capitalist not the worker. In addition, the use-values that the worker produces are not the worker's direct use-values. Often, the worker has very little insight into what the final product of his or her labour will materialize into, nor will he necessarily be granted access to the final product (e.g., minimum wage labourers who work on luxury products). One can see the direct tie to Hegel's master-slave dialectic: the capitalist (lord or master) owns the worker's (bondsman or slave) product of his labour; the tools and processes of the work performed; and, to a large degree, the agency of the worker himself. The political philosopher David Leopold sees this discussion of the alienation of the worker relative to his labour's product as one of first invocations by Marx to his notion of the 'fetishism' of the product (or the commodity). The worker produces an object that is seemingly endowed with a power that the worker himself does not have. In this sense, the product gains a semblance of agency, or subjectivity, at the very moment the worker is being objectified. The product is a stand-in, or fetish, for the agency that the worker loses in his labour.

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[14] David Leopold clarifies the difference between subjective and objective alienation as follows: "Alienation is said to be subjective when it consists in the presence (or absence) of certain beliefs or feelings. For example, individuals are sometimes characterised as (subjectively) alienated when (negatively) they do not feel at home in the modern social world or when (positively) they feel estranged from that world. In contrast, objective alienation can be discussed in terms which make no reference to the beliefs or feelings of individuals. For example, individuals are sometimes characterised as (objectively) alienated when they are unable to develop and deploy their essential human capacities, whether or not they experience that lack of self-realisation as a loss." (Leopold 206)

But it is more substantive than that: the product and the means of production actually have command over the life of the worker. He is, in a very real sense, ruled by the product (Leopold 230) and in the process becomes a ". . .predicate of his own products" (Avineri 107).

Finally, labour's alienation of the product from the worker expresses itself in the act of producing and reproducing the ability of the worker to labour for the capitalist. In this sense, the worker's labour reproduces himself, but reproduces himself primarily as a labourer for capital—a "physical subject" (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 29). All three forms of objectification—the product of labour, the means of production, and the worker's body and mind as a labourer's body and mind—are things hostile to the worker. Marx vividly captures this first form of objectified alienation in the following quote:

> Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labor by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production. It is true that labor produces for the rich wonderful things—but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces—but for the worker, hovels. It produces beauty—but for the worker, deformity. It replaces labor by machines, but it throws one section of the workers back into barbarous types of labor and it turns the other section into a machine. It produces intelligence—but for the worker, stupidity, cretinism. (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 30)

It might be tempting to view this quote as an outdated 19th century polemic, a product of the Industrial Revolution. However, this view would too easily dismiss today's reality. As I outlined in chapter one, alienation continues to exist today in the form of a massive growth in income and wealth inequality. It exists in the deskilling of work and in the return of worker displacement, unemployment, and precarity.

The second moment or form of worker alienation is the alienation of the worker from the activity of labour within the production process. I touched on this above when referencing the loss of agency by the worker, but this second moment of alienation is more complex than that. The labour process itself is something external to the worker. As Marx says, "[t]he worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself". (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 30). The worker's labour then is not a fully voluntary activity. Rather, it is an alienated activity because it is coerced: it belongs to, and is managed by, someone other than the worker himself. The act of labouring under capitalism

therefore becomes objectified and commodified. Furthermore, by participating in the commodification of his labour, the worker alienates his subjective nature from his objective nature: the worker's body and mind are separated from his own autonomous sense of self. There is a sense here, given in Marx's description of this second moment of alienation, that whatever effort the worker puts into the labouring process there is an equal and inverse effect upon his physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. His labour is "strength as weakness", "begetting as emasculating", and an "activity that is turned against him" (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 31)

Marx's third moment of alienation relates to man's 'species-being.' Marx says that only humans recognize that they are part of a universal object: the object that is the human species. According to the philosopher Sean Sayers, unalienated work is what distinguishes man from the lower animals and what defines our 'species-being': "[w]ork is our 'species being' (*Gattungswesen*), the activity which distinguishes humans from other species. . . [h]umans, by contrast, are social beings who work to transform what is immediately present to satisfy their needs." (Sayers, 2017 137). As a direct consequence of the first two moments of alienation, the worker's attachment to social relations, and thus his species-being, is profoundly disconnected. By becoming estranged from the object of production, and from the production process, the worker becomes atomized. The intentional stance, or, in other words, the object to which the worker directs his intentions, is not toward the good or service that the worker produces. Neither is it directed toward a self-determined social relation. Rather, the worker's intentional stance is directed towards the money wage. Therefore, the worker's intentionality is an abstraction that moves the worker away from the concreteness of the object of production and its potential as a social mediary. This weakens the attachment to social relations and the worker's species-being.

Some commentators criticize Marx's notion of species-being, and, in particular, capitalism's role in the alienation of the individual from his species-being. The philosopher Daniel Brudney summarizes the consensus that has developed in regard to specifying the parameters that constitute human 'species-being'. These parameters include the following:

1. An individual human being knows that there is the natural kind the human species, just as she knows there is the natural kind the horse species.

2. An individual human being is aware of herself as a member of the human species, conscious of herself as one human among others past, present, and future.
3. An individual human being is aware that she lives a life that is human in the sense that, however different its content from other human lives, hers is a life only a human could lead

4. Human beings live together in groups.

5. Human beings tend to survive by means of activities in which they are dependent on one another.

6. By acting together to satisfy biological needs, human beings develop capacities and needs different in kind from those of other animals. (Brudney 147-148)

In relation to the above parameters, Brudney suggests that it is unclear how life under a communist society would differ from capitalism in terms of reversing this species-being alienation. Furthermore, Brudney questions the extent to which this alienation exists under capitalism. In countering Brudney's position, I must first agree in principle that the above definitions of species-being are self-evident truisms, which are largely recognized as such even under capitalism. However, I would counter that Marx's notion of alienation from species-being under capitalism stands when these parameters are viewed from a subjectivist standpoint. For example, in relation to the fifth parameter, the pressure of competing in the job market, and in the work environment itself, is an atomizing force. Despite corporate rhetoric regarding the importance of teamwork and self-sacrifice toward a larger cause, the competitive nature of capitalism permeates through all of its institutions. This filters down to the behavior of the individual worker and leads to a pitting of one employee against the other, which heightens the worker's detachment from his species-being. In terms of the second parameter, the problem of isolation and loneliness is ever more acute. Even in the crowded environs of large cosmopolitan city centres, one can feel lonely and isolated in the world as one carries on with the life of labouring, commuting and consuming.

Furthermore, I posit that the contemporary emphasis on individualism leads to a mass forgetting of our dependence on one another and the institutions that previous generations have built. This subjective alienation expresses itself in a collective loss of consciousness which, through the forestalling of reflexive action, leads to a lost opportunity for democratic praxis. Under capitalism, praxis is owned and directed by the capitalist profit motive. Democracy exists

almost as a distraction while the real shaping of the world is performed by the powerful few. Interestingly, it is in reference to the praxis aspect of labour and its relation to species-being that Brudney agrees with Marx:

> . . . it is precisely because his picture is utopian in these ways, precisely through his imagining what it would be like genuinely to produce "as human beings" . . . that the 1844 Marx can place the great weight that he does on the role of community and especially on the role of labor in a good human life. And in this lies much of the value of his work. An emphasis on community is now rather common. Marx's emphasis on labor is not, however, and it points to a large and crucial lacuna in recent political philosophy. The importance of the right kind of institutional structure for work—the broad impact that such a structure has on life both inside and outside the workplace—has been neglected, indeed, usually ignored. It should be central to any political philosophy for the modern world. (Brudney 364-365)

The fourth and last moment of alienation in Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* is the alienation that the worker experiences in relation to his fellow man. It is an alienation that exists as a direct consequence of the previous three moments of alienation. When the product of one's labour belongs to another; when one's life activity is directed and owned by another; and when a worker's subjectivity is divorced from his fully embodied self and his essence, then an alienation from other humans is inevitable. In fact, in the monied economy, our relationships with our fellow human beings are most often defined in monetary and transactional terms. They are also rendered in terms of hierarchies: the hierarchy of the worker to the supervisor; the hierarchy of the working and middle classes to the wealthy and powerful owners of capital and the ruling elite; the hierarchies of privilege resulting from unequal initial endowments and social inheritance. These hierarchies are characterized by competition, coercion and mutual distrust. They breed feelings of superiority and entitlement which are mirrored by feelings of resentment and inferiority.

Marx describes another, and more direct, level of worker alienation that capitalist labour produces. This is his concept of surplus value. It is important to point out here that the concept of surplus value does not appear in Marx's *1844 Manuscripts*. Rather, it is a later concept outlined in volume one of *Capital*. According to Marx, a portion of the worker's daily or weekly labour time is spent earning the wages necessary to reproduce himself ("the means of subsistence").

This is termed “necessary labour time” and it includes all aspects of worker’s life: his food, clothing and shelter; his family; and sufficient means to enjoy some leisure so as to rejuvenate himself and ready himself for more work. Taken as a whole, “necessary labour time” is called “socially necessary labour time.” However, according to Marx, the worker does not just work necessary labour time in any given period; he also works “surplus labour time.” Surplus labour time is that portion of a worker’s daily provision of labour-power that is expended to earn the capitalist’s profit. Capitalism is not alone in its extraction of surplus labour time. Slavery is a form of labour where almost all labour-power is expended for the benefit of someone else. Feudal vassals also expended much labour-power for the benefit of their lords. Nonetheless, “[w]hat distinguishes the various economic formations of society—the distinction between for example a society based on slave-labour and a society based on wage-labour—is the form in which this surplus labour is in each case extorted from the immediate produce, the worker.” (Marx, Capital 325).

The concept of labour-power versus labour is important in understanding the concept of alienated surplus labour; therefore, a brief commentary on these related concepts is necessary here. The differences between Marx’s concepts of labour versus labour-power are subtle and complex, however, they can be summarized as follows: labour-power is capacity to labour, and labour is the exercise of labour-power. Labour-power describes a worker’s capacity to labour in the form of bodily energy and strength, intellectual capacity, and skill sets. Labour describes the goal-oriented process of producing a good or service: a use-value. In the case of unalienated labour, a worker may determine the need for a given object that will be of use-value to himself. He labours when he determines the design of the object and the required steps of its production. He also labours when he applies his physical energy, intellectual abilities and skills (i.e., his labour-power) to actually create the object. In the case of alienated labour under capitalism, a capitalist determines what objects are to be produced and how, and then solicits the necessary labour-power from workers in order to produce the object. In this latter case, the labourer sells his labour-power as a commodity to the capitalist. And it is here, in the commodity aspect of labour-power, that surplus labour is extracted by the capitalist. (Hunt)

One of the implications of the mainstream definition of labour is the unequal distribution of income in society. We have seen in our discussion of income inequality in chapter one just

how damaging inequality is to society and so it can bely our faith in institutions and our belief in justice to witness the steady increase in income (and wealth) inequality over the past four decades. The answer as to why this growth in inequality is tolerated relates to the theoretical underpinnings of income distribution within mainstream economics. Therefore, let us turn now to the theoretical defense of income distribution under mainstream economics: marginal product or productivity.

To introduce the topic of marginal product, I would first like to pose a challenge to the reader in terms of how to philosophically dissect any fundamental claims to 'deservedness' for gross inequities of income. The genuflection toward merit, the canonization of the entrepreneur, and the lionization of the billionaire all point to an unthinking acceptance of the almost God-given right for a small minority of individuals in society to reap grossly outsized rewards relative to the rest of society. To challenge this assumption, I would like to quote the sociologist Richard Sennett in what might appear at first to be an oblique reference to income inequality, but which I believe emerges as an indirect challenge to the justification of income inequality by challenging its core assumption, namely, the idea of merit:

> Practically, in the modern economy, the shelf life of many skills is short; in technology and the sciences, as in advanced forms of manufacturing, workers now need to retrain on average every eight to twelve years. Talent is also a matter of culture. The emerging social order militates against the ideal of craftsmanship, that is, learning to do just one thing really well; such commitment can often prove economically destructive. In place of craftsmanship, modern culture advances an idea of meritocracy which celebrates potential ability rather than past achievement. (Sennett 4)

I do not include this quote to advocate for a return to some romantic notion of pre-modern craftwork, but neither does Sennett I believe. He is trying to get at something more fundamental here, namely, the cultural aspect of how we value work. According to the German sociologist and political economist Max Weber, capitalism has internalized a metaphysical value system in the form of the Protestant Work Ethic (Weber) and has codified it into the logic of the commodity form of labour itself. Under this ethic, value is attached to the individual through some measure of his or her merit, and the value assigned to the individual's merit is set by the market. However, what Sennett is saying is that this system is culturally derived. In other words, there is no individual essentialist or metaphysical foundation for how we should value work.

With this in mind, I believe that there are two related points of interest in this short quote that are relevant to our discussion: the first is directly related to our discussion of income inequality, and the second is tangential, but nevertheless pertinent to my thesis as a whole.

First, the emphasis on meritocracy is illuminating because it ties back to the concept of scarcity and income distribution by means of marginal productivity, which I describe more fully below. On the surface, meritocracy sounds virtuous; it carries with it a connotation of deservedness and a reaping of one's just rewards. As Sennett mentions, past achievement is depreciated in favour of an already-existing potential. Merit is a tricky subject though, and as noted above, it links back to the Protestant Work Ethic. Contained within the idea of merit is an *a priori* assumption that the individual who holds it is either the creator of his or her talent, or in the original sense of the Protestant Work Ethic, it is God-given. In both cases, the assumption is that merit is fully owned and accounted for from within. However, merit, as judged by the market, is largely the result of preceding causes beyond the control of the individual judged as having merit. Inherited socio-economic head starts, or inherited intelligence levels and types favoured by the market, as well as inherited market-friendly personality traits (e.g. extroversion, high-energy, ego-driven, etc.) are all key components of one's judged level of merit. Therefore, much of what is deemed meritorious is the result of luck. As Sennett points out, craftsmanship, artistic expression, excellence in a trade or other 'technic', is the result of past achievement (and, of course, contains a blend of the luck aspect noted above). The difference between the two concepts is admittedly subtle, but it is important. With Sennett's notion of craftsmanship, there is a sense of 'work on the self'; an internal, self-referential form of judgement, a doing of one's best with what one is given. Merit, on the other hand, connotes a societal form of judgement that ranks individuals into hierarchical categories of deservedness, assuming that what one earns in the way of monetary or other forms of reward, is a reward originating from wholly internal sources.

What Sennett leaves out in this quote is the social mediation (and construction) of our being; that portion of our so-called merit that is owed to forces outside of ourselves. I want to suggest that we flip the sources of merit and its judgement. Our skills and our manner of being, our 'essence' in other words, owes its existence to both 'work on the self' and the social determinants of the self. This is a humbling, but humane, recognition. The judge of merit, if

indeed we need this judgement at all, might actually best be measured internally in terms of how successful we are in creating meaning for ourselves. These comments are equally valid, I believe, when we apply them to society as a whole. In other words, we would benefit from a consideration as to how these distortions of merit have been concretized within capitalism to the social levels of class, race, gender and geography; a topic for chapter three.

Before I detail the extent and the impact of income inequality today, I will take a quick detour to explain the economic concept of marginal productivity, which is the common defence of income inequality among mainstream economists. The neoclassical school of economics forms the core of today's mainstream economics. Neoclassical economics branched away from the classical school of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Jean-Baptiste Say, and John Stuart Mill in the 1870's with the introduction of two main concepts: utility maximization and marginalism. Neoclassical economics is founded on individualism and the assumption that each of us is a 'rational utility maximizer' that has a set of preferences for goods and services. As rational utility maximizers we seek to obtain the preferred basket of goods that meet our needs and wants, and we seek to do so in the most cost-effective way. Utility is achieved when our needs and wants are satisfied. Again, in this context, utility is a stand-in of sorts for the satisfaction of a need or desire. Marginalism, when in reference to utility, is the idea that these needs and desires are not static across all individuals nor even across time for any one particular individual. The classic example of marginal utility is the utility we gain from eating a sandwich. If we are hungry, and we love sandwiches (i.e., sandwiches are in our basket of preferences), the first sandwich we buy and eat has more utility to us than the second sandwich we eat (in a single sitting). The third sandwich may indeed have no utility to us, regardless of its price, given the fact that we are now satiated.

Part of the determination of marginal utility is the relationship of our income level versus the prices of the goods in our basket of preferences. If a sandwich is very expensive and our income is low, we may switch to the next closest thing in our basket of preferences and choose an apple, for example. The marginal in 'marginalism' thus refers to the cost, price, utility, productivity (whatever is economically being measured) of the next available or produced unit—the marginal unit. The neoclassical school builds up their macro picture of the economy by first building up these individual marginal profiles of demand, cost, utility, and production, along

with their elasticities. The elasticities refer to the ability of a given dependent variable to maintain its position despite changes in its related causal variables. More accurately, elasticities measure the relationship between change rates in these related variables. In other words, if we have a strong demand for a particular good, we will continue to buy the desired units of that good regardless of its price. However, we will only do so up to a certain point, after which we will either reduce the units purchased or switch to another, related good. After these individual marginal profiles are built up for all elements in the economy, they are combined into an overall economic model of equilibrium ('general equilibrium model'): a state where all production levels, prices, consumption, etc., have reached their optimal solution given all of the constraints in the system.

Marginal productivity is part of the above picture. It refers to the contribution to a firm's revenue that a unit of any one of the productive inputs (capital, labour, or raw materials) produces. In our case here, we are focussing on a unit of labour, or a labour hour. Productivity can be increased in a number of ways. A firm may add technology (capital) to the production process that permits the output quality and/or quantity produced per hour of labour to increase. Or a firm could either increase the hours worked in a day by the worker, without any additional wages, or decrease the worker's hourly wage rate. Part of the measure of the productivity of the individual worker though—and this is where our discussion turns back to income inequality—are the skills that each worker brings to his or her work (i.e., their 'merit'). Therefore, according to orthodox economic theory, labour income per hour, all other inputs remaining constant, is a function of our individual skill sets. Thus, according to orthodox economic theory, income levels fairly reflect the skills, diligence and hours worked that we put into our jobs. According to marginal productivity theory, an NBA basketball player who earns several million dollars per season deserves that salary because he has brought that much of an increase to the team's revenue (and more, as we will subsequently discuss) and has done so by means of the satisfaction of the marginal utility of millions of basketball fans watching in person and on television. This simplistic justification is held with all seriousness, ignoring all other contributing social determinants of income such as class and the hidden and unrecompensed support systems such as parenting, community, social institutions, etc.

The marginal productivity theory has come under much criticism over the years not only from a theoretical/technical standpoint, but also from the empirical and philosophical standpoints. It would go beyond my scope (and expertise) to engage in an extended technical discussion of these critiques; however, an extended and heated debate over the legitimacy of marginal productivity, called the Cambridge Capital Controversy, dealt with these very questions. It started in the late 1950's and went well into the 1960's and occurred between the post-Keynesian (or neo-Ricardian) economists Joan Robinson and Piero Sraffa from the University of Cambridge in the U.K., and neoclassical economists Paul Samuelson and Robert Solow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts (amongst others). Issues of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of unambiguously separating and then isolating (i.e., changing one unit of production while holding all others constant) the contribution of each unit of input (capital or labour) was a key issue of this debate. For example, how does one account for, and separate, raw materials from the other inputs? How does one measure 'units of capital' when capital (i.e., technology, land, buildings, etc.) come in so many different types and costs and are so long-lived? How are labour types separated? However, this debate was not just limited to technical/mathematical issues regarding the neoclassical production function;[15] the ideological underpinnings of neoclassical economics was also challenged. At the heart of the matter was the assertion by the post-Keynesians that you could not extend microeconomic principles to society as a whole. There are issues of asymmetry in power relations that need to be considered, amongst other issues. This was highlighted by the Marxist economist Michael Lebowitz in an essay entitled "The social basis of the Neo-Ricardian critique" where he comments on a quote by Joan Robinson:

> As noted above, the main thrust of the neo-Ricardian critique of neoclassical economics has been to undermine the latter's theoretical justification of the distribution of income and, in particular, the return to the owners of capital. By

[15] Cobb-Douglas Production Function: $Y = A \times K^{\alpha} \times L^{\beta}$, where:

- Y = Total production output (the only metric expressed in monetary terms…the rest are expressed in units or percentages/ratios)
- A = Total-factor productivity: the percentage of growth in productivity not captured by the growth in productivity from labour and capital
- K = Capital input (units of capital…the measure of which is/was one of the main sources of controversy)
- L = Labour input (total person-hours in a year)
- α = share of total production accounted for by capital
- β = share of total production accounted for by labour

> demolishing the theoretical credibility (if not the ideological credibility) of the marginal productivity theory of distribution, neo-Ricardian theory has severed the link between the productive contribution of capital goods and the pecuniary return to the owners of capital.[…] Recalling Keynes's vision of the 'euthanasia of the rentier', Joan Robinson notes that 'the wealth generated by technical progress, capital accumulation, work and business acumen, thus drop into the laps of rentiers while they sit at home or occupy themselves with other tasks'. Critically, this attack is on the ownership of capital rather than on the relation of capital itself. Thus Robinson earlier argued:
>
> > If the capitalists fully lived up to Marx's description and really invested the whole surplus there would be no need for socialism. It is the rentier aspect of profit, as a source of private wealth, which Marshall emphasizes, that makes the strongest case for socialism. (Lebowitz)

What goes unrecognized in the post-Keynesian critique is their lack of class analysis, according to Lebowitz. Also, other writers have added to this critique of marginal productivity by pointing to the real-world limitations on labour mobility, access to education, imperfect information, etc.; none of which is taken into consideration in the attempt to rationalize and normalize the defence of income inequality by referencing the production function model.

Thomas Piketty has looked at this issue in depth from an empirical standpoint. He agrees that marginal productivity has some explanatory power at the lower income levels of labour. However, when addressing top end salaries and returns on capital, he has this to say:

> The fact that income inequality in the United States in 2000-2010 attained a level higher than that observed in the poor and emerging countries at various times in the past—for example, higher than in India or South Africa in 1920-1930, 1960-1970, and 2000-2010—also casts doubt on any explanation based solely on objective inequalities of productivity. Is it really the case that inequality of individual skills and productivities is greater in the United States today than in the half-illiterate India of the recent past (or even today) or in apartheid (or postapartheid) South Africa? If that were the case, it would be bad news for US educational institutions, which surely need to be improved and made more accessible but probably do not deserve such extravagant blame.
>
> To my mind, the most convincing explanation for the explosion of the very top US incomes is the following. As noted, the vast majority of top earners are senior managers of large firms. It is rather naïve to seek an objective basis for their high salaries in individual "productivity." When a job is replicable, as in the case of an assembly-line worker or fast-food server, we can give an approximate estimate of the "marginal product" that would be realized by adding one additional worker or waiter (albeit with a considerable margin of error in our estimate). But when an

> individual's job functions are unique, or nearly so, then the margin of error is much greater. Indeed, once we introduce the hypothesis of imperfect information into standard economic models (eminently justifiable in this context), the very notion of "individual marginal productivity" becomes hard to define. (Piketty and Goldhammer 330-31)

This strikes a chord with respect to one of the objects of my critique, namely, positivism[16] in the social sciences. There is a sense in the above quote of a kind of backwards induction that takes place in the positivist approach to the social sciences. Mathematical models are built, largely by means of a deductive approach, to attempt to codify a formalized explanation of human, social and economic behavior. Economic policies are then derived and applied as a result of those models. These policies, once implemented, then go on to reinforce the very behavior that was assumed up front and do so by means of their very structure. The resultant correlation of outcomes to original assumptions serves to validate the original assumptions—a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy if you will. The original assumptions, therefore, take on the form of unchanging laws of nature. It is a self-reinforcing worldview that assumes human nature is fixed. It allows no room for the possibility of change and little room for the application of trial-and-error policy options. This is a perfect recipe for the ideological justification of inequality.

The second point I wish to make in reference to the Sennett quote above, relates to the concept of alienation and objectification of the worker. This relates to Sennett's comments on the need for the worker to cyclically retrain him or herself throughout their working life. This speaks to the demand that the capitalist market makes of the worker to be in a constant state of adaptability; adaptable not only in terms of the time and resource commitments to pursue one's livelihood (training/retraining takes time and resources not typically covered by employers), but also adaptable in terms of aligning one's choices to the exigencies of the market. This, in itself, is a form of alienation because it is often the case that one's talents and passions do not align with the market's demands or with the market's preferred manner of expression of those talents or passions. What is valued, and what has therefore a direct impact on the returns of one's labour-

[16] Sociological positivism: "…social phenomena can be studied only through the methods of natural science." (Green and Adams)

power, are those forms of labour that return the highest 'surplus value' to capital. The coincidence and alignment of those values with the values of personal expression (craftsmanship, artistic expression, etc.) can be thought of in terms of an inverse relationship to the degree of personal compromise that the worker makes to the demands of the today's consumer society. This has a direct impact on a person's consciousness. One must align one's being with the twists and turns of the market in order be psychically whole—another form of 'identification with the aggressor' (Gandesha). The price paid for this alleviation of anxiety, however, is a loss of autonomy and the potential for self-expression and self-creation.

There are signs in some sectors of the working environment today, particularly in wealthy nations, of an unspoken acknowledgement by businesses, and their Human Resources departments, of the inherently alienating nature of working life in capitalist society. This acknowledgement, however, takes on the form of a *semblance*[17] of acknowledgement; one that seeks to co-opt the prevailing anti-work *zeitgeist* for its own benefit (Fleming, 2013). The sociologist William Davies outlines the happiness and wellness fads that businesses have turned to over the past couple of decades, ostensibly to promote resilience and balance, but practically to promote higher worker productivity. For example, Davies cites the rapid growth of wellness and personal coaching consultancy promoting positivity, fitness regimes (including the use of monitoring), CBT therapy, Buddhist meditation, etc. (Davies). The message of 'high-performance', 'perfectibility', 'fulfillment', and most notably 'success', is alluring to many and appeals to the inherent desires—libidinal, recognition, distinction—of the employee (Lordon). However, while these messages, and the measures taken to promote them, are alluring, they are false promises. The real goal is to promote the complete handover of the employee's being to the company. Work life, home life, leisure time and play all blend into one another with the pressure to participate in not-so-voluntary after-work socializing, management retreats and team-building seminars. Workers check work emails on weekday evenings. Often, they do the same on Sunday evenings to get a head start on their Monday mornings in a misplaced effort to alleviate some of

[17] Semblance: I use this term here in its vernacular denotation of "outward and often specious appearance or show." (Merriam-Webster).

their ‘back to work’ stress. For management personnel, it is often implicitly (if not explicitly) expected that one should make themselves available to work while on vacation.

All of this aligns with Michael Foucault’s assertion that neoliberalism, through the auspices of both business and the state, has successfully recruited the whole person over to its ideology in what he calls ‘biopolitics’ (Foucault). It is no longer just the raw physical power of the worker that is asked for, it is the intellect (‘knowledge-economy’, or the ‘immaterial labourer’), the emotions, the desires (‘libidinal economy’), the need for socialization, and even our spiritual needs that are drawn in. This powerful link to the full human - body and mind—is a demand for two-way interaction: not only does it require the attention and commitment of the whole person, but it also seeks to mold the whole person in its image. Working life and the workplace are places to “work and play”, to “work as a team”, to “be a part of the [insert company name here] family.” One can see the insidious siren calls here to our natural desires for the solidarity and protection of the family and the community, and of our inherent social need for collective action. Increasingly, workplaces also seek to own us body, mind and soul through on-the-job electronic and biomechanical monitoring and feedback. The benefits to the employer of this surveillance are obvious; however, the psychological harms to employees, through their loss of privacy and autonomy, are also well documented (Ball), (Zuboff). Biopolitics has also affected us as consumers as we become slaves to our technology, eschewing activities requiring sustained attention and cognitive effort, not to mention social conviviality. Attention spans shrink and the desire for easy-to-digest entertainment and spectacle (Debord) crowds out the pursuit of challenging hobbies, life-time education and political participation.

Contrary to the methodological individualism of mainstream economics (both in its role as an *a priori* foundation and its normative stance), and contrary to the resultant atomization of workers and citizens, the German Idealist concept of ‘totality’ posits a holistic view of human society and of humanity’s relationship to nature. Under this view, the individual is indeed an important and autonomous ‘part’ or ‘particular’ within the whole. However, that particularity is defined by the whole. In fact, a recursive process of identification and dialectical reshaping takes place between parts of the whole and between the part and the whole (Limnatis 276-277). In other words, the idea that the part can exist as an island of identity, agency and self-

consciousness, or that the whole is somehow nonexistent, is unthinkable. It is to this German Idealist tradition and its concept of totality that I now turn.

Work According to the German Idealist Tradition

The mainstream economics view of labour, as already mentioned, is directly related to its assumptions with regards to the fixity of human nature. This is in direct contradiction to the dialectical and historical view of human nature and human society outlined below in the discussion of Hegel and Marx, along with the progenitors of that tradition. According to the historical dialectical approach, human nature is fluid. The interaction between individual humans and society is a two-way relationship. Because of this two-way relationship, humans both shape and are shaped by society and historical forces. Change is inherent to human nature; essences are not fixed. In my view, a better approach to defining labour, or work, is to look at its foundations in ontology and axiology. In other words, we need to define labour in terms of its ability to create our individual essences and thus define our 'being', and in terms of its ability to create meaning for us.

When I first began studying these concepts of self-consciousness and subjectivity in relation to work, the allegory that came immediately to mind, given my early Christian upbringing, was the creation myth of Genesis. Of course, I have since learned that this allegory was also an inspiration for many thinkers in the past working on the same ontological issues. For example, Hegel uses it in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* when he discusses the question of good versus evil. Also, Soren Kierkegaard uses it in *The Concept of Anxiety* to illustrate the link between freedom and anxiety. So I will initiate the discussion of the ontological role of work by reference to the creation myth of Genesis. I will concentrate here on how this allegory illuminates the two main themes of this chapter: (1) work's role in the creation of self-consciousness and being; and (2) alienated versus autonomous work. With that in mind, I would like to comment on portions of the first three chapters of Genesis. The first relates to the original creative act itself:

> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said: "Let there be light"; and

there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (The Bible, Gen. 1.1-5)

Then, proceeding on to the sixth creative day:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1.26-27)

Then, at the end of the sixth creative day:

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Gen. 1.31)

Note the dual creative processes here. God not only creates the material and living universe, in a sense God creates himself.[18] Nothing is mentioned of God's existence prior to this first act of creation. His prior existence is ambiguous. In the act of creating something material, of objectifying the world, God has objectified himself. In turn, this objectifying process of creation has given expression to his subjectivity. God has brought into being a God that is a thinking, willing subject who acts upon and shapes the very materials that he creates. Even if one insists that this allegory assumes a pre-existing God prior to the first act of creation, then God, being alone in the void, exists only in his 'consciousness'. Without other conscious entities to recognize his existence prior to this first act of creation, he is, categorically, a non-entity. Note that at the end of each creative day, God looks upon his works and judges them 'good', or in the case of the creation of humankind, 'very good.' God reflects back upon his works and passes judgement on them. In doing so, he passes judgement upon himself, an act of self-recognition and self-consciousness. It was his objectifying work that permitted this recognition.

In chapter two of Genesis, the creation of the Garden of Eden is described. It is contained within a narrative flashback as chapter two begins with a description of God's seventh day of rest, but then promptly moves back to day six and an elaboration of the creation of humankind in

[18] From this point forward I will use the male gender to describe the god of Genesis ('Yahweh' or 'Jehovah') to save on space as well as the reader's patience. It also makes sense when I later refer to the patriarchal implications of this allegory.

verse four. Chapter two continues with a description of the paradisiac Garden of Eden: its cornucopia of fruit and vegetables, its diversity of animal life, and its idyllic setting, but also, the lone 'Tree of Life' in the centre of the garden. The chapter proceeds in the recounting of Adam's first tasks given him by God: the tending of the garden and the naming of the Garden's animals, which might be taken as a symbolic representation of a unity between manual (*praxis*) and intellectual (*logos*) labour; a theme that will reappear later. It then concludes with an account of the creation of Eve. This description of the Garden of Eden might be one of the first encounters in written history of an imagined original 'state of nature' of humankind; a point I will be referring back to shortly. Chapter three is the account of the 'Fall of Man.' After Eve eats of the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Life offered her by the serpent (Satan), she then offers it to Adam who also partakes. At this point Adam receives a message from God:

> And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So, he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? (Genesis 2.8-11)

Then, the voice of God continued with his curse:

> Cursed is the ground for your sake;
> In toil you shall eat of it
> All the days of your life.
> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth
> for you,
> And you shall eat the herb of the field.
> In the sweat of your face you shall eat
> bread
> Till you return to the ground,
> For out of it you were taken;
> For due you are,
> And to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3.17-19)

In my reading of the Genesis creation story, Adam and Eve's eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life is an allegory of the moment of self-consciousness in the history of our species: an almost anthropological rendering of that precise moment in our history when we began to look upon ourselves as objects separate from the rest of nature. It is a moment of diremption—a

tearing away from nature. No longer are we simply creatures of instinct and the passions, both innocent of responsibility and yet slaves to nature's ambivalence. In this newly obtained freedom from the confines of nature, we become thinking, self-reflective and rational creatures: the 'Tree of Life' is also the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Bad.'

An image we might use to illuminate this concept is a two-dimensional moving image (a film, for example) of two humans encountering one another within the shimmering image of a garden, replete with representations of a diversity of lifeforms expressed in both sight and sound. The two human creatures are an integral part of this scene, but they do not dominate it; they are equal in impression and impact to all other elements. Like all the other living creatures in the scene, they are nonreflective beings simply taking in the phenomena from their senses and instinctively acting in response to them. It helps at this point to think of them not as separate beings within the scene, but rather a part of what forms the *gestalt* of the entire scene itself. However, imagine that at one moment in the unfolding of the film's movement, an interaction between the two human creatures takes place and an object, an offering, is presented from one human to the other. It is at this point that there occurs a recognition of each other's 'otherness.' There is a negation that flows from this: negation in the sense that each subject has now been defined by reference to an 'other' that it is not. But there is a double negation here: negation from the other human form, and then a negation from the rest of nature. At this point, both slowly emerge out of the film and enter the third spatial dimension by projecting forward toward the viewer. Their backdrop is retained, but they are now qualitatively separate from the original two-dimensional viewpoint and separate from each other. Their new position is one of alienation from the two-dimensional backdrop. They are now aware of each other, of themselves, and of their distinctness. It is a disjunctive shock for both.

In the creation myth, Adam and Eve's moment of self-recognition is a moment of shame; however, from an anthropological standpoint, something akin to it, namely anxiety, might be more apt. Freedom is responsibility and, for most of us, it is a burden too heavy to bear. We repeatedly flee from this burden, both in our prehistory (i.e., from the invention of religious creation myths and pantheism to the later authoritarian and patriarchal monotheisms) as well as today through our recent history of creating new mysticisms (e.g. the 'Invisible Hand' of the market). The authoritarian tone of this allegory becomes quite clear when viewed from this

standpoint. In one sense, Satan becomes an anti-hero as he frees Adam and Eve from their passive and pre-reflective consciousness towards self-consciousness, subjectivity and true 'Being'. However, God curses Adam and Eve for their audacity to disobey him, as if to suggest that all would have been well if they had only remained in their innocent state of nature but yet still subject to his laws. While the link between self-consciousness and work is somewhat vague here, the fruit itself holds the key to my proposed linkage. The picking of the fruit is indeed a direct form of appropriation of nature (and thus work); however, it is the 'mediating object' aspect of the fruit that becomes the symbol of self-consciousness. It is the object of mediation between the serpent (Satan) and Eve, and then later, between Eve and Adam. Once eaten, Satan's claims regarding the truth or falsity of God's claims cause a pivot from theory to praxis: reality is forever changed as a result of this action. This object of mediation will become clearer when I introduce G.W.F. Hegel's 'Lordship and Bondage' (Master-Slave) allegory.

One of my other themes regarding work is also presented here, and this is the notion of a categorical difference between autonomous and alienated labour. While labour in the Garden of Eden—the naming of the animals and the tending of the garden—cannot strictly fulfill the full definition of autonomous labour, it does contain certain elements. It may not have been freely chosen by Adam (he was, after all, still within the abovementioned 'state of nature'), but it was, nevertheless, labour that was creative, self-expressive, and performed not to obtain the necessities of life, but rather to give free expression of his full capacities. In fact, according the philosopher Walter Benjamin, who also wrote on the Biblical creation story, the act of naming was the closest faculty man had relative to God's ability to create. God, in the act of creation, simultaneously named and created in the same act. Man named objects based on the knowledge transmitted to him from the non-acoustic language of signs; those elements emanating from the object that described its essence. Man's naming was thus sourced in knowledge and was mediated and abstract. God's naming was revelation; immediate and pure (Benjamin). Therefore, even in language, Benjamin illustrates man's need for mediation in all subject-object interactions.

After Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden, their labour turned into toil and hardship, an unpleasant battle with nature forced upon them by God. It became an alienated

activity to Adam and Eve and their offspring. It became an activity born out of necessity as opposed to one of desire and freedom.

This interpretation of the Biblical creation myth and the fall of mankind is not without precedence. As I have attempted to argue above, it relates to one of Western philosophy's core concepts, namely, the subject-object dichotomy or dualism. Since Plato[19], this theme has been debated and used to explain a number of related dichotomies within the western tradition: the universal and the particular; concept and intuition; the abstract versus the concrete; history and nature (Sherman, 2016 353); and additionally, form and content; fact versus value; "is" versus "ought"; immanence versus transcendence; and freedom versus necessity. The ultimate goal of this philosophical dialogue has long been one of integration; of collapsing dichotomies and bringing about reunification by means of their mediation to the 'totality'. However, as we shall see, full integration is not necessarily possible, nor in all cases is it desirable.

Perhaps one of the best accounts of the subject-object dichotomy is Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's account of the master-slave dialectic in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, PoS). Hegel was an 18th and 19th century (1770-1831) German philosopher working within the German Idealist tradition, and so before we proceed to a discussion of his master-slave dialectic, it is necessary to provide a brief description of that tradition. The American philosopher Frederick Beiser had this to say of the Idealist tradition:

> What unites these forms of idealism…is their similar approach to some common philosophical problems. Since Kant, philosophers had become preoccupied with two distinct but closely related issues: how to explain the possibility of knowledge [epistemology], and how to account for the reality of the external world [ontology]. The entangling of these problems created a paradoxical and apparently irresolvable predicament for Kant and the entire generation after him. The predicament made it impossible to solve one problem without undermining the solution to the other. (Beiser 13)

To gain insight into the object, the subject must have access to it in some way; there must be some material commonality in order to correspond or interact with it. This requires some

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[19] Plato's *Phaedo* contains the first reference (H. Robinson) to his transcendent 'Forms': metaphysical entities representing the idealized, universal forms of all material realities: a kind of perfect categorical template for all particularities. (Plato)

degree of unity between subject and object. On the other hand, a duality between subject and object exists because the subject is all too aware of the fact that it cannot control an object outside of itself through consciousness alone. In fact, a disembodied consciousness (a subject) cannot exert any control over an object. The extreme form of this separation was theorized by the 17th century French mathematician and philosopher René Descartes with his mind-body dualism. Briefly stated, Descartes posited that the mind is independent from matter. Furthermore, our minds and, relatedly, our notions of reality, are not shaped through the inductive processes facilitated by our senses. Our senses, according to Descartes, are not be trusted. Descartes' *cogito*, a kind of disembodied thought thinking itself, is, according to him, a sufficient basis upon which to found truth. He derived this conclusion by means of a backwards induction that sought to eliminate an infinite regress:

> Yet if I derived my existence from myself, then I should neither doubt nor want, nor lack anything at all; for I should have given myself all the perfections of which I have any idea, and thus I should myself be God. But if I derive my existence from some other, then if I trace the series back I will eventually come to a being which derives its existence from itself; and so the argument here becomes the same as the argument based on the supposition that I derive my existence from myself. This is exactly the same approach as that taken by St Thomas: he called this way 'the way based on the causality of the efficient cause'. He took the argument from Aristotle, although neither he nor Aristotle was bothered about the causes of ideas. And perhaps they had no need to be; for can I not take a much shorter and more direct line of argument? 'I am thinking, therefore I exist [*cogito ergo sum*]; indeed, I am thought itself, I am a mind. But this mind and thought derives its existence either from itself, or from another. If the latter, then we continue to repeat the question—where does this other being derive its existence from? And if the former, if it derives its existence from itself, it is God. For what derives existence from itself will without difficulty have endowed itself with all things. (Descartes 175-7)

As interpreted by the German Idealists, Descartes did not solve the subject-object duality so much as he problematized it even further: his scepticism over the reliability of the senses to accurately relate the truth of outside reality resolves itself in a mind-body separation that relies on an immaterial mind as the source of all truth. The German Idealists were not content with this explanation. While they accepted the transcendental nature of our knowledge of outside reality (i.e., that we must cognitively and subjectively constitute objects by means of mental categories) they did not accept Descartes' solipsism (Beiser 106-110). Objective, material reality exists for them. The subject-object dichotomy is not to be solved by denying this reality, but rather in

finding methodologies of identification through mediation. The first German Idealist philosopher, Immanuel Kant, posited a separation between the 'thing-in-itself (*noumena*), and the sensory perception of 'things-in-themselves' (*phenomena*). For Kant, the bridge between the two was impossible to breach: we can only experience 'things-in-themselves' through the mediation of our senses. Therefore, the objects we experience as objects in space and time (*phenomena*) are only appearances shaped by our subjective, sensual perception and the mental categories that we apply to those perceptions.

Hegel's answer to both Cartesian scepticism and Kantian transcendentalism was to say that Reason exists not only within the mind but is also inherent in the material world. Therefore, what we logically and deductively posit as truth in our minds likely has a strong correlation to the nature of outside reality itself. In other words, we can trust the phenomenal register of our sensory inputs to a certain degree: the world of appearances has some correspondence to the 'thing-in-itself'. Hegel's views here are shaped by his historical, dialectical cause-and-effect philosophy. In other words, both outside reality and our perceptions of that reality, are shaped by the dialectical 'engine' of Reason. This refers to Reason's increasing development by means of the sublation process: a transcending and overcoming (yet also an encompassing of previous expressions of Reason) of the internal contradictions inherent in every moment of history. Hegel's form of transcendence is not necessarily sourced in a divine entity, which is necessary in Descartes' dualism and Kant's transcendental idealism. Hegel's source is Absolute Reason: a historical unfolding of Reason. The road towards a fully materialistic view of the subject-object dichotomy was later taken up by Marx with his 'dialectical materialism.'

The philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) was a key figure for Hegel, deeply influencing his thought and work. Fichte linked the expression of free will, or spontaneity, to labour. According to Douglas Moggach, Fichte's definition of spontaneity refers to "…the capacity of subjects to exert causality outside of themselves in the phenomenal order, in the sense-world, and to transform objectivity in accord with the evolving understanding of reason and subjective freedom, an evolution conditioned by the play of internal self-consciousness and external realisations." (Moggach 147). Moggach shows how Fichte's version of spontaneity had direct links to post-Kantian perfectionism, which emphasized the domain of right, or the domain of freedom. This was in contrast to the more interventionist approaches to perfectionism that

were in circulation at the time and which gave primacy to distributive justice and welfare in order to secure *eudaimonia*, or the happiness of all. Fichte believed that labour was the primary form of expression for this freedom of the will. This belief extended to an interventionist directive only when it came to ensuring that all citizens had a right to labour because, for Fichte, the state had an obligation to ensure that all citizens willing to work had access to some form of labour. This included the right of each worker to have access to (though not necessarily ownership of) the tools of their chosen trade. Like Hegel though, Fichte was a child of the Enlightenment and so his views on labour were coloured by a bourgeois tie to the work ethic. So, for example, while the citizen had the right to earn a living through work, and the state had the obligation to provide him or her with work, the citizen had the obligation to work, if at all possible, in order to earn those very same rights. This bourgeois attitude seems reasonable on the surface, particularly in a state of human development where socially necessary work is still required (Fichte 186-187). However, as Marx pointed out later, there would be no such obligation in a state where socially necessary labour has been eliminated due to automation. To require such would truly represent a moralistic and authoritarian turn in political ethics.

As mentioned, Hegel was strongly influenced by Fichte, and so it is no surprise that his political philosophy also gave primacy to the question of labour: its power in creating the self-determined subject and its role in creating subjects who contribute to the universal goals of the state. To explicate Hegel's views on labour and its importance to self-consciousness and self-determination let us now return to the discussion of his 'Lordship and Bondage' allegory (or master-slave dialectic) from his *Phenomenology of Spirit.* This allegory is a short section found near the beginning of the chapter on Self-Consciousness. In order to prepare us for this discussion, however, one last digression is necessary to explain four important Hegelian terms and so, informed by Michael Inwood, I provide the following definitions (Inwood 133-6):

Being-In-itself: An implicit being that exists wholly in relation to itself. It does not have an 'other' with which to compare and thus to identify itself. It is a being defined by potential and is unreflective.

Being-For-Itself: An explicit and reflective being that is self-comprehending. It is defined in relation to the 'other' and thus carries an identity. Nevertheless, a being can have characteristics

that are *in-itself* but yet missing from for-itself. For example, an infant may be rational *in-itself* (i.e., has the potential for rationality), but not *for-itself* because it is not aware that it is rational.

Being-In-and-For-Itself: A being fully at home with itself. It knows itself and is satisfied that it is expressing its full potential (i.e., its *in-itself*). It also is at home with the 'other' and finds itself in the 'other'.

Hegel's introduction to the Lordship and Bondage section begins with the declarative statement "[s]elf-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged." (Hegel, PoS 111). Hegel proceeds to justify this claim through a speculative account of an encounter between two conscious entities. This dialectic of self-consciousness begins in the move from non-reflective consciousness to first stage self-consciousness. This is the move from being-in-itself to being-for-itself. The mind reflectively shapes a sense of self-consciousness by excluding all other objects from its mind. This is a wholly internal process that allows the mind to form the image of an "I", an individual. At this stage of self-consciousness, Hegel says "[w]hat is 'other' for it is an unessential, negatively characterized object." (Hegel, PoS 113). At this stage, even if a being encounters another being similar to itself, it does not recognize the other as a separate being because, in Hegel's words, "…they are for one another like ordinary objects, *independent* shapes, individuals submerged in the being [or immediacy] of *Life*…[t]hey are, *for each other*, shapes of consciousness which have not yet accomplished the movement of absolute abstraction, of rooting-out all immediate being, and of being merely the purely negative being of self-identical consciousness; in other words, they have not as yet exposed themselves to each other in the form of pure being-for-self, or as self-consciousness." (Hegel, PoS 113). However, this first stage of purely subjective self-consciousness has no truth in terms of self-certainty because it is still an abstraction: it has not yet acknowledged its own objectivity (i.e., its own bodily presence).

The second stage of self-consciousness occurs at the moment of acknowledgement of the self-consciousness of the other being that it encounters. This is a moment of recognition of the objectivity of one's own being by means of a mirroring process in which the being sees itself in the other. It is a temporary leaving of 'being-for-itself' to 'being-for-the-other.' However, according to Hegel, what this being also perceives is the threat that the other being presents to

itself. The return to being-for-itself can only occur, according to Hegel, if one stakes their own life in a life-and-death struggle: "[t]he individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a *person*, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. Similarly, just as each stakes his own life, so each must seek the other's death, for it values the other no more than itself; its essential being is present to it in the form of an 'other', it is outside of itself and must rid itself of its self-externality." However, there is an inherent contradiction already existing in this confrontation: if the life-and-death struggle proceeds through to its logical conclusion, the second stage of self-consciousness does not succeed for either being. The death of one being leads, of course, to that being's loss of all consciousness. In the loss of the other, the victor also loses its external source of being-for-itself. It is here, in this theoretical impasse, that Hegel proposes a hierarchical structure resulting from this encounter. The dominant being (the lord) demands a capitulation of the weaker being (the bondsman) in order to preserve life. The bondsman thus serves the lord in a master-slave relationship, which serves both to preserve life and to address the lord's desire to assert his essential being-for-itself. The lord thus appears at first in this relationship to be the independent being, whereas the bondsman is the dependent being as its continued existence is in the hands of the lord. However, the lord's being-for-itself relies on a dependence upon an 'other' in the form of the bondsman.

The relationship of lord to bondsman then proceeds to the next phase where the lord's desire for the 'thing' (other objects) is satisfied by the bondsman who works on the raw materials of nature to create the objects of desire of the lord. Of importance is the parallel relationship of the bondsman to its object (i.e., the raw materials) and that of the lord to the bondsman: the bondsman does not seek to abolish these materials but rather to *work* on them. The lord's being-for-itself in this relationship does not come to full fruition, however. This is because the recognition he gains from the bondsman is not one of a self-conscious independent being, but rather of a dependent, servile being. This is where the primary contradiction of the master-slave dialectic first exposes itself: the original intention of achieving full self-consciousness by means of a recognition of an equal, self-conscious being has failed. The recognition the lord receives is a forced recognition resulting from the servitude of the bondsman. The bondsman, on the other hand, has gained the ultimate being-for-self by ridding himself of his servitude toward nature in the very act of *working* on it:

> For this consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations. But this pure universal movement, the absolute melting-away of everything stable, is the simple, essential nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity, *pure being-for-self*, which consequently is *implicit* in this consciousness. This moment of pure being-for-self is also *explicit* for the bondsman, for in the lord it exists for him as his *object.* Furthermore, his consciousness is not this dissolution of everything stable merely in principle; in his service he *actually* brings this about. Through his service he rids himself of his attachment to natural existence in every single detail; and gets rid of it by working on it. (Hegel, PoS 117)

At the initial stages, however, the bondsman's consciousness is only in the form of a being-in-itself: it is a potential, but not yet fully realized and not-fully-conscious reality within the bondsman. The lord, in obtaining the objects of his desire without working on it, has only achieved a fleeting satisfaction of self. His reliance on the bondsman has left him in a position of servitude towards the bondsman whom he now relies upon to produce the objects of his desire. The bondsman, on the other hand, in continuing his work on producing these objects, comes to a realization of his agency and self-consciousness. He now sees himself as a being who has freed himself from the bondage of necessity vis-à-vis nature and has become a being-in-and-for-itself. To be clear, the bondsman at this point is still in a position of servitude towards the lord; however, he is now free from the bondage that nature once placed upon him.

Hegel's later turn toward political economy in his *Philosophy of Right* (Hegel, PoR) contains his thoughts on the societal implications of his phenomenological grounding of work. Hegel knew of, and read, Adam Smith and so his practical views on labour aligned with those of the classical economists to a large degree. For Hegel, the amount and type of work performed in converting the raw materials of nature into commodities consumed by humans defines both the value of the commodity and the value of the labour that goes into its production. Said differently, the type of work performed, and the commodities that it produces, gain their value in reference to the needs of society. Hegel refers to these needs and their fulfillment as a complex system of *representations* that rapidly pass from one participant in the market to the other. These representations refer to the role of money and the price system in the market. These representations are what Hegel refers to as *theoretical education*. Language, as a system of

representation, is also included in Hegel's notion of theoretical education. *Practical education*, on the other hand, is Hegel's term for occupational training. It is practical not just in terms of its vocational aspect, but practical in terms of its delimiting nature: one's chosen form of work must be tailored to one's skills and abilities and to the strictures of societal demand. These imposed limitations and expectations of work define what is worthwhile work in civil society. Hegel is thus a defender of the idea of the division of labour.

The logical outcome of these traditional, classical views of labour led Hegel to a partial defense of inequality. Hegel believed that inequality is the result of an unequal development and distribution of natural physical and mental capabilities within human society. For Hegel, while these inequalities are not strictly ethical, they are acceptable because they are within the realm of 'civil society.' Hegel views civil society as one of the elements residing within the realm of *Sittlichkeit*, or 'ethical life.' However, of the three elements of the 'ethical life'—the family, civil society and the state—only the family and the state are the truly ethical. Civil society, according to Hegel, is only a 'semblance' of the ethical realm. Its internal dynamic, or 'system of needs', must, according to Hegel, be permitted to operate freely. Hegel's debt to Adam Smith is readily apparent in his views of civil society.

The division of labour, inequality in its various forms, the need for specialization in the satisfaction of human needs, all lead to correlated *distinctions* on a mass level. Hegel refers to these group or mass-level distinctions as *estates*. These estates represent complexes of mutual needs and needs satisfaction, varieties of work, and the accompanying theoretical and practical education systems in support of each. In terms of their importance to the structural foundation of the state, estates are second only to the family unit. According to Hegel, estates serve as mitigating force between the selfish motivations of the individual and universal concerns. Which estate you belong to is dependent upon the contingencies of birth and natural endowment, but also by subjective opinion and arbitrary will. The estates are important for the full expression of the individual's actuality because each individual's choice of estate (and Hegel is clear that a choice must be made as one moves into adulthood) shapes their particularity within the universal. This becomes the realm of morality and so the honour of one's estate and rectitude (or virtue) becomes key in terms of finding success in one's place in society. For Hegel, to be a 'somebody' is to be a somebody that belongs to an estate and does his best to make a positive

contribution to that estate. Being outside of all estates does not grant universality to the individual. However, being a virtuous member of an estate contains within it the universal. One becomes a being both in and for itself as a member of an estate.

Related to the concept of the 'estate', Hegel introduces a class—or perhaps more accurately, a collective subject—called the 'rabble.' This subject is collective only in the sense of its members having shared attributes: members of the rabble do not express their collectivity through solidarity. Instead, they remain highly atomized and even antagonistic toward civil society. So let us delve a little deeper into those attributes because I believe that in doing so, we will discover a commonality between both the dispossessed in civil society (i.e., the poor, the precariat, racial minorities, etc.) and the wealthy. Let us start off with Hegel's own description of the rabble:

> When a large mass of people sinks below the level of a certain standard of living—which automatically regulates itself at the level necessary for a member of the society in question—that feeling of right, integrity [*Richtlichkeit*], and honour which comes from supporting oneself by one's own activity and work is lost. This leads to the creation of a rabble, which in turn makes it much easier for disproportionate wealth to be concentrated in a few hands. (Hegel, PoR 266)

There are a number of important concepts to highlight here. First, notice the link between the phenomenological importance of work in terms of providing honour, integrity and right to the worker. Second, notice the importance of the mediating power of work in linking the worker to the rest of civil society. The rabble, in their phenomenological lack caused by insufficient or non-existent access to work, creates a feeling—and a reality—of dispossession and disconnection. Hegel goes on to further define the rabble as those who, as a result of their dispossession, rebel against the wealthy, the government, and indeed, the rest of society (Hegel, PoR 266).

Hegel is quite clear that simply expanding production and producing more wealth does not solve the problem of rabble and can actually exacerbate the problem: "…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." (Hegel, PoR 267). Hegel is specifically referring to the reciprocal disconnection of the wealthy vis-à-vis civil society and the

gross inequality that causes this disconnection. This is why Hegel includes the wealthy in the rabble:

> On the one hand, poverty is the ground of the rabble-mentality, the non-recognition of right; on the other hand, the rabble disposition also appears where there is wealth. The rich man thinks that he can buy anything, because he knows himself as the power of the particularity of self-consciousness. Thus, wealth can lead to the same mockery and shamelessness that we find in the poor rabble. (Hegel, PoR 454)

This view of the wealthy is not without precedent. A number of studies recently have pointed to the inhibited sense of empathy and compassion amongst the wealthy (Dietze and Knowles) (Stellar, Manzo and Kraus) (Piff, Stancato and Cote). To be clear, this is not an essentialist argument. There is nothing in the biological makeup of the wealthy that predetermines a lack of empathy and compassion. It is, rather, an epi-phenomenon of a cultural and structural bias towards so-called merit. Misperceptions as to the sources of one's individual worth, talent and status (i.e., the proverbial "self-made man") leads to a disconnection with the other and with society-at-large. Both sides of the rabble view others with suspicion and thus fail to see their dependence on the totality. Both sides have a difficult relationship to work: the poor and precariat through their inability to gain sufficient work to sustain themselves, and the wealthy through their easy access to money and leisure. Therefore, work—one of the prime mediating forces between the individual and the totality—cannot perform its mediating function.

Marx drew upon Hegel for a number of his conceptual insights, most notably for his dialectical methodology and his theory of subjectivity and self-consciousness through labour. However, Marx did not agree with Hegel's views on the necessity of the distribution of labour. Nor did he agree that labour within the current capitalist system was the right forum for the normative expression of an unalienated form of labour. Notwithstanding these disagreements, Marx's notion of class struggle is an almost perfect analogue to Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic. On a foundational level, what distinguished Marx from Hegel was Marx's thoroughgoing materialism. Marx eschewed all forms of Idealism. He wanted to ground theory and consciousness itself in the material world, so while dialectical thinking was central to his philosophy, its movement was not to be premised on the guiding force of Absolute Spirit, as it was in Hegel's system. Rather, for Marx, history is driven by real, on-the-ground struggles for recognition and emancipation.

The source of Marx's differences with Hegel can be traced to a fundamental difference between the philosophical foundations of Idealism and Materialism vis-à-vis the sources of alienation. For Hegel, and his Idealist cohort, alienation resides entirely within consciousness. The extent to which we humans phenomenally register, or consciously represent, objects as things residing outside of ourselves, is the extent to which we are alienated. Hegel resolves this alienation by an act of self-consciousness itself: a turning back to one's own self-consciousness to discover that the outside object is actually a representation by one's own consciousness. The object, when viewed from this Idealist stance, becomes something owned and controlled by one's consciousness. In this act of self-consciousness, the object is no longer alienated.

As the philosopher Schlomo Avineri states, Marx rejects this Idealist interpretation of alienation by separating the concept of alienation from that of objectification. Objectification is a process of coming to terms with the fact that objects exist outside ourselves and our ability to categorize phenomenon. Alienation represents the real relationship that can exist between a subject and an interactive, outside object that render the subject subservient in some way to the object. It is not, therefore, simply a problem of consciousness (Avineri 97). Marx's materialist stance differs from Hegel's idealism in a number of important ways, important not only in abstract, epistemological terms, but also in terms of their real-world implications. First, Hegel's idealist interpretation of alienation reduces man to his inner self. His autonomy is actuated simply by means of an act of consciousness. Marx's view is the opposite of this. He views man's autonomy (self-development and self-creation) as something that must be earned through struggle and work in the real world of material objects. Objects thus become something non-alienated if they are created by a person for that person, or for a cause supported by that person. Note the worker's ownership of both the process and the object, the use-value attributable to the object by its creator, and the lack of coercion in the process. Avineri summarizes the difference between Hegel's and Marx's view on alienation and its elimination as follows:

> There is another aspect to Hegel's view: if objectification is an illusory projection of consciousness that will ultimately return to itself, then the whole effort of man's shaping himself and his world is pure phantasy. Hence alienation itself is illusory. Since Marx sees alienation as residing in a concrete relationship between man and his products, such a relationship cannot be illusory provided the products are, as Marx maintains, real. [. . .]. Since Marx recognizes the autonomous existence of objects, he cannot be satisfied with

> the merely cognitive overcoming of alienation but must seek his solutions in object-creating praxis. (Avineri 98)

As the philosopher Warren Breckman posits, the forms of alienation noted in the *1844 Manuscripts* were likely influenced by Marx's readings of the German philosopher and anthropologist Ludwig Feuerbach. Feuerbach locates alienation in the ascendence of Christianity after the fall of both the Greek *polis* and the Roman Republic. Within Christianity, the individual subject's need to seek meaning expressed itself in a turning away from secular communal life and its centeredness in material (and thus mortal) reality. Meaning was sought instead in the transcendent world of the immortal subject: "[s]eeking to evade the restrictions and threats of earthly life, the Christian invests his hopes and energies in a fantasy of unlimited selfhood that denigrates the concretely existing individual and the world in the name of an abstract idea of personality." (Breckman 103). According to Breckman, Feuerbach concludes that this drawing away from the world leads to an estrangement from one's fellow human beings and produces an atomized being. This estrangement leads to a political and social form of alienation. Feuerbach believed that the way out of this urge to deny death through the establishment of the immortal self was to fully embrace ". . . humanity's potential as a communal being." (Breckman 104). Feuerbach did not deny the reality or the importance of the individual, but rather sought to ground the individual's subjectivity within the cycles of nature and in a praxis of improving the material conditions of the species. The influence of Feuerbach's materialist philosophy on Marx is clear; however, as Breckman points out, Marx saw the source of alienation not in Christianity, but in the secular material conditions of society (Breckman 104). The alienation inherent to the Christian worldview was a consequence of the alienated conditions of labour and class and was therefore not the ultimate source of alienation.

In his biography of Karl Marx, the historian Gareth Stedman Jones takes the position that both Marx and Feuerbach were not so pure in their materialism. According to him, both rely on a transcendent form to effect the necessary changes to both consciousness and material reality:

> Their [David Strauss and Feuerbach] employment of a pantheistic notion of immanence derived from the metaphysics of Spinoza, rather than of self-consciousness, to explain the displacement of Christianity by humanism or species-being. In Bauer's [Bruno Bauer] view, this meant invoking an immediately effective, universal species-being, without showing how it came to be adopted, how it operated or how it was internalized by the

> individual. Karl's [Marx's] notion of proletarian class-consciousness was susceptible to the same sort of objection. But, in his case, the source of his position seems not to have been any particular affinity to Spinoza. The obstacle to acceptance of the Kantian conception of the individual for him appears to have been the result of his distaste for any form of individualism… (Stedman Jones 203).

Stedman Jones goes on to describe Marx's desire for a return to the merged subject-object citizen of the Athenian *polis* as well as his identification of the proletariat class as the locus of that merged and collective citizen. Stedman Jones later refers to Bruno Bauer and the Republican wing of the Young Hegelian philosophers in relation to their scepticism of the emancipatory potential of labour and of the working class in general. The consciousness of workers, according to them, was "rudimentary" and "immediate" and, as such, would scarcely serve the transcendent telos that Marx had envisioned for their class. Their lack of education and their focus on the day-to-day struggle for survival leads them, justifiably, to concentrate on the here and now and on pure self-interest (Stedman Jones 203-204).

I believe that my analysis of the *1844 Manuscripts* provides ample evidence of Marx's interest in, and commitment to, the self-determining individual. In this regard, I disagree with Stedman Jones' interpretation of Marx's attitude toward individualism. Nevertheless, I believe that he does point to an important qualifier that we must continue to apply to the working class, particularly if we are to hold out any hope for its potential to serve as an emancipatory, collective subject. And this qualifier is simply to say that there is no essential—nor any transcendent—quality of the worker or his class that automatically grants it that role. Rather, it is the activity of work itself that lends itself most effectively to the mediation of the individual to society. I would further qualify that statement to specify work with a democratic, collective purpose: praxis, in other words. It would be naïve in my view to see today's working class as anything more than a promising locus of collective subjectivity; one that must expand beyond its narrow confines to represent the needs and desires of all who are in an alienated position relative to capital. In the first chapter, I outlined some of the potential avenues of expansion of the working class in my description of unrecognized social identities, the precariat, the subaltern, the Multitude, etc.

Marx's notion of 'species-being' is central to his normative[20] theory of labour. For Marx, all species express their essence through some form of labour:

> For labor, life activity, productive life itself, appears to man in the first place merely as a means of satisfying a need—the need to maintain physical existence. Yet the productive life is the life of the species. It is life-engendering life. The whole character of a species, its species-character, is contained in the character of its life activity; and free conscious activity is man's species-character. (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 31)

Man creates his "world of objects" through his work on the raw materials of nature. In doing so, he gives full expression to his "conscious species-being."

Marx highlights the differences between human and non-human species-beings in an effort to clarify the true meaning of labour as it relates to humanity. He states, for example, that animals produce only for immediate needs while man produces even when he is free from physical need. Also, animals only reproduce themselves, whereas man reproduces himself *and the whole of nature*. Finally, animals only produce objects that align with their own physical needs, whereas man is able to extend his production beyond his physical needs towards works of art that adhere to standards beyond those of necessity (i.e., aesthetic standards). Another salient difference between human and non-human animals is the human capacity for the denial, or postponement, of desire. This trait is not to be confused with the instinctive hoarding of food in some non-human animals; rather, it is a cognitive act of willful denial or postponement, and thus shows the human capacity for prudence. Humans have the ability to plan for the future, and to labour in such a way as to produce surpluses for communal needs or contingent safeguarding.

The relationship between alienation and necessity is complex. Any work performed solely out of necessity (i.e., to produce or obtain food, clothing, shelter, etc.) can be viewed as a form of alienation. Indeed, this is the alienation that nature places upon us, and it exists for us as intelligent, self-conscious beings in a way that it does not for non-human animals. This is because we alone maintain the potential to eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, the time we

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[20] By using the term "normative theory of labour" I am attempting to distinguish between his positive theory of alienated labour under capitalism (the "is", predominately sourced from *Capital*) versus his evaluative and normative theory of labour (the "ought", which I am sourcing from the *1844 Manuscripts*).

spend procuring or creating the objects necessary for our survival. The essence of our species-being, if you will, is the ability to create our own individual essences. Our essences are not fully given to us as a frozen set of qualities. We have the capacity to be self-determinate. We can create our essences when we work freely on objects of self-expression (i.e. the true 'realm of freedom'); however, we can also do so when we work on objects of necessity—but only when that work is freely chosen and autonomous.

Sean Sayers clarifies this latter point when he reminds us that Marx did not view the realm of necessity as a form of alienation. While Marx defined the realm of freedom as the realm that exists outside of the realm of necessity, he did not view the realm of necessity as a realm of unfreedom. According to Sayers, the realm of necessity can also be ". . . free and fulfilling" (Sayers, Freedom and the 'Realm of Necessity' 263), but it can only be so if two conditions are met. First, alienation from the process of production (i.e. Marx's second moment of the alienation of labour from his *1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*) must be transcended. Sayers states that this form of alienation is transcended both negatively through an absence of restraint (or coercion) and positively as rational self-determination. In other words, instead of being ruled by the blind forces of nature, man can work alongside nature and its cycles and use nature to work for his benefit. The second condition under which labour within necessity can be a "free and fulfilling" activity is when labour is carried out with the least expenditure of energy (Sayers, Freedom and the 'Realm of Necessity' 266). This approach to labour under necessity grants humanity more time for the type of purposiveness without purpose that distinguishes the realm of freedom and which is the defining feature of play, artistic expression, scientific discovery, and philosophical contemplation.

At this stage, I want to introduce the thinking of one of the early members of the Frankfurt School, Herbert Marcuse. But first, let me provide a brief introduction to the Frankfurt School itself. The Frankfurt School was started in 1923 as an institute for social research. Its founding members were drawn from a number of disciplines including economics, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis, law, philosophy, and even musicology. Its agenda was radical in a deep sense in that it challenged not only capitalism but Soviet communism, positivism in the social sciences, and all closed philosophical systems. They drew primarily upon Hegelian, Marxist and existentialist philosophies, but also incorporated Freud's theories of human

psychology. They were sceptical of the traditional Marxist views on the primacy of the working-class and its revolutionary potential and focussed instead on the cultural roots of alienation. Their primary methodological approach was that of 'critical theory' (Jay). Critical theory is, essentially, a negative approach to philosophising. It does not attempt to build systems, but rather seeks to critically analyse existing systems searching for their sources of alienation, contradiction, and retrogression. It utilizes the dialectic but does not presuppose any sublation that is greater than the sum of its preceding parts. In this regard, it runs counter to Hegel's idealistic dialectic and Marx's materialist dialectic. Therefore, it views the dialectic as a contingent process that offers no guarantees of progress.

The other prominent founding members of the Frankfurt School—Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer—were always open to the ontological and subjectivist approach to philosophy (i.e., Heidegger's existential phenomenology); however, they gave primacy to the object (Sherman, 2016). In other words, their focus of critique was the whole of western civilization: its positivist approach to the social sciences, its bourgeois ideologies and cultural institutions, and its totalizing effects. etc. This approach is what led them to question the effectiveness of the enlightened individual subject as an agent of change. Marcuse's approach was different. He was a student of Heidegger who retained a life-long openness to phenomenology and its subjectivist stance. This was despite his loss of faith in the revolutionary potential of the working class (Aronson). Marcuse, in fact, attempted a synthesis of the Marxist dialectic with the phenomenological subjectivism of Heidegger. This led him to attempt a reconciliation of Heidegger's ahistorical ontology (a timeless merging of the past, present and future), as well as his "phenomenological structure of being-in-the-world" (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism xvii), with a Marxist historicist approach that paid due respect to the dialectical process of social change within the unfolding of history. But within this historicist approach Marcuse saw a dangerous tendency to objectify all agency and to leave the individual subject stripped of political power. Therefore, Marcuse sought to rid Marxist theory of its tendency toward "…unwittingly reproducing the domination of the concrete subjects they [Marxist theorists] were intended to emancipate." (Abromeit 134). Marcuse saw this tendency in the thinking of several theorists (including Georg Lukács, whom I will be discussing in great detail in chapter 3), but

particularly those who were influential in the Second International[21]. Figures such as Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein allowed a scientistic or positivistic approach to gain influence in the Second International. This later influenced Lenin's 'vanguardism', which was later used as a both a justification and an apologetics for anti-democratic authoritarianism in Soviet socialism. Marcuse recoiled from this passive philosophy, which saw individual subjects as spectators to the inevitable forces of history outside their control. This is what drew him to Heidegger's reintroduction of the dynamic and politically powerful individual subject (Abromeit).

It is to this period of Marcuse's writings that I now turn in order to uncover a definition of labour that I believe is an important contribution to the concepts of labour thus far provided. In his essay entitled "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labour in Economics" (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 122-150), Marcuse contrasts the philosophical definitions of labour with those of mainstream economics. Marcuse begins with a definition of labour under capitalism that highlights labour's centrality in the production process and its link to the economic value. For Marcuse, the implied essence of labour within capitalism is an objectified, and objectifying, "supervised, unfree activity" (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 123). What is missing from the economic essence of labour is the philosophical consideration of its ontological status, its link to *Being*. The view of labour within mainstream economics captures only its detached, alienating substance. What it fails to answer is what the activity of labour produces within the human subject and how it affects the subject's relationship to the world. To be fair, Marcuse acknowledges that mainstream economics does, at times, philosophically address some of the ethical issues of labour: the ethics of de-skilling, exploitation, child labour, etc. However, these considerations are often on the fringes of analysis, and still fail to get at the cause of these ethical dilemmas related to labour.

In this essay, Marcuse draws heavily from Hegel, Marx and Martin Heidegger. In keeping with this phenomenological tradition, Marcuse views labour as absolutely essential to *Being*. Labour is not simply an activity. To be sure, activity is a component of human labour, just

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[21] The Second International refers to an international organization of socialist parties and labour unions. It was established on July 14th (Bastille Day), 1889 in Paris where delegates from 24 countries gathered to participate in its first congress. It lasted until 1914, the start of World War I. (Larson).

as activity is a component of play; however, the concept of activity does not fully describe labour's essence. Labour's fundamental essence is 'doing' (German: *Tun*). According to Marcuse: "[c]onceived in this way, labor is not determined by the nature of its objects, nor by its goal, content, result, etc., but by what happens to human Dasein itself in labor." (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 127). To explain this quote a brief detour to explain Heidegger's *Dasein* is necessary. One of the primary concerns of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger was his desire to understand and articulate his views on the fundamental nature of Being. What is the nature of Being (verb) for all 'beings'(noun)? The being that he was most concerned about in terms of describing its Being was, of course, the human being. His term for the specific type of being that human beings are (and engage in) was *Dasein*.[22] According to Heidegger, what distinguishes human beings (*Dasein*) from all other beings is our ability to know ourselves as beings who experience Being. We are also capable of understanding that our Being is shaped by the world that we are 'thrown' into. In other words, we are social beings dependent on other human and non-human beings. We are also captive to a world that we are involuntarily placed into, complete with its own history, institutions, social structures, etc. In this sense, we are beings who understand our history in relation to the present and can plan for, and create, our future. This implies two things with regards to our state of Being: (1) we are embodied beings whose Being is shaped by the material reality and social world around us; and (2) our Being is defined in our becoming and is therefore constituted by temporality. These elements of Being for *Dasein* grant us a level of freedom that other beings do not have (Watts). Therefore, while *Dasein* is a noun, it contains elements of its related verb. To summarize, *Dasein* is the being that understands and shapes its Being. These are powerful concepts that can help us understand our present. They can also provide us with insights as to how we might be made more aware of the forces that shape our consciousness. However, the weakness of this highly 'subjectivist' view is its almost stoic acceptance of the objective conditions that we find ourselves in today. Heidegger's emphasis on individual agency and consciousness is somewhat limited because of its failure to recognize the emancipatory potential of *Dasein*'*s* power when aligned with collective agency, an agency that might actually challenge the prevailing 'lifeworlds.'

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[22] From the German '*da*', or 'there', and '*sein*', or 'being': being there

With Marcuse's reference to *Dasein* now defined, at least in terms of its core principles, I can now outline Marcuse's link between *Dasein* and labour. Labour is *Dasein's* way of mediating and appropriating the objective world. It is also *Dasein's* task. Drawing upon Hegel, Marcuse says that labour is how *Dasein* becomes a *'being-to-and-for-itself'*. Through sensuous labour, human beings mediate nature (inner and outer) and their relations with others. Humans interact with nature to appropriate its raw materials in order to create objects for their use. To illustrate the function of labour in *Dasein*, Marcuse contrasts it with play. Play can (but does not have to) involve objects. However, objects used in play are a detached entity—a person does not orient or direct his or her attention toward the object of play in the same 'lawful' sense as one does toward the object of work. The object of work has meaning in the sense that it contains its own laws (uses, agreed categories, etc.). The objects of play, however, do not have their own laws—at least when used in play. Instead, in play, one directs one's attention to the rules of the game. The object of play simply exists as a means to observe, and work within, the rules of the game. In a sense, play allows one to enter a dimension of freedom higher than that under labour because one is playing within one's own self, and his or her chosen rules of the game, and not with the object. However, play has no permanence. In this stage of Marcuse's thinking, play is self-distraction and self-recuperation from labour.

Marcuse defines labour using three core 'moments': (1) duration; (2) permanence; and (3) its burdensome character. Marcuse's reference to duration implies a counter-intuitive notion of the permanent and burdensome aspect of labour, or work's necessity throughout the life of the individual. There is never a point in an individual's life where one has laboured enough to declare him or her a full Being. It is a continual process of doing. The permanence of labour refers to the fact that the outcome of the labour process should be something permanent that enters the world. This something could be an object that others use, or it could endow the worker with something permanent. The burdensome character of labour does not refer to its imposition of physical and mental effort. Rather, labour's burden refers to its alienating character: "[i]n labor man is always taken away from his self-being and toward something else: he is always with an other and for an other." (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 130). Marcuse is careful to distinguish this ontological, 'being-in-becoming' nature of labour from the economic definition of labour. To be clear, the process of 'becoming' also occurs within labour under its economic definition; however, the economic definition does not exhaust labour's contribution to becoming.

In fact, man would need to labour even if all necessities were taken care of and economic labour was no longer required. To Marcuse, labour is a core component of *Dasein's* essence. Contrary to non-human beings, whose relationship to the outside objective world is to 'let things happen', human *Dasein* 'makes things happen.'

Marcuse next highlights the importance of labour to the process of self-creation in relation to the temporal nature of *Dasein*. As mentioned above, we are 'thrown into' our lifeworlds. These lifeworlds—built environments, institutions, social relations, worldviews, etc.—represent the built-up permanence of labour from previous generations of *Dasein*. This would include (but is much more than) Marx's 'general intellect': the built-up technological and social knowledge accruing throughout generations of workers. These attest to the *permanence* of labour. However, they also represent a challenge to each successive generation of *Dasein* in terms of establishing its own place in the continuum of *doing.* In the context of these inheritances, each *Dasein* must chart his or her own course and establish its claim to the temporal continuum of labour's permanence. Marcuse calls this process a "…sublation of the past currently present." (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 136).

A further point of distinction between the economic and the ontological definitions of labour relate to a means-ends consideration. Economic labour can be thought of as a means toward the ends of the production of surplus value (or profit) for capitalists and the ends of wages for workers. Means and ends are thus separated by a considerable distance. Ontologically, labour's ends are much richer: the "…real plenitude of Dasein in its duration and permanence." (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 143). Therefore, ontologically speaking, the goal of labour is *Dasein* itself. However, this ontological goal cannot come to full fruition within the realm of necessity. The point at which society has successfully moved beyond the realm of necessity—towards Marx's 'realm of freedom'—is the point at which *Dasein* becomes free to labour for its own possibilities. Labour at this stage becomes *praxis* and thus frees itself from its former status as an activity that simply established and secured *Dasein's* place in the fabric of its unchosen and thrown lifeworld:

> Thus, this praxis contains its goal and end in itself; it is no longer *at the mercy* [*Ausgeliefertsein*] of an "alien" objective world, is no longer constantly bound to an *imposed* happening, to which it must submit itself in order to exist at all. What

> Dasein take on itself and makes happen here is its own authentic self. It discloses the truth and plenitude of its being and maintains itself in this disclosed truth and plenitude—to be, in the final sense, what it *can* be. Thus, praxis in the "realm of freedom" is authentic praxis and that to which all other labor is directed as its "end": the free unfolding of Dasein in its true possibilities. (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 144)

Marcuse concludes this essay with a discussion of the division of labour and its relationship to both economic and ontological labour. The division of labour can be classified into its 'natural' or 'social' forms, or they can be classified into their artificial *dominating and dominated* forms. In the past, the social forms of labour's division expressed itself in terms of sex differences (the different roles of women versus men in the family, for example), class differences, occupations and their place in the social hierarchy, etc. The so-called natural forms expressed themselves in differences between individual constitution and talents. These forms, of course, are still with us today. Within the context of a complex civilization, the labouring *Dasein*, according to Marcuse, must engage in a "knowing doing" (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 147). In other words, *Dasein* must not only engage in a form of labour that provides it with the greatest opportunity to express its particular possibilities and objectivity but must also recognize the goals and aspirations of other *Dasein.* Each particular *Dasein* must also knowingly, and with circumspection, *engage* in labour that contributes to the whole by ensuring that its labour aligns with the universal goals of *Dasein's* collective *praxis*. The artificiality of the dominating and dominated form of the division of labour, however, cannot be defended as a normative state. This dominating and dominated form of division also constitutes the source of many of the harmful social forms of division in society: gender inequality, class divisions, etc. Marcuse summarizes this form of labour divisions as follows:

> Whomever's Dasein is placed in the service of "things," those things become chains from which he can no longer liberate himself without negating [*aufheben*] his Dasein as such. Dasein's enduring and constant bondage to material production and reproduction cuts off at the roots the growth of conscious foresight and circumspection corresponding to its authentic possibilities. "Status" [*Stand*] and the ascription of labor to it are no longer determined by the power of Dasein, grounded in foresight and circumspection; they become socio-economic bonds, into which the individual is born or forced. (Marcuse, Heideggerian Marxism 149)

Marcuse's reference to "material production and reproduction" is important. It delineates that form of labour from the dual praxis of *Dasein* in its non-alienated forms: the realm of

necessity and the realm of freedom. While "material production and reproduction" (i.e., the economic realm) address the concerns of the realm of necessity, it does so as a by-product of its real intention within capitalism; namely, the production of surplus value. Labouring solely in this economic realm shuts off *Dasein's* possibility for living an 'authentic' life. In fact, it ceases to be true labour to the extent that it is separated from the "…real praxis of Dasein." It is a labour that accompanies labour or walks alongside it. In its reification[23] of *Dasein*, it becomes the 'semblance' of labour.

The philosopher Lucien Goldmann, in a manner similar to Marcuse, links Martin Heidegger's phenomenological and non-dialectical concept of *Dasein* with the Marxist dialectical approach of Georg Lukács—specifically, Lukács's notion of totality (Goldmann 40) (Feenberg, Heidegger and Marcuse 71). For Heidegger, *Dasein* is a 'being-toward-death'; a being that obtains its meaning in relation to its inevitable death. But there is more to this Heideggarian concept than a consciousness of death. In moments of 'authenticity' *Dasein* expresses Care (*Sorge*) for his self through a deliberate and fully conscious act of self-creation: a simultaneous act that both acknowledges, and acts in defiance against, death. Care is a meaning-producing activity in that it shapes *Dasein* as a totality in and for itself. For Heidegger though, this act of *Dasein* is an individualistic act open only to an elite, heroic few who alone have the power to reshape history. Heidegger's eventual sympathies towards Nazism are perhaps slightly more comprehensible given his elitist philosophy.

What is critical to extract from Heidegger's notion of Care, at least for my purposes here, is the fully conscious approach to work and the objects of work (both tools and final objects of production). Through Care, *Dasein* acts authentically with and on objects: mindfully and in full cognizance of the object's integral relationship to *Dasein*, Being and history. Heidegger uses the terms *Zuhandenheit* ("ready-to-hand") and *Vorhandenheit* ("presence-at-hand"). Presence-at-hand refers to our automatic and almost unthinking day-to-day activity. When we act throughout the day and use objects in a "present-at-hand" manner, we are captive to the "now." We do not

[23] Reification: the process by which a subject is turned into an object, or a subjective process is turned into an objective 'reality'. This concept will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter in my discussion of Georg Lukács' *History of Class Consciousness*.

question the object's existence, or inquire as to its history, cultural relevance, or hidden ideological linkage, nor do we question our role in the chain of linkages, causes and consequences. We simply go about our daily activity, using whatever objects we need to use in order to get through our day. According to Heidegger, this is the definition of the "inauthentic life."

Heidegger's "inauthentic life" has parallels to Lukács's notions of "reification" and "false-consciousness", as well as Adorno's and Horkheimer's "contemplative attitude", as I will discuss in detail in chapter three. Nevertheless, there exists an important difference between Heidegger's phenomenological approach and Lukács's dialectical approach. While Heidegger's view of Care is individualistic, and even elitist, Lukács's totality is a dialectical process of collective action. It contains within it the idea of the gradual integration of subject and object and links individuals to the totality through collective subjectivity and agency. In terms of consciousness, totality represents both the "now" of the present linked to its past, as well as the "now" working toward its future. The individual subject within this totality incorporates Heidegger's "authentic" life, as well as the full consciousness of the objects he uses to get through life (i.e., Heidegger's "ready-to-hand"), but he does so within the larger context of a system-level praxis. His "readiness-to-hand" extends all the way to the point of taking an active part in the democratic design and choice of his objects. Thus, I assert that Lukács's totality incorporates a fuller expression of Care amongst its individual participants than does Heidegger's individualistic conceptualization (Goldmann 40-51).

Heterodox Views on Labour

To close this chapter I want to introduce two heterodox definitions of labour for our consideration. These are the views of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) as set out in her book *The Human Condition* (Arendt) and those of Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) from his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Schiller).

Arendt was one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century. She received her training in Germany from Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Karl Jaspers but had to flee Germany in 1933 after Hitler's rise to power. After spending time in Paris, she

eventually found her permanent home in New York where she taught at the New School for Social Research up until her death. Her political philosophy is difficult to categorize as it has elements of liberalism, republicanism and socialism. However, she did not consider herself a Marxist, and was highly critical of some liberal traditions, including representative democracy. The primary focus of her work was her theory of action and active citizenship (d'Entreves).

The structure of *The Human Condition* is founded upon two main lines of argument. The first argument relates to the ways of living in which we humans engage, and the second argument relates to the social structures that we build to support each of the ways of living. Arendt's views on labour and work are highly original and contrarian. While labour and work are often synonymous terms, Arendt clearly distinguishes the two and provides a new way of classifying labour. Arendt begins with a discussion of the vita activa, or the life of action, but before we describe this way of living, it is necessary to place it in the context of the other major form, vita contemplativa, or the life of contemplation. There is a hierarchy to these ways of living for Arendt, and, as we will soon discuss, this hierarchy changes as we move from the pre-modern to the modern worlds. According to Arendt, the ancient Greek version of this hierarchy was as follows:

Vita contemplativa

Vita active

Vita activa: Labour (*animal laborans*)

Vita activa: Work (*homo faber*)

Vita activa: Action (*bios politikos*)

Action (*praxis*)

Speech (*lexis* and *logos*)

The life of Contemplation was the highest form of life in ancient Greek society. It was free of all activity, including the act of goal-oriented thinking. Contemplation is reflective thinking, the proverbial "thinking about thinking." It does not engage in deduction or theory-building, but rather, seeks illumination and transcendence. V*ita activa,* the second primary 'way of being', contains three subcategories within this ancient Greek hierarchy. The first form of active life for the ancient Greeks was 'Labour' or *animal laborans*. Labour is the activity which corresponds to

the biological processes of the human body: growth, metabolism, and eventual decay. Labour sustains and reproduces the species, but it does not leave any lasting artifice. 'Work', the activity of *homo faber*, is superior to labour in that it produces stable objects with lasting value to humanity. This is a direct corollary to Marcuse's notion of labour's "permanence" discussed above: its temporal link between past, present and future and its ontological link between the subject and totality. In fact, art works are an example of the objects produced by *homo faber*. However, work is also the activity which corresponds to the "…unnaturalness of human existence." (Arendt 7). It is not embedded in the human life cycle. Work provides an artificial world of things, a world of utility. This leads to worldliness, secularity, or being-in-the-world, which is to say that the being of the worker is a being in contradistinction to any transcendent form of being. It is important to note here that both Labour and Work remain within the realm of 'necessity' and are therefore considered separate from the realm of 'freedom'. In fact, Arendt says that they were not granted the dignity afforded to the life of Action or Contemplation because they were not considered autonomous and authentically human ways of living; they only produced what was necessary and useful (Arendt 13).

Finally, 'Action'. Action is the activity, in fact, the only activity, that goes on directly between human subjects without any intermediary. It is expressed by means of two subsidiary activities: action itself and speech. The subdivision of '*Vita activa*—Action' (both 'Action' itself and 'Speech') is the realm of politics, the results of which create the conditions for remembrance and human history. This relates directly to its role in the shaping of political and social institutions. The two most important attributes of *Vita activa* are 'freedom' and 'plurality.' For Arendt, freedom means something more than freedom of the will. Her definition of freedom is more akin to *sui generis* knowledge, or novel action. It relates, in Arendt's view, to the importance of natality, or birth. She describes natality as the "miracle-working faculty of man", in that it rises above and beyond the cyclical recreation of humans and human society by allowing for the introduction of new forms of knowledge: "[i]t is…the birth of new men and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born." (Arendt 246-7). This reference to birth is, I believe, both literal and figurative: freedom originates from both the birth of new human beings, and from the birth of revolutionary potential. Plurality refers to a complex amalgam of equality and distinction. By acting in a cooperative and mutually beneficial manner, the uniqueness and distinction of each human participant in society, considered as equals, serves

to strengthen the whole. However, this plurality is primarily expressed using language as the mediator, not the objects of work or labour. In the case of the ancient Greek *polis, agonal* conflict and debate built rhetorical and philosophic excellence, which further facilitated recognition and distinction (Arendt 194). As Arendt says, action is both a means and an end. In other words, it produces no artifice lasting beyond its performance. The speech act, the debate, the performance are ends in themselves. Indeed, this was (and still can be) an arena of *eudaimonia* (Arendt 206-207).

It is clear from the above that the life of pure action was elevated in the eyes of the ancient Greeks. Labour and even work were seen as undignified: they impeded the autonomous and authentic life; however necessary they were in establishing the conditions for *Vita activa*. However, it bears repeating that the life of action still remained subsidiary to the life of contemplation. For both the ancient Greeks and the Medieval Christians, stillness and quiet were valued above anxiety-inducing (or reflecting) action—even if that action consisted only in thinking and speaking. Contemplation permitted consciousness of the unchanging *kosmos* and its beauty and truth (Arendt 15). *Vita activa*, even in its highest form of action, serves *vita contemplativa*. These categories of 'ways of living', and their descriptions, remain constant within Arendt's political philosophy, even when brought forward to the present. What changes when she moves to modern times are not the categorial descriptions, but rather the relationship of each category, from one to each other, and their place in the hierarchy.

Next, let us turn to a discussion of Arendt's social structures, which as mentioned, correspond to and support the ways of living. I will return to the ways of living when we bring both it, and their related social structures, into the modern age. For ancient Greek society, there were two main realms: the public and the private. The private realm, the life of the *oikos*, was the realm of the family and of the home. Economics at that time consisted of the satisfaction of life's necessities—food, clothing, shelter, sex and reproduction, child-rearing, etc.—from within the home. Inequality was a fact of life in the *oikos,* and a strict hierarchy was enforced. The private realm was also the realm of labour, which was performed primarily by slaves, but also by family members, including the head of the household. This private realm of necessity was essential in enabling the public realm of freedom. Public life was the life of the *polis* and was only available to its male citizens. All members of this realm were considered equals. The *polis* was the

political arena of action and speech. Thus, the *polis* was separate and distinct from the private realm of the economy (*oikos*). The *polis* was also the source of *eudaimonia*. According to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* happiness was best thought of as a progressive flourishing over the entirety of one's life. It was achieved on an individual basis through the perfecting of human virtues but required the political arena (*polis*) for its fullest expression. Contrary to our contemporary views of happiness, Aristotelian *eudaimonia* required courage—courage to leave the safety and comfort of the *oikos* and courage to face the responsibilities of political freedom in the *polis*:

> The "good life," [*eudaimonia*] as Aristotle called the life of the citizen, therefore was not merely better, more carefree or nobler than ordinary life, but of an altogether quality. It was "good" to the extent that by having mastered the necessities of sheer life, by being freed from labour and work, and by overcoming the innate urge of all living creatures for their own survival, it was no longer bound to the biological life process. […] [w]ithout mastering the necessities of life in the household, neither life nor the "good life" is possible, but politics is never for the sake of life. As far as the members of the polis are concerned, household life exists for the sake of the "good" life" in the *polis*. (Arendt 37)

If we extend the last sentence of that quote and apply it to our time, we could assert that the economy should exist for the sake of the "good life" not for the sake of capital and its obsessions with profit and economic growth.

Arendt next contrasts the ancient Greek social structures with that of modernity. In modernity, society (a direct corollary to Hegel's 'civil society') comes to dominate. Roles change, the locus of necessity changes, and the hierarchy of the ways of living is inverted. Society becomes the realm of economics—a modern-day equivalent of the Greek *oikos.* Society integrates the social and the political, and in doing so, diminishes both. A number of destructive forces come into being in the abolition of the private realm. First, the realm of necessity becomes social. As we will see shortly, this leads to the enthronement of alienated labour. Second, with no private realm, intimacy becomes a hidden, and in many ways suppressed, aspect of being human. Lastly, with the emphasis on production within capitalist society, the life of contemplation was rendered almost obsolete. The life of society thus takes on almost all of civilization's functions, including politics. This also renders the life of action (i.e., that portion of *Vita activa* not

concerned with labour or work) almost as irrelevant as the life of contemplation. This brings profound changes in our attitudes towards meaning.

Since Arendt wrote prior to the advent of neoliberal capitalism, I would add to this narrative my view that a new relationship between the realm of the economy and political life is evolving. A movement away from political economy has now proceeded in full force with political life and political agency increasingly being taken out of the hands of the *polis* (i.e., citizens) and is placed, instead, into the realm of the economy. Increasingly, the economy has come to represent all aspects of humanity. However, with this realignment of societal hierarchy, true agency increasingly resides in the hands of the wealthy elite, with a *semblance* of agency residing amongst the rest of society and expressing itself as consumer choice. This reification of polis (i.e., the citizen as objectified 'producer' and 'consumer') de-links citizens from the totality. While they interact with civil society as producers and consumers, they do not have a true sense of agency to change civil society.

Arendt pays particular attention to the changes wrought in the transition from the public realm to the realm of society. According to her:

> . . . society equalizes under all circumstances, and the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact society has conquered the public realm, and that distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual. (Arendt 41).

Note the distinction between equality before the law and in politics. She is not speaking of our current concern for equality of wealth, income, and of opportunity. These are objectively unequal commodities today. Rather, she is talking about the homogenization of society and how that diminishes our ability to distinguish ourselves and find meaning within a social context. This is a complex, and seemingly contradictory, concept. Equality in the Greek polis was required in order to engage in the agonistic process of politicking, gaining recognition and distinguishing oneself. Modern society overturns this relationship: we live, compete, work in objectively unequal terrain, and as a result we often fail to gain recognition and distinction.

In elucidating the leveling-out process of society, Arendt makes an interesting point about the mathematization of the social sciences, particularly economics. As society grows and becomes more homogenized, the results of statistical models start to achieve alignment with

empirical observation. This cannot help but be the case. The law of large numbers, as she calls it, guarantees this alignment. The problem arises when these backward-looking models are used to project into the future in terms of policy. For Arendt, distinction is achieved in the social realm as an exception. It is a rare and special event. Using highly summarized statistical data, and concepts such as the 'representative agent' in economics, serves to diminish the subject and further homogenize society. On this, Arendt says the following:

> The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. (Arendt 178).

Also of note, Arendt quotes the work of Gunnar Myrdal who termed this homogenizing tendency of economics, and indeed of utilitarian philosophy in general, the "communistic fiction." (Arendt 44). Incommensurability of abilities, perspectives and values, and the constant drive to extinguish these differences through the homogenizing effects of money, also represents a loss of meaning.

As mentioned above, work is the realm of *homo faber*. This is the aspect of *vita activa* where objects and works of art are created that have some permanency. It is the realm of the craftsman, the artist, the engineer, the architect, etc. It is also the realm of utility. The work of *homo faber* is exemplary action and is meaning-creating. Arendt uses a portion of the chapter on work to present the contradictions inherent in the utilitarianism of modernity. Any opportunity work had in the past to be a means towards creating meaning has been abandoned. Fabricating lasting objects is an activity that addresses use value. Work is a means to produce objects that can be used, and as such does not directly lead to ends, but rather to other means. This is because utility does not address ultimate ends or meaning. Nevertheless, utility has become the foundation for modern society and so the production of things has become society's focus. It is the productive process itself that dominates, with little concern for what the "use of use is" (Arendt 154). Furthermore, the relationship became even more alienated in late capitalism where use value itself becomes of secondary importance and exchange value takes its place.

All of what has been discussed of modernity so far, and of its differences in ways of living and social structures, lead to Arendt's concept of "world alienation.". She refers to Max Weber in describing this world alienation:

> The greatness of Max Weber's discovery about the origins of capitalism lay precisely in his demonstration that an enormous, strictly mundane activity is possible without any care for or enjoyment of the world whatever, an activity whose deepest motivation, on the contrary, is worry and care about the self. World alienation, and not self-alienation as Marx thought, has been the hallmark of the modern age. (Arendt 254).

Arendt concludes this discussion of world alienation with a reminder of the juggernaut we face when we try to imagine an alternative to capitalism. Capitalism has most certainly come into being as a result of appropriation and exploitation of labour; however, unlike the mercantilist, imperialist nation states of the past, it did not and does not stagnate, nor does it waste its accumulated wealth. Rather, it continually feeds this wealth back in and renews itself. Its growth imperative and its ability to morph and adapt, as well as its ability to co-opt counter movements that oppose it, guarantee that the permanence once sought in work and its objects no longer provides a potential for meaning. All of its must be fed back into the system (Arendt 256).

Arendt sees even more potential for a loss of meaning in society if these same overarching trends continue. Not only has the activity of work been relegated in favour of labour, labour itself is beginning to take on a diminished role in society. Since the industrial era, the introduction of machinery and the division of labour processes has continued unabated until today, we are faced with automation by means of robots and artificial intelligence, as I discuss above. While this may have positive consequences if managed correctly and directed towards a common telos, here is how Arendt views the results so far:

> The last stage of laboring society, the society of jobholders, demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning, as though individual life had actually been submerged in the over-all life process of the species and the only active decision still required of the individual were to let go, so to speak, to abandon his individuality, the still individually sensed pain and trouble of living, and acquiesce in a dazed, "tranquilized," functional type of behavior. (Arendt 322).

I believe that Arendt's views on labour and work offer an important oppositional force to the views presented by the German Idealist tradition discussed above. Her 'ways of living'

hierarchy, with its preferencing of activity and contemplation over labour and work, speak to the productivist tendency in some progressive dialogues[24]. Work and/or labour for the sake of production does not necessarily lead to optimum social development or to self-consciousness and freedom. The current systemic issues that we face today, as I mention in my introduction, are largely the result of a 'productivist' mind-set that maintains a primary political and economic agenda based on the continuation of exponential economic growth. This mindset is not only found in capitalist thought, but also in some strains of socialist and post-capitalist thought. The post-work movement takes this seriously and calls for an end to all work once socially necessary labour has been automated (Frayne) (Weeks). While I agree with many of this movement's theoretical foundations, I remain committed to the central role of work in the shaping of subjectivity and agency and its socializing power. I fear that a movement away from all work is a world lacking in one of the core sources of human essence and collective agency. However, we must take Arendt's notion of non-work action seriously, particularly as it relates to political agency through communicative action leading to collective power.

Friedrich Schiller, the famous Romantic poet and playwright, friend of Goethe and inspirer of the 'Ode to Joy' text of the last movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony, was also an important philosopher in his own right. While his views lie within the broad category of German Idealism, I present his views here as heterodox due to their unique emphasis on play and the 'play drive.' One of Schiller's main concern in his series of letters entitled *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* was to correct the imbalance between Reason and Passion that he saw

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[24] The philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who was influenced by Hannah Arendt's thinking, also challenged the productivist bias in Marxist philosophy and economics. He does not see labour as the mediating activity between subject and totality, but rather emphasizes communicative action. Communicative action for Habermas is rational, deliberative, democratic and intersubjective communication. Habermas's communicative action draws upon Arendt's distinction between the public and private spheres of society. The ancient Greek *oikos* was the private economic sphere of family and reproduction and was complemented by the public sphere of the *demos* and its *agora*. The *agora* was the realm of communicative action where democratic politics and debate took place. It was a realm largely free of competitive enterprise. After centuries of imperial and feudal rule, the European bourgeois revolutions provided an opening for a renewed public sphere of democratic, communicative action. However, this public sphere contained within it the old private sphere, which had been turned inside out and folded within the public sphere. Since that period, the private *oikos* becomes the public economy. Habermas goes one step further to suggest that gradually, with capitalism's development, this new public sphere lost much of its democratic impulse as it morphed into the unthinking realm of consumerism. Habermas's normative stance is the re-institution of the public sphere as it existed just after the bourgeois revolutions. (Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere 19-26)

emerging out of the European Enlightenment, where reason gained prominence. The likely cause of this imbalance was the Enlightenment's efforts to correct for the irrationality and asymmetric power of organized religion. In addition to the Enlightenment's critique of religious dogma was its emergent emphasis on science and the scientific method. The primary source of these critiques came from the three main centres of Enlightenment philosophy: France (Diderot, Montesquieu, Voltaire), Scotland (Hume, Smith, Hutcheson), and Germany (Kant, Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Wolff). Schiller's concern about this overemphasis on reason was sparked by his horror of the violence of the French Revolution during the Terror. He believed that the Terror was the direct result of the Enlightenment's enthronement of reason and its simultaneous diminishment of the importance of sentiment and morality (Moland). Schiller sought a reconciliation and balance between the two primarily through the aegis of the 'aesthetic dimension.'

According to Schiller, humans are faced with a twofold task when it comes to realizing their being in relation to nature and to one another. First, in line with Hegel's 'being-in-itself', man must extend his innermost potentialities outward and manifest them in the world. Second, he must bring form to all that is outside of him. To Schiller, these dual tasks are necessary in order to harmonize man's sensuous nature with his rational nature (Schiller 77). In his twelfth letter, Schiller presents his innovative dialectic of the play drive. The first aspect of this dialectic is what Schiller calls the "sensuous drive." This drive is the base of change, materiality and embodiment, and of time. It is a self-limiting drive precisely because of its singular and negative determination of reality. To exist materially in time is to make determinate choices in our being at the exclusion of all other potentialities. To be ruled solely by sensuality is to experience pure sensation and thus the loss of self. On the opposing side of the dialectic is the "form drive." The form drive is the locus of man's rational nature. This is the drive that seeks eternal categories, permanence and an annulment of time and change. As Schiller says, "…the first drive only furnishes cases, this second one gives laws—laws for every judgement, where it is a question of knowledge, laws for every will, where it is a question of action." (Schiller 81). One could summarize this by saying that the sensuous drive focuses on the particular, while the form drive's focus is on the universal: "[w]e are no longer individuals; we are species." (Schiller 83). To live solely by the form drive is to not live in the world because no negations would be actioned and thus no particularity would be formed.

In his thirteenth letter, Schiller prescribes a unity—or, in the terminology of dialectics, a sublation—of these two opposed drives. According to Schiller, there is nothing inherent in either of these drives that would constitute mutual exclusivity. Rather, in a dialectical manner, when combined, these two drives cancel the negative content of each other, yet, at the same time, they retain their positive elements. The resultant play drive represents a true Aristotelian synergy. Heightened receptivity of phenomena leads to greater apprehension of the world. Combined with reason, this leads to a greater ability to give form to the world. This, in turn, leads to a greater realization of potential within each individual Being. Schiller summarizes the effects of this new play drive succinctly:

> Where both these aptitudes are conjoined, man will combine the greatest fullness of existence with the highest autonomy and freedom, and instead of losing himself to the world, will rather draw the latter into himself in all its infinitude of phenomena, and subject it to the unity of his reason. (Schiller 88-9)

And later, in a brilliant summation of the ascendant nature of the sensuous-formal sublation, Schiller says the following:

> When we embrace with passion someone who deserves our contempt [sensuous drive], we are painfully aware of the compulsion of nature. When we feel hostile towards another who compels our esteem [form drive], we are painfully aware of the compulsion of reason. But once he has at the same time engaged our affection and won our esteem, then both the compulsion of feeling and the compulsion of reason disappear and we begin to love him, i.e., we begin to play with both our affection and our esteem. (Schiller 97)

What we are beginning to see here is an attempt to integrate, or resolve, the subject-object dichotomy, that long-standing quest in Western Philosophy. The particular manner in which the play drive accomplishes this task is through the aesthetic dimension. Schiller uses phenomenological terms to describe this dimension when he clarifies the object of intentionality of each of these three drives: the object of the sense drive is life; the object of the form drive is form itself; and the object of the play drive is living form, or beauty. The effect of beauty on the human being is both calming and enervating. Beauty also has the effect of bringing balance to Being. As Schiller says: "[b]y means of beauty sensuous man is led to form and thought, by means of beauty spiritual man is brought back to matter and restored to the world of sense." (Schiller 123).

Schiller cautions the reader that this sublation is not locked in stone. It requires a strong personality, shaped by aesthetic education, to keep control over the constituent sensuous impulses of the play drive, and a continued receptivity to the phenomenon of the world to control the dominating tendencies of form and reason. Freedom and creativity are both the expressions and the rewards of the play drive, but the play drive must continually be exercised. Freedom once gained through the play drive is not a permanent state; it must be fought for anew at each stage of an individual's determinate Being.[25] The reward of creativity expresses itself in objective terms through the auspices of free and autonomous work (i.e., play). The object worked on may be objects of use, objects of art, or the object of one's own self. Schiller sees the play drive, and thus beauty, as a "second creatress":

> It is, then, not just poetic licence but philosophical truth when we call beauty our second creatress. For although it only offers us the possibility of becoming human beings, and for the rest leaves it to our own free will to decide how far we wish to make this a reality, it does in this resemble our first creatress, Nature, which likewise conferred upon us nothing more than the power of becoming human, leaving the use and practice of that power to our own free will and decision. (Schiller 149)

After Schiller provides this introduction to the play drive, and its resultant aesthetic dimension, he proceeds in the twenty-second and twenty-third letters to delineate the mechanism of the aesthetic dimension. It here that we begin to see the applicability to my thesis. The aesthetic dimension becomes the intermediary between the unfree and fully pre-determined state of sensuous man—the 'being-in-itself'—and the fully developed, 'being-in-and-for itself' that Hegel would later define (see above). However, before I outline how this principle applies to my theme of work, it is necessary to allow Schiller himself to explain how it applies through the medium of the artwork. When exposed to the artwork, sensual man responds strongly to the sensations elicited upon hearing, reading, listening or touching the artwork. The focus is on the material content of the artwork. Emotional response dominates over the intellectual. However, a 'genuine' work of art, according to Schiller, should affect us as follows:

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[25] Determinate being: Each being has an almost infinite set of possibilities available to him or her at any given moment. To be free, paradoxically, one must choose one of the available choices and negate all others. Therefore, he or she must limit his or her freedoms in order to gain the highest degree of freedom. This singular choice (i.e.,determinate choice) might be bold and creative, or, it might be passive and meek. One could also avoid making any choices.

> Precisely because of this, the one no less than the other must lead to exhaustion, since material cannot for long dispense with shaping power, nor power with material to be shaped. If, by contrast, we have surrendered to the enjoyment of genuine beauty, we are at such a moment master in equal degree of our passive and our active powers, and we shall with equal ease turn to seriousness or to play, to repose or to movement, to compliance or to resistance, to the discursions of abstract thought or to the direct contemplation of phenomena. (Schiller 153)

The salient outcome of the artwork, therefore, is its form not its material: "[i]n a truly successful work of art the contents should effect nothing, the form everything; for only through the form is the whole man affected…" (Schiller 155). The most successful artwork is one where the form consumes the material. In other words, even frivolous thematic material (i.e., pretty melodies) in a musical work may be elevated if it serves the form of the work. On the other hand, if the material of the artwork is the focus, the elevation of sensuous man to the whole person—achieved through the mechanism of beauty—becomes a missed opportunity. It is important to note at this stage that Schiller is not calling for a full return to the form drive. Rather, he is suggesting that the play drive, and its mechanism of beauty, allows for an integration of subject and object, of sensuality and reason, of the particular and the universal. In the artwork, beauty enables one to focus on what is common to us all, not just on our individual emotional and libidinal impulses. Contrary to the biases of the pure form drive, however, the form expressed through the play drive is in full contact with our sensuous nature.

We post-moderns might chafe at Schiller's Romanticism, but while his aesthetic theory might sound antiquated to some, particularly those not familiar with German Idealism and its progenitors, there remains a strong link to Schiller's aesthetic theory in contemporary thought. Theodor Adorno's aesthetics of music and his elevation of musical form is but one example of this connection (Adorno, 2002). Jurgen Habermas also found common cause with Schiller's aesthetic dimension in his theory of communicative action (Habermas, Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 45-50). Regardless of one's initial receptivity to Schiller's aesthetic theory, or lack thereof, there is a conceptual core contained within it that is applicable to—or at least I wish to posit it as being applicable to—our theme of work and its normative praxis. The importance of Schiller's aesthetic theory relates directly to the mediating role that beauty (or the aesthetic dimension as a whole) plays with regards to the integration of rationality into the human psyche: "[i]n a word, there is no other way of making sensuous man rational except by first making him

aesthetic." (Schiller 161). There is no shortcut directly to rational man: truth and duty, directly presented to the sensuous man, is wholly inadequate.

Does this mean that beauty, and the artwork that holds beauty's content, actions this rationality? Does the artwork itself contain truth and duty in its very content? These are questions of contemporary relevance. Does literature have the capacity, for example, to make us more humane and compassionate? Does pure music contain the necessary intellectual content to move us in the direction of rationality? Not according to Schiller. This direct mode of interaction is not what the play drive provides. Schiller was deeply influenced by Immanuel Kant and his theory of aesthetic judgement. In particular, Schiller's play drive relates to Kant's notion of the beautiful as a form of purposive purposelessness: "[b]eauty is the form of purposiveness in an object, so far as this is perceived in it apart from the representation of an end." (Kant and Walker, CoJ 66). This references the artwork's ability (or any object of beauty, including a natural object of beauty) to elicit both imagination and understanding even though no external concept can be attached to the object of beauty. This is unlike our ability to reason, which must grasp the phenomenal object and subsume it beneath *a priori* categories in order to understand it. The concept inherent in a beautiful object is internal to the object of beauty itself; there is no external concept to which it adheres. Therefore, the object of beauty has no external purpose or utility. A great work of art is something in which all of humanity can partake given the rules of play inherent in the form of the artwork itself. However, the 'purposelessness' of the object of beauty does not intimate frivolity. On the contrary, it is one of the most serious and important of all human faculties! The approach to the creation of, and the participation in, the object of beauty is—please notice—'purposive'. In creating and participating in objects of beauty, we approach with the utmost of seriousness in terms of both intention and dedication. This illuminates the logic inherent in the choice of the word 'play' when referring to the creative aesthetic process: an open but yet dedicated commitment to form (in the case of play, the established rules of the game). This sense of play allows for the free expression of our common humanity: our love of life and pleasure, but also our collective expression of the tragic nature of human existence. Purposive purposelessness also refers to disinterestedness toward the materiality of the object of beauty (Kant and Walker, CoJ 42). In other words, in appreciating an object of beauty, we are interested in its transcendent formal aspect, but not particularly its underlying, objective material. To appreciate a beautiful sculpture, we appreciate its form, not necessarily the stone chosen to

hold that form. And, as mentioned above, in a beautiful piece of music, it is the form, not necessarily the thematic or melodic content that brings beauty to the music.

The mediating aspect of beauty and the aesthetic dimension now becomes clear. Sensuous man is defined by his unfree, fully determined self. This determination is a passive one, one imposed by nature. The completely formal man would theoretically be completely free. However, in this hypothetical state, he would not truly exist in space and time (he would be 'spiritual man'). Therefore, while determination is essential and unavoidable, the pertinent question is whether that determination is passive (sensuous man, or the sense drive) or active (the play drive, the whole man, or 'being-in-and-for-itself'):

> Through the aesthetic modulation of the psyche, then, the autonomy of reason is already opened up within the domain of sense itself, the dominion of sensation already broken within its own frontiers, and physical man refined to the point where spiritual man only needs to start developing out of the physical according to the laws of freedom. The step from the aesthetic to the logical and moral state (i.e., from beauty to truth and duty) is hence infinitely easier than was the step from the physical state to the aesthetic (i.e., from merely blind living to form). (Schiller 163)

What the play drive provides us with, then, is the mediating power of freedom, or active determination. So while the object of the play drive (the artwork, or object of beauty) is a form of 'purposive purposelessness', its emancipatory power to reshape the human psyche allows for an overflowing of purpose!

The play drive is not an immanent, fully-formed facility. Schiller therefore highlights the need for 'aesthetic education':

> He must learn to desire more nobly, so that he may not need to will sublimely. This is brought about by means of aesthetic education, which subjects to laws of beauty all those spheres of human behaviour in which neither natural laws, nor yet rational laws, are binding upon human caprice, and which, in the form it gives to outer life, already opens up the inner. (Schiller 169)

Schiller is referring here to the notion of 'semblance'. Semblance is the process by which we shape our human reality in ways that recreate outside reality (or 'nature'). Again, showing his debt to Kant, Schiller locates the origin of this mimetic force within our primal sensory faculties. For example, the images we project onto our 'mind's eye' from the sensory data we receive through our eyes does not fully correspond with the physical reality of the sources of that sensory

data[26]. We append a "storyline" to the data even at the pre-reflective stage of interpretation. This is done by means of our instinctual, pre-cognitive functions: we filter some periphery data; fill in missing data; and attenuate or amplify other data. A similar process is at work, although at a higher level of cognition and self-consciousness, when we create objects of beauty. Through the creative process, we attempt a merger of the sensuous (concrete, particular) and the formal (abstract, universal) through the artwork. However, this object of beauty is only the semblance of a more perfect merger of subject and object in the form of an emancipated human subject reconciled to, and in harmony with, all of its objects: human society, non-human nature, and self. The artwork, then, can be said to prefigure the 'aesthetic state': an idealized state run on rational principles and granting all of its citizens equality, freedom and meaning.

As I have shown above, Schiller's play drive is not meant to affect a direct, material subject-object integration or reconciliation in society. It is the semblance of such an integration only. Therefore, it relates to the form of action that Aristotle refers to as *praxis* (doing) as opposed to his form of production referred to as *poiesis* (making). A very brief sojourn to describe these two terms is called for as they relate to the progression of my thoughts on the ideal normative form of work. For Aristotle, *poiesis* has a goal or *telos* that resides outside itself. This is Aristotle's version of labour. It utilizes technical or artisanal expertise (*tekhne*). *Praxis,* on the other hand, has a *telos* internal to itself. It utilizes practical wisdom (*phronesis*). The *techne* of the carpenter creates the house*,* whereas the *phronesis* of the harpist causes the harp to be played*.* For Aristotle, practical wisdom requires excellence (*arete*) and is therefore considered one of Aristotle's virtues in his *Nichomachean Ethics* (Aristotle). Expertise, or *tekhne*, is 'merely' a skill and so is not considered a virtue.[27] These concepts influenced Hannah Arendt in her conceptualization of *poiesis* (labour and work) versus *praxis* (action and speech) and the elevated status she granted *praxis* over *poiesis*.

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[26] Kant terms the mimetic results of our sensory interpretation "*phenomenon*", whereas the actual physical foundation and source of those impulses are termed "*noumena*." For Kant, *noumena* is forever locked away from direct apprehension and comprehension. It is only accessible via *phenomenon*.

[27] I am indebted to Henry W. Pickford for this succinct summary of Aristotle's distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis* in his book chapter entitled: "Poiesis, Praxis, Aisthesis: Remarks on Aristotle and Marx" (Pickford).

Marx would later develop a form of *praxis* that incorporated *poiesis* (as I describe above), which was in keeping with the elevation of material labour that he inherited from the German Idealist tradition, in particular Hegel. Schiller's play drive is also an attempt to merge the two, but as I note above, only at the level of semblance in the artwork. He does not take the extra step that Marx takes in materializing this unity to the everyday world. This does not mean, however, that Schiller's play is a purely academic exercise of philosophical abstraction. As I note above, the key to understanding the practical significance of the play drive is not through its direct products of beauty, but rather through the mediating influence of aesthetic education.

Schiller's aesthetic education is incomplete, at least in terms of my intention to present an alternative, viable, and fully-formed definition of labour and work. However, it offers an important and novel set of attributes that I would posit as being necessary to any normative vision of work. First, work should engage the whole person, the 'being-in-and-for-itself'. This means that a person's creativity is just as important as their intellectual capacity. Ideally, even though an end product or use-value may be the final result, work should have a phenomenal 'feel' similar to that of play. In other words, it should be something we engage in with all seriousness of intent. Practical wisdom and excellence should be applied to our work at all times. It should engage our creative capacities. Second, one must not feel compelled by outside forces to engage in work. Work should be highly purposive from its own internal standpoint and not dominated by any external 'purpose'. Lastly, it should prefigure the world we wish to create in both its outcome and its mode of activity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have defined work from the standpoint of the subject. In doing so, I have outlined what role work plays in the formation of self-consciousness, and have also addressed the phenomenon of work as it applies to the creation and articulation of the individual being—the Being through becoming. Addressing work from the standpoint of the subject is of vital importance if we are to later address the reconciliation of the subject with the object by means of the mediation of work. Work for the individual subject is the primary mode of interaction with other subjects, with the rest of society, and with nature. In short, work is essential to the subject in defining its place within the Totality. However, the subjective standpoint is only half of the

equation relative to this reconciliation process. Since subject formation is a recursive, two-way relationship with the object, we must also address work from the standpoint of the Totality itself and its objective components. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Labour and Life Under Capitalism: The Objective View

As I begin writing this chapter, I do so in mid-April of 2020 in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic. At this particular point in time, it is impossible to assess how deeply this human tragedy will impact humanity. How will I and my partner, our families and our friends, our workmates fare? The fear is palpable, not only of the virus itself but of the unknown impact of the pandemic on the state of our civilization. The toll in human suffering and death, economic collapse, psychological trauma, etc. will be felt for years, if not decades. I mourn the lives already lost and those who will continue to lose their lives before this pandemic has finally passed. I feel deep sympathy for the families and loved ones of those who have passed. I live in a relative state of privilege and so when my thoughts turn to those on the front line of this pandemic—doctors, nurses, first-responders, grocery store clerks, farmers, etc.—or those in less fortunate countries already suffering from the ravages of poverty, war and gross inequality, I feel a sense of dread and mourning. I also feel a sense of profound guilt for having the good fortune to be born in a wealthy and relatively stable country. However, I also feel enraged! I am enraged at the senselessness of a system that places profits and the gilding of coffers of the global elite ahead of human lives and the health and integrity of our planet and its natural systems. While disease has always been a part of the human condition, including periodic outbreaks on epidemic and pandemic scales, the capitalist system has progressively placed the human species in this state of heightened vulnerability. The drive to commodify nature has led to the tearing down of forests resulting in the displacement of wildlife towards closer proximity to human civilization. Unchecked globalization has also led to the creation of international vectors of swift pathogen transmission. This disease not only affects the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions, it also disproportionately affects those in marginalized communities within the wealthy industrialized nations (African Americans, Indigenous communities, minimum wage workers, etc.), as well as the poor of colonialized third world nations. The greed and sociopathic lack of empathy of the many conservative and fascistic political leaders at this point in time has already resulted in much higher national death tolls than would have been experienced under competent and moral leadership. A murderous culpability!

Over the past few weeks there has been no shortage of op-eds and other commentary in the media about the need to use this tragedy as a springboard to radical systemic change; the very position I am arguing for in this thesis. The common thread running through these commentaries is that we must not strive to return to our 'normal', pre-pandemic reality. Instead, we must use this as an opportunity to reshape society and our economic system; to return to cooperative models of behaviour, production and international relations, and to heal the deep wounds that consumerism has wrought upon the natural world and the human psyche. These humane calls for transformation are necessary and timely, and, indeed, they are hopeful. However, in order to prevent them from falling on deaf ears, or of being forgotten once the pandemic has passed, they must draw attention to the source of our current crises: the objective totality of capitalist society.

In the previous chapter I provided a subjectivist view of labour from various philosophical standpoints. This was done to provide insight into the phenomena of work and labour *from the worker's and the working class's point of view*. While these subjectivist definitions are important, they can only provide a partial picture of the reality of labour. In order to provide a more complete picture—one that places labour within the context of society at large and that situates both our current lifeworlds and our potential future lifeworlds in their proper historical context—we need to approach the question of labour from the standpoint of the object, of the totality of human relationships, institutions, productive capacities, and culture. Subjectivist viewpoints are susceptible to myopia and false consciousness, both of which are born out of the way in which we are 'thrown' into the world and all of the implications that follow from this ontological condition. That is why the focus of my discussion in this chapter will extend beyond work and labour to the broader context of this objective totality in which labour is a part. This section will consider the objective conceptions of totality from two of the twentieth century's most influential philosophical works: Georg Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (Lukács), and Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno). While both works were published in the first half of the twentieth century (1922 and 1947 respectively), they continue to be highly relevant for our times—perhaps more so now than ever!

Georg Lukács: Reification and Class Consciousness

Georg Lukács (1885–1971) was a key figure in the birth of Western Marxism. Born into a wealthy family (his father was an influential banker) Lukács was able to pursue an advanced education in his native Hungary. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Kolozsvár in 1906 and then obtained a doctorate from the University of Budapest in 1909. After receiving his doctorate, Lukács worked and participated in intellectual circles in Budapest, Berlin, Florence and Heidelberg. During this period, Lukács developed a close connection to Max and Marianne Weber, to Ernst Bloch and to the Neo-Kantian philosophers Heinrich Rickert and Emil Lask.

In 1918 Lukács joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918. From that point forward, to the end of his life, Lukács was a committed communist who served in many high-ranking government positions in his native Hungary, and later in Moscow. During Stalin's reign, Lukács did become increasingly subservient to the Stalinist orthodoxy. However, after Stalin's death, he began to publicly criticize Stalin and Stalinism and, in fact, began arguing for a renewed communist party in Hungary that would open itself up to competition with other leftist forces within a multi-party democracy (Stahl).

As previously mentioned, Lukács was one of the initial intellectual figures in the Western Marxist movement. In fact, his *History and Class Consciousness* was one of the first publications of this philosophical school and it became a highly influential text for later Western Marxists, such as Horkheimer and Adorno. Western Marxism was (and is) distinguished from the orthodox Marxism of the Soviet Union, for example, in its emphasis on Marx's earlier, philosophical writings as opposed to his economic writings, particularly the three volumes of *Das Kapital*. Western Marxism was also influenced by Max Weber's sociology and Hegel's dialectics. With its Frankfurt School adherents, it also became highly critical of Stalinism, state communism and "Soviet Marxism." Indeed, in the mid-1950's, particularly after the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary in 1956, Western Marxism took root in Western Europe, as well as India and Japan, and expressed itself as a democratic alternative to the centralized authoritarianism of Stalinist Soviet Union (Marcuse, Soviet Marxism 167-191).

Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* provides illuminating insights into contemporary capitalist culture and its alienating and reifying impact on humanity. One of the central themes of *History and Class Consciousness* is the opposition inherent in the bourgeois (capitalist) worldview versus the dialectical materialism of Marx. Bourgeois philosophy and science (particularly social science) views the world from the standpoint of a fixed, unchanging "is" of the present. The present is the measure of all things, both in terms of history and in terms of possibilities for the future. In this static, ahistorical worldview, capitalism, in some form or another, has always existed, or at least has always been a latent 'essence' of humanity since its beginning, awaiting its time in the sun as conditions progressed to enable its emergence. Under this ahistorical worldview it becomes easier to assert that since capitalism has always been, capitalism will always be. Thus, the "is" of the present is the "ought" of the future. It is also a contemplative, empirical worldview.

The task of bourgeois social science is to observe and understand the empirical workings of society and the economy so as to draw from these supposedly fixed laws a better and more complete exploitation of them. According to Lukács, there are two main forms of exploitation of these laws under the contemplative attitude: (1) exploitation through the application of technology, and (2) inwardly-directed action through ethics (e.g. Kant's 'Categorical Imperative') (Lukács 38). Individuals may more efficiently draw upon the immutable laws of society through some form of technological supplementation, or, in the case of individual behavior, one may apply a set of duty-based moral standards that sit over and above the empirical and deterministic effects of these laws and provide some form of freedom. One can see the uncanny return of religious and animistic mysticism in these views, where supposedly free and 'enlightened' humans passively 'contemplate' the laws of human society (e.g. the market). The bourgeois worldview also places primacy of action on the individual—in theory. We see this in the macroeconomic foundation of orthodox economics today and its *a priori* assumption of 'methodological individualism.' We see it in the juridical foundations of individual property rights. However, I qualified this foundational assumption of individualism with the words "in theory" for a reason: in reality, the contemplative life of bourgeois society is not one that fosters the kind of non-identity with societal categories that is in fact necessary for true individualism; a topic discussed in more detail below.

Dialectical materialism, on the other hand, drawing upon the philosophical traditions of ancient Greece through to German Idealism and then to Marx, views the world from the standpoint of change. Like the philosopher Heraclitus' assertion that one cannot step in the same river twice, both nature and human society are seen by dialectical materialists to be subject to constant change. Therefore, their reality, their Being, is shaped by processes ('becoming'). They are not immutable, static forms. Unlike Heraclitus, however, dialectical materialism goes one step further by asserting that the objects in question (i.e., the river, in this example) is not only subject to change in terms of its attributes (or its 'content'), but that the form of the objects themselves are subject to change. One might be tempted to view this worldview as highly speculative; however, both human history and natural history demonstrate the truthfulness of this assertion. The study of biological evolution clearly shows us, not only from the fossil record, but from genetics through to systematics (i.e., taxonomy) and field biology, that organisms are subject to constant change. One could frame this change as one that takes place by means of a dialectical process of mutual, inter and intra-specific dynamics that responds to the inherent 'contradictions' of each ecological fitness manifold. Human history too is marked by constant change. From stone age hunter-gatherers to pastoralist farming and animal husbandry through to the dawn of civilization. Human societies have changed in response to increases in built-up knowledge and technology, as well as heightened self-consciousness. Human history has changed not only the content of the human object but also its form.

This discussion of the importance of process, of change and of becoming over stasis and immutability is a key element of Lukács' object-focussed philosophy. Much of *History and Class Consciousness* is taken up with the analysis of bourgeois society and its philosophical foundations. All of this is done in an effort to expose to consciousness the reified nature of our existence, which is applicable to every member of society regardless of class. Lukács locates the origins of this alienation from within the very heart of the epistemological foundations of bourgeois thought which, in turn, stem from the 18th century bourgeois revolutions. In their attempt to strip away the mysticisms of pre-Enlightenment thought, these rationalist philosophies imposed a thought regime that gave primacy to the immediacy of the empirically given. On the surface, this approach sounds reasonable and progressive, and, for the most part, within both the natural and social sciences, empirical observation is a necessary (but insufficient) analytical tool. However, to stop there, to cut the analysis short with a simple 'contemplative' attitude towards

empirical data and ignore the historical facts surrounding that data or the relationship of the individual data points to the totality of human society (in the case of the social sciences), is a 'false consciousness', according to Lukács. This is not to denigrate the scientific method whose cyclical use of inductive (including empiricism) and deductive methodologies have been, and continue to be, highly successful in understanding our world and in demystifying the ancient regime. However, when this contemplative approach is applied in the social sciences, or even in the natural sciences through the applied sciences of engineering, technology, biosciences, industrial chemistry, etc., its blinkered reductionism fails to rise above reified and commodified thought.

What sets Lukács' approach in *History and Class Consciousness* apart from the subjectivist approaches I discussed in chapter two is its systemic, or objective, scope. The 'false consciousness' that Lukács exposes is not limited to the psyches of each of society's individual subjects. This false consciousness permeates the entire system! It exists in our system of production. It exists in our education systems, our legal systems, our social relations, our politics, and even our journalism. Lukács describes this false consciousness as follows:

> The objects of history appear as the objects of immutable, eternal laws of nature. History becomes fossilized in *formalism* incapable of comprehending that the real nature of socio-historical institutions is that they consist of *relations between men*. On the contrary, men become estranged from this, the true source of historical understanding and cut off from it by an unbridgeable gulf. (Lukács 48)

Lukács goes on to describe the dual subject/object nature of this false consciousness. From the standpoint of the object (i.e., society at large), false consciousness in bourgeois society is expressed in the mass psychology of a forgetfulness of society's evolution. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno go so far as to say that bourgeois society is impossible without this forgetfulness:

> A suspicion would arise that our attitude toward human beings, and toward all creatures, is no different to that toward ourselves after a successful operation: blindness to torment. For cognition, the space separating us from others would mean the same thing as the time between us and the suffering in our own past: in insurmountable barrier. But the perennial dominion over nature, medical and nonmedical technology, derives its strength from such blindness; it would be made possible only by oblivion. *Loss of memory as the transcendental condition of science. All reification is forgetting.* (Horkheimer and Adorno 191; my emphasis)

In other words, the historical record of change and, in many ways, of progress, and the suffering involved in this progress, is forgotten so as to preserve the legitimacy of the process of bourgeois 'progress'. The present state of society is all, and is locked down, or, in Lukács' words, "history becomes fossilised in a formalism incapable of comprehending that the real nature of socio-historical institutions is that they consist of *relations between men*." (Lukács 48) It can be said, then, to represent a sort of 'Whig history' of society where any reference to historical progress is considered more in terms of a convenient narrative, or origin story, of stepwise progress explaining society's current state of perfection, rather than to acknowledge the fact that change has always been, and continues to be, a constant source of movement, which entails simultaneous progress and regress. This false consciousness of objective fixedness serves the interests of the ruling elite quite handily by providing a ready-made inoculation against radical critique and activism. From the standpoint of the subject (the atomized individual of capitalist society) false consciousness is marked by a two-fold failure of consciousness: (1) a failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism, which are thus alienated; and (2) a failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence: its goals, desires, and potential.

If bourgeois thought is structured as a "fossilized formalism" how do we account for the very real progress that has been made on many fronts under capitalism since its inception? Lukács answers this question by referring back to the goals inherent in the Enlightenment project since its inception, namely the elevation of reason through science and philosophy. The application of the scientific method has undoubtedly brought many lifesaving and life-enhancing improvements to human society. Various philosophical traditions since the Enlightenment have also allowed us to free ourselves from the bondage of irrational religious worldviews. However, Enlightenment thought was also a child of capitalism, and so it is no surprise that the Enlightenment project triggered an era of 'bourgeois revolutions' (the French Revolution being the most prominent), while having been successful in ending the dominance of the aristocratic elite, have broadly failed to extend that emancipation to all members of society. On this point, Lukács sees two modes of action within bourgeois society. First, there is the exploitation of the supposed 'immutable laws' of human society in the form of technology. What appears on the surface to be action (in the form of technological advancement) is actually entirely compatible with the notion of a 'contemplative' approach to existence. For example, technological advance

is often framed within a narrative of "you cannot stop progress." The underlying assumption here is that if there exists the expertise to develop a given technology, and the capital to fund it (this assumes that the logic of the commodity has been sufficiently appeased to deem the technology profitable), its development is inevitable and must not be hindered. This is not to say that the needs of humanity are never served in these technological developments; however, it is the case that the driver of these developments are not sourced in the democratic will of the people, but rather in the profit motive and reproduction of capital. What often accompanies this movement of technological development is the mediating character of the heroic entrepreneur who provides the linkage between the idea and capital. However, not even the entrepreneur bypasses the contemplative approach. All of us in bourgeois society are viewed as observers and perhaps manipulators of society's unchanging laws. Second, on an individual level, there is an impetus (with implicit societal pressure) to internalize and make private one's moral or ethical stance. This extension of Max Weber's 'value neutrality' to all of society (originally intended by him as a purely methodological stance of the individual sociologist), is another form of inoculation against the critique and change of bourgeois society. This position serves to isolate the individual subject while simultaneously providing an alibi of individual freedom. Here is Lukács on this subject:

> …there is action directed wholly inwards. This is the attempt to change the world at its only remaining free point, namely man himself (ethics). But as the world becomes mechanized its subject, man, necessarily becomes mechanized too and so this ethics likewise remains abstract. Confronted by the totality of man in isolation from the world it remains merely normative and fails to be truly active in its creation of objects. (Lukács 38)

Lukács sees the source of this false consciousness in the reified nature of commodity production itself. Capitalism is, and must be by its own inherent logic, a social force. As Lukács says, "…capitalism is the first system of production able to achieve a total economic penetration of society…" (Lukács 62) . It must be so because it requires the whole of society to serve its interests on both the production and consumption side. Its continual need for growth drives its need for expansion of the logic of the commodity form to all aspects of society and every corner of the globe. The interests of capital are largely represented by the interests of the individual capitalist or their representative managerial custodians. However, the capital class itself represents a small minority of the global population. Therefore, to achieve its dominance—

political, ideological, economic, cultural, physical and social—it has no alternative but to instill a false consciousness in the rest of society. The bourgeois class, according to Lukács, must present its needs in such a way as to convince society that there is no alternative: the capitalist form is the 'natural' form, it is a 'law of nature.' Lukács says that the bourgeois are not necessarily indifferent to the social implications of this class conflict. Indeed, this is why the class consciousness of the bourgeois is itself false in that it too believes itself to be governed by these very same immutable laws: "…it understands the process (which it is itself instigating) as something external which is subject to objective laws which it can only experience passively." (Lukács 63). In fact, Lukács sees (in a manner similar to the consciousness of Hegel's master in his Master-Slave allegory discussed above) the 'false consciousness' of the bourgeois as being greater than that of the other classes: "…the highest degree of unconsciousness, the crassest form of 'false consciousness' always manifests itself when the conscious master of economic phenomena appears to be at its greatest." (Lukács 64).

The capitalist class performs this feat of hegemony with the support of its own theoretical foundations located in orthodox economic theory and law, and in philosophy itself. It also accomplishes this task through the ideological cornerstone of individualism. The constant promotion of personal 'human capital' and the admonishments to "pull one's self up by the bootstraps" are examples of the cultural push towards individualism. In addition, neoliberal capitalism has been largely successful in its attack on all forms of collective agency, with union-busting activity by corporations and the state being just one example. These actions serve to further atomize the individual subject and separate him or her from their natural inclinations toward cooperation, mutual aid and conviviality.

On the other side of the coin, the proletariat finds itself in a double bind. On the one hand, as the class consciousness of the proletariat matures, it becomes increasingly aware of its subordinated and exploited status. However, it is also aware of its reliance upon this structure for its very survival. Thus, what has the potential to become a political force of overwhelming strength in numbers is dampened by the economic necessities of life. Lukács highlights the fact that, early on, Marx saw the possibility for the proletariat to misalign their bourgeoning consciousness towards an apolitical and economically palliative mentality. This missed opportunity of the proletariat is often seen in the behavior of today's trade unions who

increasingly side with industry or the state in an attempt to mitigate their waning powers and numbers. But this separation of the political and the economic has moved far beyond the consciousness of the proletariat and has now concretized in society at large under neoliberal capitalism.

Lukács sees the solution to the abovementioned dialectical cleavage of the proletariat's opposing interests in the collective subjectivity of the class: its growing consciousness of its historical role and how that plays into both its immediate strategies and its long-term goals. Of course, Lukács was writing *History and Class Consciousness* just a few years after the end of World War I and the failure of the revolutions that manifested themselves in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. The working class today has changed in composition, in relative power, and in its degree of class consciousness, which one could argue is greatly diminished today. In the first chapter, I outlined the many ways that the working class is facing pressures from multiple sources: pressure to avoid collective representation, pressure to accept precarity as a way of life, pressure to accept less and less in return for its labour-power. In the last chapter, however, I will address the avenues of working-class renewal and reinvigoration, not to mention current signs of encouragement and hope.

At the centre of Lukács' philosophical program is the concept of reification. I discussed reification as it applies to the individual subject in chapter two; however, what needs further elaboration at this point is the source of this subjective reification, which is to be found in the systemic reification of capitalist society—objective reification. To begin this discussion of objective reification, I turn to a short quote from Andrew Feenberg's book *The Philosophy of Praxis:*

> Reified practice is the basis of the antimony of subject and object and the other antimonies of philosophy. These antimonies arise because the reified subject of practice treats the product of its combined action with other similar subjects as a law-governed, objective reality. It is the unconsciousness of their collective social practice that condemns these subjects to actively reproduce a world foreign to themselves and to their aims. (Feenberg, The Philosophy of Praxis 99)

The philosophical antimony of the subject and object dichotomy was discussed above with reference to Descartes' mind/body duality and Kant's unbridgeable gulf between the phenomenal world (the world as it appears to our senses—i.e., the subject) and the noumenal world (the

object as it actually is, the 'thing-in-itself'). This foundational antimony is locked into the post-Enlightenment worldview through the auspices of capitalist bourgeois thought and its supporting scientific method and positivism. As Feenberg mentions, this foundational antimony finds its way into a number of related philosophical antimonies, all of which continue to sever our individual selves from the whole of society and block any movement towards integration. Indeed, this collection of 'bourgeois antimonies', as Lukács calls them, represents our reified existence at the objective, societal level. As Andrew Feenberg notes, Lukács follows Marx's lead in suggesting that all of these bourgeois antimonies—taken together—represent a universal ontological position; our entire Being (Feenberg, The Philosophy of Praxis 4). Therefore, if we can transcend them and bring about an integration and resolution to each one of them, we might arrive at a reconfiguration of society, one in which reification and alienation cease to be.

In order to fully understand the bourgeois antimonies, we must revisit the subject/object antimony once more. To the classical philosophers the separation of object and subject is insurmountable. We cannot gain pure access to the object. Only mediated access through the senses is possible. In other words, we can only gain access to the appearance of the object through an interpretive act. Therefore, according to the classical philosophers, we 'subjectively constitute' our reality. The implication of this view is that the subject is primary. However, in this view the subjective constitution of reality is not meant to denote a direct creation of the object, but rather a creation by means of the *interpretation* and a *categorization* of the object's phenomena. This is the source of the bourgeois 'contemplative attitude; it is a fundamentally passive stance. The object, being largely inaccessible, is also immutable. The object takes on a mythical character.

The same passive, contemplative view establishes the unbridgeable divide between *fact* and *value, form* and *content, voluntarism* and *determinism, nature* and *man, freedom* and *necessity, essence* and *appearance,* and *theory* and *practice.* These secondary antimonies are more particular instances of the primary subject/object antimony but are nevertheless important to consider in some detail as they delineate Lukács' definition of objective reification.

I referenced Max Weber's methodological value neutrality above and how this has been transformed from a purely sociological method to one of the philosophical foundations of

capitalist politics and economics. Capitalism and capitalists, particularly within neoliberalism, always seek to free economic activity from restraint. In fact, economics is seen as a separate sphere of existence from the rest of society. Its scientific foundations are seen to be as sacrosanct and rational as those of the natural sciences and, therefore, not open for debate. This is despite the growing body of criticism of orthodox economic theory both from within orthodoxy and from heterodox economics. This walling off of the economic sphere and its theoretical foundations extends to the relationship between economic facts and values. As previously discussed, economics only deals in one form of value: utility expressed through its proxy, money. Since money is measurable, it is the only value, or value proxy, permitted for inclusion into the economic system. Also, due to its quantifiable nature, money and all of its associated economic metrics, become the foundational 'facts' of modern society. Gross Domestic Product, share prices, inflation rates, exchange rates, tax revenues, deficits, debt, etc., these are the facts most worth measuring. As economic facts, they are not subject to interpretation, at least not outside the world of orthodox economics. Other human values—spiritual, humanistic, intrinsic values of the natural world, etc.—are to be kept outside the sphere of the economy. They exist in their own separate realm of politics or religion where they can exert the least amount influence on the realm of the economy.

Theoretical justification for a more complete inoculation of economic activity from even the influence of democratic will has come in the form of public choice theory. This conservative politico-economic theory originated with John Buchanan at the University of Virginia under the sponsorship of American right-wing think tanks and wealthy donors. Buchanan's public choice theory treats the democratic process with deep suspicion and posits as its replacement a system of 'public choice' through consumer choice—i.e., the market sphere (MacLean). The concern over democratic will by capitalists and their apologists centres around the question of alternative value systems. Democracy allows, in principle, for the political expression of these non-monetary value systems. In doing so, it can pose an existential threat to capital. In reality, facts do not exist in a vacuum, particularly 'social facts.' The orbit of planets around their star and the trajectory of a struck billiard ball might be value-free facts based on physics, but social facts are too complex, too diverse and too contingent to be value-free. Their measurement, their interpretation, their salience or lack thereof, are all expressions of value. The antimony of *fact* and *value* is an antimony that has been manufactured for the benefit of capital. To assert that the

'factual' measure of economic growth (expressed through GDP) is the only valid measure of progress, for example, is not a value-free statement! It is draped in the value system inherent to capital. The bourgeois insistence on the separation of these categories serves the interests of capital by ensuring that the realms of economics and politics remain separate spheres of existence; one not influencing the other.

The American philosopher Hillary Putnam examined the fact/value dichotomy in great detail in his book *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy* (Putnam). Putnam critiques the positivist foundations of this dichotomy but reserves his most salient criticism for those who continue to apply this dichotomy in the social sciences, particularly economics. As Putnam argues, mainstream economics posits *Pareto optimality* as its value-free judgement of optimal utility maximization. Briefly stated, Pareto optimality, or Pareto efficient allocation, is a state of income or resource allocation "…in which no other allocation of resources would make at least one person better off without making someone else worse off." (Daly and Farley 4) In this supposedly value-free approach, efficiency is seen to be an end in and of itself. However, with the economist's insistence on ignoring original states of inequality and questions of fairness of distribution Pareto optimality is, at its core, a value-laden theory. Putnam summarizes this well:

> Pareto optimality is, however, a terribly weak criterion for evaluating socioeconomic states of affairs. Defeating Nazi Germany in 1945 could not be called Pareto optimal, for example, because at least one agent—Adolf Hitler—was moved to a lower utility surface. Moreover, if the reason for favoring Pareto optimality as a criterion is that one approves of the underlying value judgement that every agent's right to maximize his or her utility is as important as every other's, then it would seem that Pareto optimality isn't a *value neutral* criterion of "optimality" at all. How could there be a *value neutral* criterion of optimality, anyway? (Putnam 56)

The economists Herman Daly and Joshua Farley go one step further in their assessment of Pareto optimality where they show how redistribution can actually be an efficient policy when distributing a dollar from a low marginal utility rich person to a high marginal utility poor person. This hypothetical transaction actually increases total social satisfaction and is an example immanent to the assumptions of Pareto optimality itself. However, economists typically take the view that this type of interpersonal comparison and summation of utility is forbidden. This, in itself, according to Daly and Farley, is a value judgement! They also quote the economist Joan

Robinson from her book *Economic Philosophy* where she argues that the main function of the Pareto criterion was to "…sterilize the egalitarian implications of the law of diminishing marginal utility…" (Daly and Farley 303)[28]

In reality, all social truths are contingent, historical and subject to change. Social truths arise out of a shared commonality of moral vision, hopes, desires and pragmatism. As such, they are imbued with value. They are also subject to change as the needs and desires of society change. The attempt to keep these two concepts separate is a "neat trick" played by bourgeois society to keep its own value system (embedded within bourgeois thought and practice) hidden so as to reify and 'fossilize' their theoretical cover as immutable, objective truth. This is not to suggest, however, that utility as a philosophical normative value was not an advancement. If we take the bourgeois revolutions into consideration (particularly the French Revolution), the historical confrontation with the ancient regime, with its divine right of kings and its overall aristocratic elitism, we can see how a move toward the more egalitarian measure of progress (individual utility maximization) truly did represent an advancement. What I am referring to here, however, is the return of a form of elitism, but this time on the part of the bourgeois whose value system of utility maximization has been re-designed and homogenized to lock in privilege and prevent further progress. In this sense, utility maximization is how the bourgeois consolidates, and locks in, its power. It uses value neutrality as a cudgel against the working class.

At this point I want to inject a brief intermezzo in my discussion of the bourgeois antimonies. This relates to the is/ought dichotomy; a dichotomy that does not present itself as an antimony but is related to the fact/value antimony. To the bourgeois, the is/ought dichotomy is an antimony already resolved but resolved by means of an epistemic reappraisal of the normative "ought". The normative ought, according to this bourgeois rendering, is already integrated with the present. To determine the "ought" of the future one only need to discover the "is" of the present. This naturalistic worldview expresses itself in a kind of essentialism that says that

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[28] "The method by which the egalitarian element in the doctrine was sterilized was mainly by slipping from *utility* to physical output as the object to be maximized. A smaller total of physical goods, equally distributed, admittedly may yield more *utility* than a much larger total unequally distributed, but if we keep our eye on the total of goods it is easy to forget about the *utility*." (J. Robinson 41)

capitalism is the natural working out of mankind's essential nature. To go against this essential nature is to fight against reason and the natural order of things (the "is"). Therefore, the first step in resolving this dichotomy is recognizing its continued status as an unresolved dichotomy and challenge capitalism's false integration of is/ought. In reality, this false integration represents an ahistorical worldview under capitalism because it makes the very broad assumption that the current state of affairs (i.e., the "is") is the logical and rational state of society (i.e., the "ought"). In this view, any attempt to intervene in its workings is counterproductive. To intervene is to invite unintended consequences which affect the 'natural' workings of the market. Under this view, the "ought" ceases to be normative. It ceases to take on an aspirational and activist viewpoint and instead partakes in the passive, contemplative attitude. The contemplation and manipulation of the existing state of affairs becomes the de-facto normative standard. In contrast to the bourgeois view, a truly normative approach to this dichotomy, one that seeks an active and moral integration, is one that critiques the present. It is an approach that says the present state of society is not good enough, we can do better. The ought does not simply describe the present; it describes a utopian horizon. This progressive (or, using Lukács terminology, "proletarian") movement toward integration is qualitatively different from the bourgeois is/ought integration. It is a forward-looking integration that reaches out and beyond the "is" of today toward the "ought" of tomorrow. It is an active becoming. This is in stark contrast to the backward and passive determination of the "ought" from the standards of the present "is" of bourgeois thought. For Lukács, the proletariat is the subject/object of history that, at the same time, synthesizes the is/ought.

Stepping back now into our discussion of the bourgeois antimonies, let us consider the nature versus man antimony. To step aside once again into the everyday reality of the Covid-19 pandemic, I believe this antimony to be particularly pertinent. It is now clearer than ever that our actions toward the planet, and toward all of non-human nature, have a direct impact on our ability to survive as a species. Our insatiable demand for economic growth drives the destruction of natural ecosystems and biodiversity and our continued refusal to properly address climate change threatens our survival. Arising from our fear of nature, we see it as something that must be conquered and exploited. This is the heart of the man/nature antimony: the simultaneous expression of the human separation from, and yet superiority over, nature. It is another example of the inability of capitalist society to grasp—or perhaps more accurately, to remember—the

concepts of totality and history. Humans and human society are a product of nature and, despite our technology, we have not transcended nature in any material manner. We are a part of nature and its cycles, not separate and elevated. Yes, we have reached the point of collective intelligence (or general intellect) and technological capabilities to produce a measurable impact upon our planet from our economic activity—the so-called Anthropocene—but we do not control nature. Covid-19 and climate change are clear indications both of our hubris and our powerlessness before nature.

Before we discuss how this antimony might be healed through integration, it is important to first discuss how we arrived at this attitude of dominance toward nature. The history of this attitude predates capitalism and enters the collective consciousness of our species as we initiated our move to cities and civilization. In chapter two, as part of my discussion of the Biblical creation myth, I presented an allegorical rendering of that moment when the recognition of mortality entered into the collective self-consciousness of humanity. This allegory also presented a rendering of the diremption from nature that our species had to endure at a conscious level and, indeed, that each of us must experience as we pass from infancy to adulthood. To understand the objective corollary of this experience, we can look once again to ancient Greek society for illumination.

The ancient Greek pre-Socratic polis was an evolution brought about by means of the written codification of the Greek mythological cosmos by Homer. Prior to Homer, Greek society was autarchic, rural and ritualistic. Its collective knowledge and culture were transmitted orally. Homer's written works—*The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*—codified these myths and reprioritized communication away from ritualized recitation and improvisation toward discourse and argumentation. This was a distinctly civic invention where close living quarters and dismantled hierarchies shifted political power away from the palace and towards the *agora*. The art of rhetoric and persuasion through discussion and debate came to dominate. The citizen was an individual capable of realizing their uniqueness and how that uniqueness contributed to the community. Each citizen had a role to play in society and, in fulfilling that role, had the opportunity to lead authentic and meaningful lives. Structured upon an admittedly exploitative system of slavery, citizens were largely free of necessity and thus free to engage their creativity through art. They were also free to express themselves philosophically and politically and to

debate freely. In other words, each citizen had access to all the necessary ingredients for a *eudaimonic* existence. These capabilities fostered the creation of a true subject: a free-willing agent who not only recognized their distinction from the rest of objective nature through the faculty of thought, but also recognized their distinction from other free-willing agents (Chytry).

This almost paradisaical moment in Athenian history, however, faced an epistemic challenge with the rise of Socrates. Socrates introduced into Athenian culture a new form of dialogue (*elenchus*) that contained within it a critical spirit and a dialectical form. This new *elenchus* forced a kind of communicative transparency and honesty. It was tragic in the sense that individuals were forced to be honest with themselves by questioning their preconceived notions and non-critical acceptance of popular opinion. While it was emotionally painful to fully engage in *elenchus*, it was, ultimately, a cathartic process (Seeskin). *Elenchus* ultimately led to the dawning of a new type of freedom; an intellectual and democratic freedom that gave each individual citizen a new sense of agency and power through the free use and expression of reason. It brought with it, however, the responsibilities associated with the newfound skill of abstract, conceptual thinking. No longer was it possible, for example, to uncritically rely on slaves to take care of the citizen's necessities. Conceptual thought, along with critical thinking and dialogue, forced these issues to the surface. The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor makes this expulsion from the Edenic moment in Athenian history clear:

> In other words, the beautiful Greek synthesis had to die because man had to be inwardly divided in order to grow. In particular the growth of reason and hence radical freedom required a diremption from the natural and sensible. Modern man had to be at war with himself. The sense that the perfection of the expressive model was not enough, that it would have to be united with radical freedom, was clearly marked in this picture of history by the realization that the loss of primal unity was inevitable, and that return was impossible. The overpowering nostalgia for the lost beauty of Greece was kept from ever overflowing its bounds into a project of return. (Taylor 7)

Here we can see, in this dialectical moment, a tension that remains with us today. The necessary and inevitable move towards individual wholeness and freedom negates much of the original collective wholeness with society and nature (i.e., the 'totality').

While this moment obviously predates contemporary capitalism, it served as one of the foundations of the bourgeois man/nature antimony. The two elements that this Socratic

revolution bequeathed to modern, bourgeois society were the faculty of reason and individualism. As discussed in chapter two, this revolution in human cognition and self-awareness was a necessary step toward the evolving emancipation from necessity, which, in pre-modern times, meant freedom from the necessities imposed by nature: food, clothing, shelter, protection from violence and disease, etc. Despite these cognitive advancements, pre-capitalist societies still viewed nature as a force with which societies and individuals had to align themselves. The expressions of reason and individuality largely limited themselves to the technological and organizational progression of civilizations largely in harmony with nature's cycles. As Feenberg notes: "Never before the emergence of capitalism did human beings see their destiny as the total and integral domination of nature." (Feenberg, The Philosophy of Praxis 97).

How then does the advent of capitalism qualitatively change humanity's attitude to toward nature? In pre-capitalist society, production was largely based on use-value: what was produced was what was necessary at that particular moment in time for producers. Surplus production did, of course, occur but it tended to occur in response to the necessities imposed by nature's contingent events: for example, grains were stored in silos to prevent famine in times of drought. It was not until the advent of capitalism that surpluses were raised primarily for the benefit of the capitalist, and it was at this point that the focus of commodity production shifted away from pure use-value to that of exchange-value[29]. In this move from use-value to exchange-value, the application of an instrumental form of reason came into being. The positivistic sciences, along with the application of mathematics, enabled capitalists to apply a quantitative and technological approach to production whose emphasis became efficiency, productivity and profit. Now, nature was seen as both controllable and exploitable by man. Also—and this is critically important—nature was seen as something separate from man. This epistemological and

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[29] In Marx's conceptualization, the relationship between money and commodities changes with the advent of capitalism. His famous representation of this shift is the transition from C-M-C to M-C-M and, ultimately, to M-C-M^1. In the pre-capitalist form of exchange, the commodity and its use-value is the primary object of intention; money is simply a short-term intermediary to represent those equivalent use-values. All movement along the chain of exchange is equal. With the rise of merchant capitalism, the object of intention is now money. Commodities change their role as they now become a temporary stand-in for money. In doing so, their primary measure of value shifts from use-value to exchange value. In addition, capitalist profit-making and rent-seeking adds an inequality to the chain represented by the higher value of the second M: M^1 (Marx, Capital 247-257)

ontological separation is now deeply embedded in the structure of society and the very consciousness of man. For the capitalist, nature is now purely a source of raw materials and energy, and a waste sink. For the individual, this separation manifests itself in what Lukács calls "second nature". Despite the appearance of individuality and freedom, the individual subject under capitalism lives out his life as a contemplative actor, subject to these newly described 'laws of nature'. These are the social and behavioral 'laws' created by humans but yet positioned as natural and immutable:

> For, on the one hand, men are constantly smashing, replacing and leaving behind them the 'natural', irrational and actually existing bond, while, on the other hand, they erect around themselves in the reality they have created, and 'made', a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature. (Lukács 128)

The freedom promised by capitalism is thus a false freedom. In exchanging the bonds of necessity to nature for the bonds of necessity to this 'second nature', man has subjugated himself to a reified existence.

It is not difficult to observe examples of the instrumental view of nature taken by bourgeois society. For the sake of brevity I will provide just one example of this instrumental view. It is taken from the field of environmental economics (a branch of orthodox economics) and relates to the concept of 'ecosystem services.' Ecosystem services is based on a financial modeling system used throughout economics and finance called discounted cash flow analysis (DCF). With DCF, all current and future cash inflows and outflows are estimated and placed in their correct position with respect to value and timing. All of these periodic net cash flows are then discounted based on an assumed discount rate in order to bring future net cash flow totals to today's equivalent value ("present value"). If the net total of all of these present values is greater than zero (i.e., a positive 'net present value') then the investment is considered worthy of further investigation. While the cash outflows in an ecosystem services model are relatively straightforward to estimate (usually based on the lost revenue from development and/or resource extraction—an 'opportunity cost'), cash inflows from ecosystems services are difficult to estimate. This is because DCF models are very much based on the singular measure of value inherent in the commodity form. For example, the decision to protect a fresh-water estuary and turn it into a protected park might come down to the difference between the lost revenues of

foregoing the development of an oil well on a known reserve under the estuary. The offsetting benefits side of the equation must be quantifiable and commodifiable. For example, does the estuary provide services for the reproduction of fish, and if so, is there a market for those fish species (i.e., are they commodifiable?)? Any non-commodifiable values attached to the estuary (e.g. biodiversity, aesthetic value, intrinsic value, etc.) are not included in the model.

These models not only suffer from a one-dimensional view of value, but they also suffer from an assumed discounting of the value of future generations. Inherent in the choice of discount rates is an assumption about the value of future benefits relative to today's benefits. For example, the DICE Climate Change model was a DCF model promoted by the economist William Nordhaus. DICE was developed to model out various scenarios of costs related to climate change: the costs incurred as a result of the effects of climate change itself versus the costs associated with active mitigation/prevention. In choosing a discount rate that corresponded to the average return on capital, Nordhaus was also implicitly suggesting that the economic welfare of future generations was not as 'valuable' (due to being strongly discounted) as the economic welfare of today's generation (Stern) (Rabl). The 'time value of money' concept implicit in these DCF models means that the further a cost or revenue is forecasted to occur into the future, the more strongly it is discounted. This is particularly true with higher discount rates (the discounting process is an exponential function). In addition, the non-monetary/non-commodity values mentioned above are excluded from the model.

The historical materialism of Marx and Lukács posits a resolution to the man/nature antimony through the mediation of the consciousness of 'totality' or wholeness. This must first be achieved through a collective remembering of man's history and pre-history. We are not only a product of nature we *are* nature. We might even say that we are the self-consciousness of nature; nature looking upon itself. This may be viewed as a liminal moment in the history of man, and perhaps in the history of the universe; the moment when nature consciously applies reason to its development. In applying a form of Reason that is cognizant of the totality of an integrated man/nature whole (as opposed to an instrumental form of reason) we come to recognize that our survival depends upon us integrating our technological, physical and cognitive development to the cycles of nature. This does not demand a romantic 'back to nature' approach. On the contrary, it is a future-oriented and progressive approach. However, it necessitates an

active, democratic praxis. Technological development must, therefore, be democratized with all of humanity having a say, and participating, in how our society develops. The passive acceptance of push-down technological development where consumers make choices simply based on their consumption preferences is no longer tenable. It is a detached and unconscious choice originating from our imposed 'second nature'. Technological development under our current capitalist model is designed to serve the needs of capital not the needs of an informed, democratic citizenry. This has led to our current state of overconsumption and waste. In a more pessimistic tone, we could say that the current development of capitalism could be seen as a social evolution as natural as any other possibility, and that this evolution is simply nature's own death drive playing itself out. But this too is a passive and contemplative view. There is no way to the prove this so-called 'naturalist' conclusion one way or the other, other than to passively relent and allow the experiment to arrive at its conclusion. As I am taking great pains to point out in thesis though, we have it within our power to work collectively toward a utopian horizon, toward the affirmation of life.

The final bourgeois antimony that I want to discuss is that of form versus content. In addition to rounding out Lukács' theory of reification, this discussion will also serve as a link to the concepts arising from the final text to be considered in this chapter, namely *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Form and content, and its related dichotomy of the universal and the particular, are philosophical concepts dating back to pre-Socratic Greece. Plato's theory of forms, particularly as expressed in his allegory of the cave in his dialogue *The Republic*, serves as the foundation for much of Western philosophy's long argument on the form/content dichotomy. Therefore, a brief reminder of the allegory is in order. Plato invites us to imagine an underground cave with a long opening whose light from the outside is available to the inside of the cave. There are a number of occupants in the cave, all of whom have been bound by head and feet and are thus constrained in their view towards the wall opposite the opening. A fire burns behind them and casts a shadow on the wall, upon which they are forced to stare. There are others in the cave who are not so bound, and who pass objects between the fire and the backs of the bound individuals. The shadows of these objects are cast on the wall. For the entirety of their lives, the bound occupants of the cave have their reality defined by the images they see cast upon the wall. These images are representations of reality and are perceived by the bound occupants through the immediacy of intuition. Plato then asks what would happen if one of these bound individuals

were set free and allowed not only to turn around, but to flee the cave. Would he flee, or would he more likely react by viewing this new vision as a mirage, something to be feared? He would likely wish to go back to his chains, back to the comfort of what he knew. However, if this freed man was instead forced to go up through the entrance, past the opening and out into the light, and then forced to observe all that he could observe, eventually he would come to an understanding of the unreality of his former worldview.

There are two levels of understanding possible here. First, there is the understanding that what is perceived of an object is but the phenomena of the object (i.e., the shadows). Second, there is the higher-level understanding that all particular instances of objects of a given category—even those used to project the shadow images in Plato's cave allegory—represent only imitations of their related Forms. In Plato's view, the Forms are eternal and universal. They are the transcendent and perfect templates of objects or concepts. Kant's 'thing-in-itself', or *noumena*, is a direct descendent of Plato's Forms. In Kant's view, the object, as it is perceived, is only accessible as sense phenomena. So the form under both of these views is something inaccessible and thus unchangeable (immutable).

How do the Platonic or Kantian transcendental forms relate to bourgeois thought though? The answer to this question lies in the notion of identity as it relates to the Enlightenment project of rationality. According to this model of rationality, science and mathematics should have the capacity to construct theories (i.e., forms) in such a way that they fully explain (or identify) all observed and potential content. If content is observed that fails to identify with its related form, then either the form (i.e., theory) is incomplete, or the content is dismissed. Again, this is of particular relevance to the dominant social science structuring bourgeois society, namely economics. Forms in the shape of social theories (or even theories within physics or the other natural sciences) are constructed objects. To reiterate, the forms attempt to explain the whole (i.e., the 'totality') by means of an abstracted model of the whole, and, in the fully rationalistic bourgeois worldview, the observed empirical content relative to any given form must be fully identified with the form. If any content does not fully identify with its form it is, by definition, irrational.

Bourgeois social sciences hold mathematics up as their model of a fully integrated epistemology: all content is fully explained by its form (i.e., perfect identity). Pure mathematics, through its thoroughly abstracted nature and its foundational axioms, has produced an impressive array of fully integrated form and content models. In fact, its success in doing so is largely responsible for its elevated status in the sciences. This goes a long way toward explaining the dominance of mathematics in contemporary orthodox economics, particularly with its prioritization of deductive methodology over empirical methods (Summers). However, the extension of pure mathematics to the social sciences does not, by mere association, grant the social sciences the same degree of perfect identity. According to Lukács, both the forms *and their content* of pure mathematics are creations of man. Therefore, identity is 'baked into' the science of mathematics. With the sciences, particularly the social sciences, content is always uncovered/discovered that does not identify with its associated form. This poses a problem for the bourgeois worldview and its theoretical foundations in the social sciences:

> This doctrine of the irrational leaves behind it the era of philosophical 'dogmatism' or—to put it in terms of social history—the age in which the bourgeois class naïvely equated its own forms of thought, the forms in which it saw the world in accordance with its own existence in society, with reality and with existence as such. (Lukács 119)

As discussed in chapter one with the discussion of inequality the bourgeois class, from its very inception, had to construct a theoretical scaffold to justify its elevated status and its reliance upon alienated and exploitative labour. The members of the bourgeois class were not and are not inherently less ethical or moral than members of the other classes. At the risk of psychologizing this point, I posit that this class has built an elaborate body of theory to justify their position of power, which also serves the purpose of assuaging the cognitive dissonance that is inevitably triggered when defending a position of privilege sourced in the exploitation of others. Any threat to these theories (i.e., these forms) is a threat to their power, privilege and wealth. My discussion of marginal productivity as a defense of inequality in chapter two is one example of this rationalization process. The economic historian Philip Mirowski has provided a wealth of examples of this rationalization process through his writings on the history of neoliberalism and, in particular, the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS). Mirowski has pointed out the strong influence that political philosopher Leo Strauss's notion of the "necessary lie" had with MPS members, and that continues to have with neoliberal intellectuals and politicians to this day. Mirowski details

how this principle has been put into practice through the co-optation and manipulation of key human desires such as freedom, political agency, economic autonomy and the like. These "necessary lies" take the form of theoretical justifications (e.g. public choice theory, marginal productivity, rational choice theory, methodological individualism, etc.) for an anti-democratic and elitist power politics where state and corporate interests align to establish and maintain a hegemonic culture of competitiveness, inequality and class hierarchy. To neoliberals, according to Mirowski, these lies are justified because allow the small minority, that is, the educated and privileged elite, to run the world in a way that, in their worldview, benefits all (Mirowski, The Political Movement that Dared not Speak its own Name). It is a paternalistic worldview of the first order.

Threats to bourgeois theories, however, occur often and come through the irrational, but empirical content of their theoretical forms. Orthodox economic theory, for example, relies upon a behavioral assumption of 'rational utility maximization', as discussed in chapter two. However, empirical observations of human behavior often fail to live up to this *a priori* assumption of rational (i.e., utility maximizing) human behavior. Cooperative, altruistic and collective behavior is quite common in human society (Ostrom). Tribal behaviors, which can often flaunt all concerns of rational self-interest, are also common. At the level of the individual, even the most basic of psychological and psycho-analytical insights put the lie to the claim that human behavior is driven solely, or even primarily, by rational choice. We are never, nor have we ever been, purely rational in our choices and our behavior. In addition to the higher faculties of reason, we are driven by instinctual pressures, unconscious fears, biases and repressions. On the other hand, we are also driven by a desire for connectedness, collectivity and altruism. These observations of 'non-identity' with the even the basic behavioral assumptions of orthodox economics pose a danger to its legitimacy. To admit that economic theory may be erroneous, or at a minimum, insufficient, is to admit that the so-called immutable laws governing society are also erroneous. This threatens the theoretical scaffolding of bourgeois society and the legitimacy of capitalism itself. This is why orthodox economics is so protective of its status as a 'science' and of its core set of assumptions. As Feenberg notes, the gap between form and content in the natural sciences is not nearly so precious. In the natural sciences, the full identity of form and content is itself only a theoretical consideration (Feenberg, The Philosophy of Praxis 79). In fact, many scientists view with relish the opportunities offered up in the detection of 'irrational' content. Indeed, these

instances of non-identity are seen by many scientists as exciting and possibly fruitful new avenues of research[30].

Lukács' solution to the problem of the integration of form and content is similar to that of all the bourgeois antimonies: recast the problem as one of action rather than contemplation. Reality is a process: a becoming and not a frozen being. Furthermore, society must structure that action with a view to the totality. The resolution of the bourgeois antimonies is a recursive process. Form is not immutable. It can change based on its content, and this change can spark new action and lead to new content. When we recast this approach from the philosophical realm into the realm of political economy, we can begin to see how a pragmatic approach to social theory might look. Economic theory would no longer be shackled by the delimiting strictures of ideology. It would be guided instead by its effects on the totality of society and nature. It would be open to trial and error and thus open to change. It would give renewed emphasis to democratic will rather than elite privilege and self-interest. With regards to the concept of totality, economic theory would also be guided by ecological and planetary concerns. Its value determinants would be pluralistic.

The common theme running throughout *History and Class Consciousness* is the notion that only a class-level consciousness of our current reified existence can serve as the base for radical social change. However, Lukács did not put his trust in the objective aspect of the proletariat (i.e., it was not its ontological status as a class that mattered). Rather, he viewed the proletariat as having the potential for revolutionary agency only insofar as it engaged in *active praxis*. In other words, it was the act of labouring that gave the proletariat a consciousness of itself and its role in the historical process of change. It was in this action that the proletariat became the "identical subject-object of history." This position that no doubt looked more probable in 1920's than it does today. We are much more sceptical of the working class's radical potential, mainly due to the reasons I pointed out in chapter one. Nevertheless, what I wish to

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[30] The philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, represented this 'non-identity' of content (empirical evidence) to form (theory) in the scientific enterprise as "anomalies". Anomalies in science are those empirical facts, faults in theory, alternative explanations, etc. that challenge orthodoxy and potentially trigger paradigm-shifting movements in theory. These are the liminal states of science: those moments when science has the potential to make quantum leaps in understanding. (Kuhn and Hacking 52-65)

bring into my subsequent discussion of labour policy alternatives from *History and Class Consciousnes*s is the importance of fostering a collective consciousness of our systemic reification. Solutions will not emerge from subjective self-consciousness alone. The atomized individual is too steeped in work and consumption to develop his critical and reflective skills (Lukács 193). To address this need for a collective agent of systemic change, I wish to discuss a related bourgeois antimony, namely, that of the individual versus society. I will also revisit the man versus nature antimony but from a different vantage point. To accomplish this I now turn to a discussion of Horkheimer's and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

Dialectic of Enlightenment

The authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, were two of the earliest members of the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, or the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School was a social research institution which had been in operation since 1923 but was moved to its satellite office in Geneva, and then later to Columbia University in New York, to safeguard it from Nazi Germany. The Frankfurt School's theoretical focus was decidedly Marxist; however, it was apolitical in terms of avoiding any affiliations with political parties (Jay 4). The Frankfurt School's research program was interdisciplinary: members' disciplines ranged from economics, sociology, political science, psychology and psychoanalysis, law, history, aesthetics (e.g. literature and music) and philosophy. Its methodological approach was similarly open and diverse, using, for example, sociological empirical research (including survey methods), analytical economics, as well as abstract, speculative philosophy. One of the school's most important and long-lasting contributions to philosophy is its creation of Critical Theory. Critical Theory, as aptly described by Martin Jay, became a "gadfly of other systems" (Jay 41). By this, Jay means that Critical Theory applies it dialectical methods to critique existing economic, political and socio-cultural systems and their philosophical underpinnings. While Critical Theory's roots are from within the German Idealist and Marxist tradition, it is as critical of authoritarian state socialism as it is of capitalism. Critical Theory dissects the power dynamics in society to uncover the sources of dominance and exploitation. Its philosophical roots are to be found in Hegel and Marx, but also in Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (Jay 41-47).

The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (DoE) was written by Horkheimer and Adorno during the Second World War. Horkheimer moved to the Pacific Palisades district of Los Angeles, in a neighborhood with a large German emigrant population, in 1940. In 1941 Adorno followed him to Los Angeles and moved into the same neighborhood. The *Dialectic of Enlightenment (DoE)* has faced some criticism for its pessimistic tone; however, given the context of this period—not only the war itself, but the rising tide of authoritarianism in both fascist Europe and the Stalinist Soviet Union—its tone is not so much pessimistic as it is a thoroughly rational response to modern barbarity. It calls for nothing less than a complete rethinking of the foundations of bourgeois society. To counter authoritarianism, while still maintaining the importance of the objective, systemic sources of modern malaise, Horkheimer and Adorno emphasized the importance of the particular—the particular not fully captured even within the sum of all categorial universals. This uniqueness ("non-identity" in their terms) was crucial in maintaining the autonomy of the subject (Buck-Morss) while avoiding the solipsistic denial of the autonomous object inherent to subjectivist philosophies. This is in keeping with the dialectical inheritance of Hegel and Marx shared by both Adorno and Horkheimer. Hegel's dialectical approach insists that the subject and object interpenetrate one another, and so while all thought is context-bound, "…as free, self-determining beings we are the ones who construct the historical context, and, therefore, the categories that mediate our relation to the world." (Sherman, Sartre and Adorno 4).

The DoE was written as a reconciliation of sorts between the bourgeois philosophy of Sigmund Freud and the revolutionary philosophy of Marx. Adorno and Horkheimer, and indeed, the Frankfurt School as a whole, were keen to reconcile the failure of Marxism in terms of its revolutionary potential with what they saw as the continued relevance of Marx's philosophy, and in particular, his historical dialectics. In turning to Freud, they sought to find an explanation for the failure of the socialist revolutionary hope in the individual and social psychology of society (Jay 105-6). To reiterate, the Frankfurt School's emphasis on Critical Theory led them to a critical view not only of bourgeois capitalist society, but also of the state communism of the Soviet Union: both were considered exploitative and barbarous totalities. As mentioned, the overarching purpose of DoE is to examine the objective sources of modernity's alienated and disenchanted subjectivity. According to the Adorno scholar Deborah Cook Adorno and Horkheimer use Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic as its model of investigation:

> In Adorno's version of the master-slave dialectic, the slave will win her freedom, not by viewing herself as completely distinct from nature (as her male masters have done), but by gaining a fuller appreciation of the extent to which she depends on nature as an embodied being. At the same time, since the slave already enjoys a relative degree of autonomy with respect to nature (an autonomy gain both by manipulating nature to fill her master's desires, and by delaying the gratification of her own needs in the service of her master), her emancipation requires that she acquires a better understanding of the degree to which she is independent of nature, while finding less repressive and exploitative ways to express that independence. (Cook 89-90)

In fact, the antimony of man to nature is seen as the source of the antimony of man to society in DoE. In seeing man as separate from nature, and in viewing nature as something that must be dominated, a structural bias toward hierarchy and social dominance was built into the very fabric of our civilizing project. For Adorno and Horkheimer, this bias is reflected in our mythologies and our language.

To inform my position with regards to the objective conditions influencing our individual and cultural attitudes towards work, I will concentrate on three of the six chapters from DoE. First, I will draw from Adorno's and Horkheimer's definition of 'enlightenment' to show how it is intimately connected to myth. Next, I will draw from their exegesis of Homer's *Odyssey* to uncover the ancient, and therefore pre-capitalist, sources of our contemporary version of modernity. Finally, I will utilize the essay entitled "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" to illustrate the depth of our unconscious susceptibility to coercion in the service of capital.

The first chapter of DoE, "The Concept of Enlightenment", begins rather bluntly with the statement: "Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge." (DoE 1). It has, since its post-Bronze Age beginnings, sought to advance thought and liberate humans from fear by setting them up as masters over nature. However, knowledge, particularly knowledge as it is applied to technology, has turned out to be the primary tool for the dominance of man over nature and man over man. As Adorno and Horkheimer say, "[i]t aims to produce neither concepts nor images, nor the joy of understanding, but method, exploitation of the labor of others, capital." (DoE 2). The pre-historical period of man's history was marked by a belief in magic, spirits and demons, an adaptation to the fear of nature. The purpose of magic was to ward off the existential dread of

nature by integrating oneself to nature in the form of mimesis: a copying or a resemblance of nature. Mimesis was a relationship of kinship (DoE 7). To relieve a life filled with anxiety, pain and suffering, nature was endowed with spirit and these spirits were seen as susceptible to appeasement through magic and ritual. This pre-historical relationship to nature was one of alignment to, and respect for, nature.

The transition from pre-history to history was in itself a period of enlightenment. This was the dawn of civilization and the widespread use of written language. In ancient Greece this was marked not only by a transition to city states but also by a change in worldview. The pre-Olympian gods (e.g. Helios, Eos), each of whom directly represented elements of nature, fell out of favour and gave way to the Olympian pantheon of patriarchal and domineering gods that controlled nature (e.g. Zeus, Apollo): a new (and authoritarian) level of mediation between man and nature. These gods were the direct antecedents to the monotheistic gods of the Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Knowledge was now codified in language and thus became frozen in time. The oral traditions of knowledge dissemination faded. This severed the link from the past to the present. History was no longer seen as a continuity and thus was no longer seen as pertinent to the present. This temporal separation was duplicated in human consciousness by the separation of subject and object. Already, at this early stage of civilization, an awakening of the subject is occurring, and the object had begun to be seen as separate from, and inferior to, the subject. The object becomes a monad, a singular "mass of things" (DoE 5) that, in its separation, and its reduction to a singular identity, becomes the object of exploitation and dominance. Now, power has become the basis of all relationships (DoE 5).

Horkheimer and Adorno see this early enlightenment as the beginning of man's progressive move towards the triumphant separation of subject and object in the positivist worldview of the 18th century Enlightenment, which continues to define society today. Distinctness of objects, or non-identity, gradually gives way identity and fungibility. The incommensurable must be eliminated because it represents a challenge to the fungibility of a singular value system. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the move to more and more abstract ways of thinking led to the separation of subject and object. Abstraction not only distances subject and object but it "…makes everything in nature repeatable…" (DoE 9). This is a necessity in industry and profit-making. However, under these increasing levels of abstraction

labourers are also seen and treated as objects. Their behaviour is seen as constant and repeatable. This attitude by the powerful filters down to the labourer himself who increasingly is treated as just one amongst the "herd."

Horkheimer and Adorno see the progressive movement of enlightenment from the dawn of civilization to today as part of a long continuum of demythologization which, paradoxically, actuates itself as just another form of myth:

> Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization, of enlightenment, which equates the living with the nonliving as myth had equated the nonliving with the living. Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized. The pure immanence of positivism, its ultimate product, is nothing other than a form of universal taboo. (DoE 11)

The myth immanent to contemporary society is the primacy of the individual subject. This myth serves the interests of the powerful. Through the division of labour and the hierarchical ordering of society, the powerful can impose its agenda on the collective whole while disingenuously selling such a scheme as an arena of individual freedom. Adorno and Horkheimer remind us of ancient Athenian democracy in its ancient golden age where free citizens were raised up to their position of freedom through the work of unequal and unfree slaves, women and children.

Relationships of power and dominance are reified into the very core of society, in its science, its culture and indeed in the very consciousness of its subjects. Thought itself becomes reified and ritualized. It becomes automatic, structured and rules-based. Thought turns away from reflectivity and, as Lukács describes, becomes routinized. As Adorno and Horkheimer express it "…mathematics made thought into a thing—a tool, to use on its own term." (DoE 19). In this positivist version of thought, the past cannot be a guide to the present, and looking to the future is pointless. Only the present matters because the present represents the past, present and future. According to the positivist worldview, one makes no advances in thought by reflecting upon the past and making connections to the present. Even more taboo to the positivist worldview is the idea that reflective thought, turned into praxis and action, could reflexively alter the future for the better.

This false focus on the self leads to an asocial focus on self-preservation. In fact, self-preservation becomes the primary focus of all members of society—bourgeois and proletariat alike. For the bourgeois, the division of labour allows surplus value to accrue to them so as to increase capital: their source of meaning. For the proletariat, labour literally means survival. For Horkheimer and Adorno this focus on self-preservation, on the base of human existence, is a forced alienation of individuals. In the move away from nature, from the enchanted world of spirits and mystery, humanity has grossly exceeded its original intentions of self-consciousness and handed over its subjectivity to the relentless drive of instrumental reason. The irony here is that modernity sees itself as the moment of the final crowning of the subject, when, in fact, the subject has been hollowed out to become a shell of its former self. Individuals whose lives are primarily focussed on self-preservation have no time to move towards a fuller development of the self. All of our civilizational accomplishments have been squandered if the subject retreats back into the ambiguous backdrop of identity with the rest of the "mass of things", sacrificing his subjectivity in favour of an objectified existence. Self-preservation also sets limits on one's consciousness as political choices become limited to survival or doom (DoE 23). The 'job creators', the heroic 'entrepreneur', the hard-headed politician who declares "it's the economy stupid", all amplify this false choice as the only available choice. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy under today's global financial capitalism as threats of moving jobs overseas to less costly and less regulated jurisdictions are hung over the heads of domestic workers. This crowds out all opportunity to even discuss, let alone build, the opportunity to move beyond survival toward autonomy, self-development, and the *eudaimonic* life.

Bourgeois society is structured by a relationship to nature—both external and internal—that is buried within a new mythology. This mythology is characterized by the same fear of nature that characterized Bronze Age animism. We assuage this fear of external nature by dominating it, by attempting to tame and control it. We tear down ecosystems such as tropical forests and wetlands. We build over them constructing new, clean and safe 'forests' of sky-scrapers, factories and subdivisions. Alternatively, we recoil from its ambivalence through repression and denial. Bourgeois society has long given preference to the 'beautiful' of the manicured perfection of gardens, for example. Often approaching kitsch (e.g. golf courses, manicured domestic gardens, etc.), these gardens construct a fictitious version of external nature that is wholesome, geometrically perfect and harmonious because the sublime element of raw

external nature is too dangerous for bourgeois society. Internal nature is also repressed. The psychological necessity of experiencing external nature—its complexity, its power and sublime beauty, and its awe-inspiring aura—is replaced by artificial spectacle (e.g. Disneyland, mass sporting events). Seeking one's passions through self-expression and autonomy is seen as expressing a form of behavior that is dangerously close to our primal, 'natural' being. And since our primal being is incapable of being subdued for the sake of alienated labour, society works towards its repression: "[t]he way of civilization has been that of obedience and work, over which fulfillment shines everlastingly as mere illusion, as beauty deprived of power." (DoE 26)

Horkheimer and Adorno take a deep dive into man's relationship to nature by using Homer's *Odyssey* as their point of reference. Continental philosophy, of which the Frankfurt School is a part, has always used literature as a source of deep insight. It has now become trite to say it, but fiction often contains more truth than non-fiction. Its fictive elements allow room for a level of honesty and directness that is often elided in the more detached world of non-fiction. I will not dwell too long on this chapter as it a lengthy exegesis; however, I will highlight those sections that have particular pertinence to the question of labour as it relates to society as a whole.

The first story from the *Odyssey* that I wish to highlight is the story of the Sirens. Odysseus's passing by the island of the Sirens was prophesied by the sorceress Circe whom Odysseus had lived with for over a year while on his long journey home from the Trojan War. Here is her warning to Odysseus:

> First, you will raise the island of the Sirens,
> those creatures who spellbind any man alive,
> whoever comes their way. Whoever draws too close,
> off guard, and catches the Siren's voices in the air—
> no sailing home for him, no wife rising to meet him,
> no happy children beaming up at their father's face.
> The high, thrilling song of the Sirens will transfix him,
> lolling there in their meadow, round the heaps of corpses,
> rotting away, rags of skin shriveling on their bones . . .
>
> Race straight past that coast! Soften some beeswax
> and stop your shipmates' ears so none can hear,
> none of the crew, but if you are bent on hearing,
> have them tie you hand and foot to the swift ship,

> erect at the mast-block, lashed by ropes to the mast
> so you can hear the Siren's song to your heart's content.
> But if you plead, commanding your men to set you free,
> then they must lash you faster, rope on rope. (Homer and Knox 272-3)

Horkheimer and Adorno offer a masterful interpretation of this story. Their position in DoE is that the myth of enlightenment begins with the move to civilization, and, more specifically, with the ownership of property. Odysseus was portrayed in *The Odyssey* as a wealthy landowner with many servants. So, in addition to the rich bounty of metaphors pertaining to man's relationship with his internal nature (vis-à-vis the Sirens), it also offers us an insight into the master-slave relationship (i.e., between Odysseus and his crew). The Sirens themselves represent an internal state of mind: an ever-present but unconscious draw towards a full return to nature—the reintegration of subject and object. Their seduction is a dangerous one because their pleasures are more than primal, more than momentary. The Sirens have knowledge of the past and they offer wisdom to those who listen to their song:

> Come closer, famous Odysseus—Achaea's pride and glory—
> moor your ship on our coast so you can hear our song!
> Never has any sailor passed our shores in his black craft
> until he has heard the honeyed voices pouring from our lips,
> and once he hears to his heart's content sails on, a wiser man.
> We know all the pains that Achaeans and Trojans once endured
> on the spreading plain of Troy when the gods willed it so—
> all that comes to pass on the fertile earth, we know it all! (Homer and Knox 277)

Their promise of wisdom is applicable only to the ego-less being. The identity of self to the whole of civilization is what founders upon the rocks and becomes ". . . heaps of corpses, rotting away, rags of skin shrivelling in their bones . . ." (Homer and Knox 273). So this is the real danger that must be avoided according to the logic and psyche of the bourgeois hero: the loss of ego and of the self; that masculine, purpose-driven self of power and domination. The Sirens' pleasures are the pleasures of nature. Their knowledge is historical and is therefore not stuck in a perpetual present of contemplation. The wisdom they offer is full, reflective self-consciousness—an integration of the rational and irrational. They also represent that part of our self that is embodied and instinctual. The instincts reside in a hybrid state between subject and object. They are fashioned by evolution based on the objective, embodied necessities for survival, yet they continue to form a part of our subjectivity. To ignore or repress them is to

dehumanize our self. Yet, as illustrated in the story of the Sirens, acknowledging this irrational aspect of our nature threatens our ego, and in doing so, it threatens our power and dominance over internal and external nature. But there is wisdom in this irrationality. The irrational in effect becomes rational and, at the same time, we come to see how instrumental reason (bourgeois rationality) becomes irrational.

Odysseus, like the true bourgeois, wants to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to experience the aesthetic pleasures of the Sirens' song but does not want the ego-overwhelming implications of allowing nature in. In doing so, he resorts to contemplation, an empty aesthetic pleasure free from the responsibility of using its sublimating energies to shape a better future. Things must remain the same for him. He must return to his property and his family; he must continue to enjoy his dominating power. This cunning of Odysseus, the attribute of his personality that he is most famous for, only serves to diminish his own life. He is not changed from the experience, and so the Siren's pleasures are temporary and empty.

Odysseus's attitude towards his crew is also illuminating. Odysseus is tied to the mast of his ship free to listen to the Sirens' song, but physically prevented from jumping overboard and swimming to the Sirens. His crew, on the other hand, are fully prevented from experiencing the Siren's song because Odysseus instructs them to stuff their ears with wax. Other than the wax, however, nothing changes for them. They are still tasked with rowing the ship. This is another example of the Hegelian 'master-slave' relationship at work. Odysseus, as the master, permits himself a taste of the ego-free life of nature. However, he remains alienated from nature in his bound condition. His desire to experience some part of the Sirens' pleasure is an admission of his alienated life. He cannot even experience the limited pleasures associated with work. As Horkheimer and Adorno say: "[u]nder the given conditions, exclusion from work means mutilation, not only for the unemployed but also for the people at the opposite social pole." (DoE 27). However, the crew cannot enjoy their work either because they do so "…under compulsion, in despair, with their senses forcibly stopped." (DoE 27). Odysseus and his crew safely navigate beyond the Sirens, with their egos intact and with the hierarchy of master-slave still in place, but they have gained nothing from the experience.

Horkheimer and Adorno see this denial of the sensual as a corollary to the denial of external nature, primarily through its domination and exploitation. This domination is achieved by the division of labour and by the technological development mandated by the interests of the powerful. Repression of the instinctual life and of the critical intellect through labour is key to the success of this domination. Technological development, along with the labour that is its facilitator, is framed as the inevitable march of 'progress'. To resist it is to resist progress. As Horkheimer and Adorno frame it: "Adaptation to the power of progress furthers the progress of power, constantly renewing the degenerations which prove successful progress, not failed progress, to be its own antithesis. The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression." (DoE 28). And this regression is not just a regression of denied sensuality, it is an intellectual regression as well. Thought is limited to the contemplative, to the calculating technic of administration and positive science. Thought gives itself over to producing unanimity.

> A consequence to the restriction of thought to organization and administration, rehearsed by those in charge from artful Odysseus to artless chairmen of the board, is the stupidity which afflicts the great as soon as they have to perform tasks other than the manipulation of the small. Mind becomes the instrument of power and self-mastery for which bourgeois philosophy has always mistaken it. (DoE 28).

And what about the workers, Odysseus's crew? They are "…harnessed to the same rhythms, like modern workers in factories, cinemas, and the collective…[i]t is the concrete conditions of work in society which enforce conformism—not the conscious influences which additionally render the oppressed stupid and deflect them from the truth." (DoE 28). The crew cannot participate in even the momentary pleasure of the Siren's call. Their work not only supports themselves it supports Odysseus in his privileged position. Nevertheless, they no doubt feel a sense of relief from being saved from the trap posed by the Sirens, and thus feel loyalty to Odysseus. Such is the subjectivity of contemporary workers who fall prey to the narrative of the heroism and largesse of the 'job creators.' Who are the true Sirens?

The siren call of capitalists towards work is the lure of 'freedom'. But their claim to be the true representatives of freedom is a seduction. To take one extreme example (although one in keeping with the logical extension of capital's false claims regarding work), Hitler's *"Arbeit macht frei"* (work sets you free) hid the exploitative and ultimately deadly purpose of concentration camp work in its linkage to freedom. The false conflation of freedom with the

perpetual satisfaction of necessity (both real and constructed) is what holds us back from true freedom. Technology, in and of itself, is not inherently destructive. It can be put to humane use to eliminate necessity and enhance life in harmony with nature. This would be a sound foundation upon which to build true freedom. However, to achieve this would require a truly revolutionary form of democratic praxis! Labour too, if organized democratically and performed without compulsion, can serve the goal of freedom. The sensuous pleasures and intellectual satisfactions of work might then be achieved.

The whole of *The Odyssey*, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, can serve as an allegory of man's evolution toward civilization and the bourgeois worldview. The transition from primitive beings surviving in small nomadic clans to civilized city dwellers is captured chronologically in Odysseus's long journey home to Ithaca from Troy. Odysseus's behavior throughout this journey, towards his crew, and towards those he encounters along the way, are personifications of the evolutionary stages of bourgeois society. His cunning and deception are seen throughout, as is his penchant for risk-taking. He is drawn towards nature (the source of happiness), but yet denies it through domination. He treats his fellow beings, and nature as a whole, as a means to his own ends rather than ends in themselves. Indeed Odysseus's deceit and his domination over others relates directly to one of the main themes of The Dialectic of Enlightenment, namely, the transition from ancient sacrifice to the renunciation of the self. In ancient sacrifice, a blood offering was made to the gods in an effort to give up something of equal value to atone for a wrong inflicted upon others or upon nature itself. It was an attempt to restore the past. But at its heart sacrifice was always a representative and abstracted act. Those causing the harm upon society or upon nature were not the ones paying the price of the sacrifice; an unwilling participant was always chosen instead. Thus, sacrifice was always only possible within a societal relationship of domination by the guilty over the sacrificial 'lamb' of the dominated. Furthermore, trickery is involved in this relationship. This is because those dominating individuals (and classes) in society that demand the sacrifice are also fully aware of its essential falsity.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the transition between the falsity of ancient sacrifice and modernity's renunciation of the self, is the cunning of Odysseus, which Adorno and Horkheimer describe as a cunning that is "…nothing other than the subjective continuation of the

objective untruth of sacrifice, which it supersedes." (DoE 41). It is capitalism's claim to rationality that this very same cunning expresses itself in the renunciation of the self to the logic of capitalism. The renunciation of nature and of humanity's essential oneness with internal and external nature is key to the success of capitalism. In modernity, the harms done to internal and external nature are atoned for by this renunciation of the self. (DoE 37-53).

I would like to switch over to a thematic treatment of Odysseus's journey as developed in the dynamics of Odysseus's encounters. A claim to cunning and deception as being a structural feature of bourgeois society may seem unfair. However, in the many examples that Odysseus displays of his cunning, the nature of the contract and its inherent cunning is exposed. Also, his resort to word-play in deceiving the cyclops Polyphemus outlines the nominalism that bourgeois society adopts and the deception that can be built into 'following the letter of the law' rather than its intention, or more broadly speaking, the moral obligations of a given situation. Odysseus's cunning in flaunting the logic of the myth of the Sirens has already been discussed. In his deception, he cheats nature by gaining the pleasure of the Siren's song without paying the price. As Horkheimer and Adorno note, while The Odyssey does not discuss the consequence of this deception to the Sirens, the logic of all mythology is that this unpaid debt would result in their demise.

Bourgeois capitalist society today is built upon this cunning. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the source of profit, namely the 'surplus value' accruing to capital from the 'surplus labour' of workers. In this master-slave relationship workers receive less value from their work (i.e., wages) than they put in. The nature of the trade in financial assets on the open market is another example. Most trades, particularly those of a speculative nature, are based on the assumption that the buyer or seller of these assets has more information (which they are unwilling to share) than the other party to the transaction has access to. This may be a real or perceived advantage, but it is a conscious attitude underlying every trade and so deception is at the very heart of these transactions. Bargaining, in the context of individual buyers and sellers, or in the context of large corporate contracts (commercial, union, etc.) is based on an assumed asymmetry of information and power. Indeed, this 'getting one over on the other' is one of the draws to the business world for many people. This foundation of cunning and deception is so ingrained in bourgeois society and culture that it is rarely acknowledged, let alone discussed. To

be honest about this is to expose one's ego to cognitive dissonance, and so it is swept under the conscious rug, as it were. Horkheimer and Adorno see the origins of this bourgeois attitude in the practice of "occasional exchange" (DoE 48). In ancient civilizations, most economic activity was domestic (domestic in its original meaning of 'the household'). In other words, necessity was met at the time of need and met by the individual consumer or his or her fellow family members. Surplus production was rare, and trade of surplus production was rarer still. There were, however, instances of trade in surplus ("occasional exchange"), particularly between consumers and international traders or merchants. This is Horkheimer's and Adorno's "lone voyager armed with cunning" and is the progenitor of today's homo oeconomicus. The distance between the source of the commodity and its ultimate buyer provided a screen for cunning and deception.

This cunning and deception, and the rewards it generates, were, and still are today, defended by an appeal to the just rewards of risk-taking. Like Odysseus—who seemed to be immune from learning from his many near fatal encounters with monsters, spirits and spiteful gods or demi-gods, and who appears to have purposely sought out risky encounters—today's entrepreneurs and corporate executives justify their outsized rewards as their just desserts for risk-taking. In Odysseus's case, others had to pay the price for his risks though: the Sirens, the Cyclopes, his crew, and his wife and family. Risk today is also distributed throughout society. Upside rewards accrue almost exclusively to capital. Downside risks, however, are made public through corporate bailouts and subsidies; are shared broadly through multiple levels of insurance and re-insurance; are externalized as negative social and environmental externalities; and are limited through bankruptcy laws.

An important theme to discuss, particularly in relation to my desire to outline the criteria for assessing policy alternatives for the future of work, is the tendency for a regression to the primitive. The undifferentiated subject-object of pre-conscious beings is a state of being that I discussed above in the Biblical example of Adam and Eve before the fall. It is a state of bliss where one not only fully resides in nature but is nature. Life is of the moment, with little memory of the past and no concern over the future. This state of being, and the possibility of self-conscious beings regressing to this stage, is illustrated in the story of Odysseus's second stop in his voyage home, namely the Land of the Lotus Eaters.

> Lotus-eaters, Lotus-eaters
> who had no notion of killing my companions, not at all,
> they simply gave them the lotus to taste instead . . .
> Any crewmen who ate the lotus, the honey-sweet fruit,
> lost all desire to send a message back, much less return,|
> their only wish to linger there with the Lotus-eaters,
> grazing on lotus, all memory of the journey home
> dissolved forever. But I brought them back, back
> to the hollow ships, and streaming tears—I forced them,
> hauled them under the rowing benches, lashed them fast
> and shouted out commands to my other, steady comrades:
> 'Quick, no time to lose, embark in the racing ships!'—
> so none could the eat the lotus, forget the voyage home.
> They swung aboard at once, they sat to the oars in ranks
> and in rhythm churned the water white with stroke on stroke. (Homer and Knox 214)

In the post-work literature, this state of being is not demonized as it is under our contemporary work ethic and as Odysseus views it above. If happiness is truly sourced from nature, as I have suggested above, then perhaps this blissful state is something to be pursued. Horkheimer and Adorno side with Odysseus on this question—up to a point. To them, this state of bliss has more in common with the altered states of consciousness attributable to narcotics than it has with true happiness. Bliss under this scenario is less a fulfillment of happiness earned by the active effort of lessening suffering than it is a temporary forgetting of suffering. Its primal return also negates an integral part of what it means to be a self-conscious, reflective human being: "[a]gainst them he [Odysseus] asserts their own cause, the realization of utopia through historical work, whereas simply abiding within an image of bliss deprives them of their strength." (DoE 49). But here is the missed opportunity, and indeed the moment of bourgeois allegiance, because upon freeing themselves from the Land of the Lotus Eaters, Odysseus immediately re-asserts his dominance over his crew. His distaste for the behavior of his crew is not related to his concern over their lost sense of self and abandonment of personal life projects, it is entirely related to his need to re-establish hierarchy and dominance so as to carry forth with his particular interests. One of the most important points I wish to leave the reader in this thesis pivots on this question of nature and the primal versus our higher intellectual capacities of reason and its ability to engage in objective praxis. This is not an either/or choice, however. The integration of subject and object called for by the German Idealists, and by subsequent philosophers working in the tradition (including Horkheimer and Adorno, albeit with a major caveat: the non-identical) directly addresses this issue. One can re-connect with nature and the

body while fully utilizing his or her intellectual capacities to shape a more humane and rational society. A true state of bliss is achieved by what is built, not by a denial of the hidden.

The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* contains an important essay that is perhaps more relevant today than it was in the 1940's when Horkheimer and Adorno wrote it. This is the essay entitled *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*. I will close out this chapter with an analysis of this essay in relation to the theme of this section, namely, the objective, or systemic sources of the contemporary world of work and labour. I will set the stage with an extended quote from the essay:

> Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labor process so that they can cope with it again. At the same time, however, mechanization has such power over leisure and its happiness, determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself…[t]he only escape from the work process in factory and office is through adaptation to it in leisure time. (DoE 109)

The authors have received some backlash for this essay with claims of cultural elitism. This backlash has particularly been aimed at Adorno who, as a musician, composer and musicologist, was known for a somewhat austere and negative view of jazz music. However, much of this criticism misses the broader conceptual innovations that this essay provides for the critical analysis of culture and its links to political economy. In the above quote the intimate link between work, entertainment and leisure is made clear. In fact, these elements are considered almost as if they are the same object within a spectrum of attributes. Work, leisure, entertainment, and mechanization are all co-determinate and necessary parts of late capitalism.

This essay is also important for my purposes as it serves as an important analytical tool in assessing the possibility of resolving the antimony of man versus society. It is now mid-May 2020 as I write this, and the Covid-19 pandemic is still raging all over the globe. It is now almost three months into the pandemic and in many countries individual rights versus collective solidarity has become an important issue, with cultural values and ideology influencing the debate. At issue is the right of citizens to disregard government statutes or guidance with respect to pandemic mitigation policies related to social distancing, when and how to open up the economy, the use of masks, etc. In some jurisdictions, such as the United States, individual

freedom and liberty proponents are directly challenging governments and medical experts demanding that the restrictions be lifted. This has been taken to the extreme of blocking hospital emergency room entrances and storming the state legislature in Michigan armed with assault rifles.

There is a glaring irony on display here linked to a misapprehension of the notion of freedom. Freedom cannot be considered in isolation. To achieve the maximum societal freedom, limits on individual freedoms must be put in place. Isaiah Berlin, in his essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" (Berlin), discusses the difference between 'positive' and 'negative' liberty. For Berlin, negative freedom (or liberty) is that category of freedom obtained by being free from coercion or interference ("freedom from"), whereas positive freedom is that which provides individuals with the freedom to reach their fullest potential ("freedom to"). Berlin prioritizes negative over positive freedoms due to the latter's tendency to involve paternalistic coercion, and, in its most extreme form, a tendency towards authoritarian and even totalitarian states. Even in its most democratic forms, Berlin worries that too great an emphasis on positive freedoms can lead to a crisis of clashing rights, particularly those of the majority versus those of the minority. However, Berlin may have overstated the case for negative freedoms. Subsequent revisions and commentary by Berlin himself, as well as others, have demonstrated the essential nature of each form of freedom, and the importance of both forms operating in concert with each other. Berlin and others recognize that true freedom requires content—something that negative freedoms alone cannot deliver. Positive freedoms, on the other hand, do provide content (Bowring 158-9), and that content can be subjective (e.g. self-realization or self-identity), objective (e.g. identification with the universal), or some organic amalgam of the two. Societal freedoms must be negotiated, and they must seek to achieve the maximum freedom across all of society given the constraints of resources, the rights of animals and of non-human nature. This balance goes to the heart of the man versus society antimony. Societies that place a high cultural importance on individual rights often favour the powerful and wealthy elite of a nation as they eschew government intervention of any type. Societies that too strongly favour the collective, at the cost of individual rights, can fall into the trap of authoritarianism.

How does this seemingly tangential issue of freedom link to Horkheimer's and Adorno's essay on *The Culture Industry* though? As it turns out, it is the essential link to an understanding

of the man versus society antimony. Horkheimer and Adorno see the pull towards hyper-individuality versus a full subject-object integration (i.e., 'totality') as a Scylla and Charybdis dilemma. Either extreme is counter-productive to achieving maximum freedom. Authoritarianism, in both of its primary expressions (state communism and fascism), is an obvious example of totalities that fail to maximize freedoms. However, the hyper-individualism of liberal capitalist society is another example. Indeed, this is the primary target of critique in *The Culture Industry*. It is the function of the culture industry in bourgeois society to provide the *semblance* of freedom to workers. The culture industry's function is to renew workers psychically while distracting them unconsciously thus ensuring compliance to the totality that is capitalist society.

For Horkheimer and Adorno, mass culture is identical to the capitalist production and consumption process. It is designed by capital to fill capital's needs. No pretence of critical art is even attempted. They are "businesses" and "industries", and as such demand profits. Cultural products are designed to manipulate and to create false needs. When Horkheimer and Adorno reference the culture industry's 'identity' with the capitalist totality, they mean its full alignment with capital. The critical aspect of art, its role in challenging authority and in expanding consciousness, is abandoned. Cultural products—movies, music, books, sports, travel, etc.—primarily serve as vehicles for corporate advertising. But their alignment with capital goes much deeper than this: their very content is shaped to support capital. As consumers of cultural products, we are not invited to engage our critical faculties in categorizing, interpreting or intellectually and emotionally engaging with them. These activities are pre-programmed into the cultural products themselves so as to ensure the 'correct' reactions from consumers. In addition, they are designed to elicit immediate reaction rather than mediated, reflective interpretation.

The products emerging from the cultural industry are not designed for transcendence. Their content is either banal and quotidian or they are fantastical works of escapism and spectacle. In both cases, they are meant to confirm one's daily experiences as normative by either mirroring them precisely or escaping from them. Critical art engages with the "is" by magnifying its contradictions and injustices. Critical art can also signify utopia and offer alternative possibilities to the imagination. In this way, the culture industry is a giant reproductive system for the perpetuation and enlargement of capital: "[e]ach single manifestation

of the culture industry inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole has made them." (DoE 100).

The culture industry also seeks to provide the semblance of freedom through its use of "repressive de-sublimation" (Marcuse, ODM 56-83). Herbert Marcuse dealt with this concept in great detail in his book *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM), but he elaborated on an idea that was first introduced in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Repressive de-sublimation is the use of libidinal desire within the commodity (consumer products and cultural products) to elicit a sense of freedom in its consumption. However, this is a false freedom. In reality, the conjuring of these instinctual feelings is a conversion of sublimated desire for a new form of repression. Sublimation is a form of conscious acknowledgement of our instinctual desires with a recognition that civilization requires its control. To sublimate desire is not to repress it. On the contrary, it consciously redirects desire to other positive ends. Sublimated desire resides in the critical work of art. It resides in the political drive to improve living conditions. Repression, on the other hand, is a form of denial. It has no healthy outlet. Repression also distorts desire. It condenses erotic love into a self-centred focus on erogenous zones. Or it releases itself through psychological or personality disorders. It also renders what was sublimated (i.e., the controls that society places upon 'acceptable behavior') forgotten. When a conscious memory of what was sublimated is retained, it is converted into political, artistic, and autonomous energy. So, in our hyper-sexualized society, with pornography freely available everywhere one looks, it becomes that much more difficult to assert that capitalism is repressive. However, upon closer examination, this de-sublimation is evidence for repression:

> Works of art are ascetic and shameless; [on the other hand] the culture industry is pornographic and prudish. It reduces love to romance. And, once reduced, much is permitted, even libertinage as a marketable specialty, purveyed by quota with the trade description "daring." The mass of production of sexuality automatically brings about its repression. (DoE 111-2)

Sex is everywhere in society, yet its treatment is schizophrenic. Sex sells, therefore, it is ubiquitous not only in advertising and cultural products but within the very design of consumer products themselves. But sex only sells by means of the tease, of the tantalizing promise of desire fulfillment without the actual fulfillment. For this to work, for it to maintain the desire it creates while transferring it to the product being sold, an element of the prudish and forbidden

must exist alongside it. The desire must be repressed. During this process, one is manipulated into the purchase out of the wish for desire fulfillment, the object of which has shape-shifted into something less fulfilling and temporary by means of a transference over to the commodity. However, it is vitally important for capital that a strong residual of repressed desire remains after the commodity's consumption. Satiation is capitalism's undoing. Here, then, is the repression that accompanies de-sublimation. And here too is the link between my above definition of freedom and the truly repressive and alienating environment of capitalism and working life. Working life is often so physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting that healthy and fulfilling intimate relationships are fleeting or permanently damaged. In exchange for this lost opportunity for real intimate love and compassion/passion we often substitute consumerism and leisure—ultimately an empty substitute.

Horkheimer and Adorno see a direct link between pure entertainment and business:

> . . . entertainment has always borne the trace of commercial brashness, of sales talk, the voice of the fairground huckster. But the original affinity between business and entertainment reveals itself in the meaning of entertainment itself: as society's apologia. (DoE 115)

Pure entertainment, which includes sports, popular culture, travel and tourism, etc., are those elements of the culture industry that stake no claim to art. In fact, entertainment is designed to distract, to keep people's minds clear of the ongoing injustices in society. It allows people to acclimatize to society's problems and normalizes injustices. The suffering of others is the furthest thing from one's mind while one is being amused (i.e., "escapism"). In terms of the business world, entertainment helps ensure a stable 'business environment', one free from collective action and resistance. It also helps maintain pliant, subsumed employees.

As alluded to above, the *semblance* of freedom is important for capital to promote. For an ideology that is ostensibly based on individual drive, ambition and the competitive spirit, the admission that reality is more complex than that would be to invite revolt. Thus the drive to promote hyper-individualism. As I hope I have already made clear, there is no such thing as a wholly independent, self-made individual in society. We cannot exist without the support of others: the others from the past who have built up our knowledge base and institutions, the others contemporaneous to us who have helped shape our personalities, and the others who, behind the

scenes, support us in our every activity. During the Covid-19 lockdown we have all come to see how important social contact is and how much less human we feel without it. The promotion of the ideology of hyper-individualism is a smoke screen of manipulation and control by capital. Horkheimer and Adorno call this "pseudoindividuality" (DoE 125). Capitalist competition relies upon the myth of the self-made man. Working collectively and cooperatively often exposes competition as wasteful and socially caustic. Capital knows this and takes great pains in establishing a culture of identity to the capitalist mode of production and consumption because, given the opportunity to do so, humans tend to self-organize in collective ways to solve problems. The economist Elinor Ostrom has written extensively on this topic and has shown how voluntary, organic organization has solved many 'common pool problems' in ways superior either to free market property rights or state control (Ostrom).

It is important to point out that one of the primary concerns that Horkheimer and Adorno addresses in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the loss of individual identity due to the identarian pressures of capitalist modernity! Indeed, this is one of the aspects of the dialectic of enlightenment that they warn us about: the loss of identity in the move to be fully identified within the capitalist totality. When we as individuals are easily and completely ("sufficiently") captured within a limited range of categories (i.e., worker, consumer, etc.), there is very little of the individual that is left. Yet, we go through life under the mistaken impression that we are free individuals. To be a true individual, a true autonomous subject, there must be a leftover or a residual of qualities that cannot be categorized. This residual is what makes the true individual.

The purpose of the culture industry is to build and maintain the myth of the individual while at the same time shaping the subjectivity of workers to align with the prerogatives of production and consumption. Leisure time flows from, and back into, work life as it re-energizes the worker for more work while also providing another outlet for consumption. Leisure time, entertainment, and even art (in its bourgeois form) are structured to produce a form of individuation that seeks to define itself only in relation to itself: personal projects of self-improvement, self-promotion, career ambitions, all of which are in full alignment with the capitalist system. Under this pseudoindividualism, the process of individuation poses no threat to capital even as it provides the semblance of distinction and superiority. Individuation through the

discovery, development and subsequent contribution of one's unique talents to social praxis is discounted as idealistic and lacking in value-neutrality.

What I have intended to communicate in these summarized accounts of Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* and Horkheimer's and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the *objective* determinants of subjectivity and how these are both sourced in, and determine our attitudes towards, work. Work is not a sidebar to these systemic and structural aspects of society; work is in fact the central concern! The source of capital's wealth and power is the surplus value gained from both historic primitive accumulation and current surplus labour. The capitalist system cannot survive without workers. Any claims to the contrary at this juncture in time have been quickly laid to rest during the Covid-19 pandemic as the world has come to realize just how dependent it is on the workers throughout our supply chains: truckers, warehouse workers, delivery persons, store clerks, cleaners, etc. This creates a situation for capital that requires a balancing act between keeping surplus value at its highest through low wages, higher working hours, automation, offshoring, avoidance of regulation, etc. versus the potential for resistance (and revolution) from workers due to these exploitative conditions.

Both of the texts considered in this section show how capital pulls off this amazing balancing act. Through the labour process itself, and the alienating effects of the division of labour, workers are reified. This strips worker of their agency and shapes their consciousness towards the interests of capital. Our ties to nature, both external and internal, are alienated and redirected toward an acceptance of man's dominance and exploitation of nature. Nature is reduced to a source of raw materials and a sink for waste. All aspects of human desire and ambition are made identical to each other and thus made commensurable. This totalizes capitalism to the extent that all activity, all values, all consciousness, in all corners of the globe are brought under the control of the market. Both texts locate these tendencies prior to the ascendance of capitalism—indeed in the process of the evolution of self-consciousness itself—but both texts also see the pinnacle of barbarity, inherent to this alienating process, in contemporary capitalism.

Conclusion

We have dealt with a number of definitions of labour and work in this chapter, some of them positive (i.e., descriptive of the current state) and others that contain a normative element. My purpose in examining these varied definitions was twofold. First, I provided an analytical guide for our assessment of the causes of our current state of work precarity and the weakened working class. Second, I also provided a normative guide for my later assessment of policy options. To recapitulate, we have discussed the role of labour under capitalism, as defined by mainstream economics. We uncovered the assumption of antagonism that inheres within the individual labourer: labour versus leisure; freedom versus domination; autonomy versus heteronomy. We also uncovered the antagonism of the labour versus capital class relationship. Capital's drive to maximize profits drives the need to chase ever-increasing gains in productivity through greater exploitation of the labourer and/or technological advances. We considered Marx's description of labour as a multi-faceted form of alienation. Alienation occurs in the form of surplus value and the surplus labour time that creates it. It occurs in the disjunction between the labourer's subjective and objective nature. Alienation also occurs due to the separation of the labourer from his or her object of labour and in the form of production of the commodity. This relates to the commodity's distributed production: distributed in the form of highly specialized and compartmentalized job functions as well as temporal and spatial distribution. Finally, on a phenomenological perspective, we discussed how alienation is caused by the labourer's estrangement from the object of production from one's own labour-power, which redirects the intentional stance of the worker whose object of intention is now the money wage.

In discussing the economic description of labour we also dealt with the methodology of economic rationality and how its positivistic approach, which purposely mirrors that of the natural sciences, leads to a false sense of scientific legitimacy as well as a simplification and concretization[31] of its assumed behavioral foundations. This has led to the theoretical

[31] Concretization: In philosophy, concretization refers to the process of taking an inherently abstract concept and (often falsely) turning it into an assumed reality (a concrete reality). Actual concretization can and does take place when theoretical abstractions are, through a recursive process, naturalized into society itself. Its members start to personify, for example, the behavioral assumptions inherent in a given policy directive. In other words, theory, rather than explaining empirical phenomenon, takes on a generative role in shaping phenomenon.

justification of income inequality through a strict rendering of the production function and its backward measurement of marginal labour productivity. While these are seemingly theoretical considerations, they become real when applied to the material reality of the worker. His or her wages are set according to the theory; the impetus to automate comes out of this theory; and the internalized gross inequality of the rewards of his or her labour are defended by means of this theory. At no point in mainstream economic theorizing does the notion of a fully democratic participation in the choice, design, and implementation of new technologies come up. Technological development would look very different if this radical re-alignment of development choices was applied.

The object-oriented, or systemic, approach to analyzing labour under capitalism is essential because of its power to shape individual subjectivities. Individuals within capitalist society, those of us who are under the spell of the culture industry and the reification of labour itself, have a reduced capacity for reflective consciousness. Our ability to distance ourselves from our daily lives and dispassionately critique society has been greatly diminished. Even more damaged is our ability to circle back and feed the outcome of reflective thought into reflexive action (praxis). While it is true that the system shapes our subjectivity, it is also true, or at least possible, that we can collectively change the object that feeds our subjectivity. Indeed, this is the real source of our individual autonomy: the collective and democratic praxis of reconstructing society towards more humane ends.

In the next chapter I will use the joint subject-object view of work that I built up in chapters two and three to build a dialectical constellation of concepts upon which to analyze and critique four current policy options related to the future of work. These policy options will be judged in their ability to negate the negatives of both Lukacs' and Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of capitalist modernity. None of these policy options are, in any way, radical. All are currently in the mainstream of discussion and practice. However, each option is also investigated with an eye to their potential to foster radical change.

Chapter 4: Towards a Post-Capitalist World of Work

As I hope I have made clear in the preceding chapters, the current reality of the world of work and labour is unsustainable and destructive to human flourishing. While work does not represent the whole of society, it does represent the most powerful axis upon which to radically alter its trajectory. We may reach a point in the future where human labour is redundant. However, whether that hypothetical fully automated society is an egalitarian, just and ecologically sustainable one, or an amplified version of today's already dystopic society, depends on how today's workers use what is left of their power. We have available to us today a number of policy alternatives to address the issues so far discussed; everything from business-as-usual (or, in the case of some conservative economists and commentators, a push for even more laissez faire economic policies), to universal basic income, and government job guarantees, reduced work weeks, to more progressive solutions such as an expansion of worker co-operatives. The purpose of this concluding chapter is twofold: (1) establish a set of criteria to determine the optimal policy or set of policies; and (2) assess each of the policy options to determine suitability.

Criteria

In establishing the criteria for my appraisal of policy options I will rely upon a normative foundation based upon the philosophical principles laid out in chapters two and three. This normative foundation will consist of both positive content (i.e., what elements must the policy contain), and negative content (i.e., what elements must the policy avoid). My aim is to assess currently discussed and theorized policy options. I will not, however, present any novel policies as my real intention is to construct a methodology of policy assessment using current policies as an illustrative case. The foundation of my methodology will be the use of a 'constellation' of concepts in line with the ideas set out in Adorno's Negative Dialectics (Negative Dialectics). This methodology seeks to describe an object using a constellation, or matrix, of subjective conceptual categories, all offering a diverse range of possible content in the hopes of more fully representing (but never fully representing) the object in question (Negative Dialectics 162-3). The construction of a constellation enables the illumination of a specific aspect of the object,

rather than the object in its totality. However, the categories are not chosen randomly, but rather are interrelated and overlapping. The methodology is also purposely biased towards selecting concepts that define the object in a normative way; one that "heals the wounds to nature" (human and non-human) and prevents them from occurring in the future. Philosopher Deborah Cook expresses this healing aspect of the use of constellations in the context of non-human nature:

> Among the concepts that form a constellation, then, are ideas that gesture towards the possibilities in non-human nature in order to ascertain what things might become if the conditions that now damage them were ameliorated in such a way as to enable them to flourish. (Cook 86)

This is an important point regarding negative dialectics and the use of constellations: the object is subjectively defined in such a way as to reflect values elided or repressed by capitalism's one-dimensionality. The active and subjective shaping of definitions of an object becomes the first step in a praxis toward the realization of a renewed actuality—a renewed object! This stays true to the process-oriented view of objective reality which posits that reality is continuously shaped by both subjective and objective forces. It is not static, as the positivists would have us believe, and so it is capable of being healed.

Having established the normative foundations for my policy assessment, I will then apply the critical methodology of determinate negation. Adorno's negative dialectics is faithful to the dialectical view of human social evolution but takes its leave from Hegelian dialectics at the point of resolution. For Adorno, the dialectical resolution of any given antimony does not automatically fall toward a positive outcome. There is no theodicy of Absolute Spirit (Hegel, PoR) guiding the dialectic's resolution. Therefore, the determination of how an antimony is resolved depends more on the conscious effort involved in guiding its resolution than the material and historical tendencies of the antimony itself. For Adorno, humane and rational thought must guide the resolution if it is to resolve itself in a humane and rational manner. And, in fact, the antimony's resolution is less a resolution, or an integration, than it is a reconciliation between two seeming opposite poles. This clarification between the concepts of reconciliation versus integration is important because the notion of integration ties in with the 'identarian' form of resolution that Adorno opposes precisely because of its authoritarian and alienating tendencies. In the reconciliation process the subject must remain; an excess of non-categorizable particulars must continue to exist. This reconciliation must be achieved as a 'determinate

negation' which focusses on the negation of a specific element of social negativity (e.g. alienation, heteronomy) (Adorno, Negative Dialectics 231). Abstract negation is, at best, a philosophical process of identification. Determinate negation, on the other hand, is a step towards praxis: it attempts to resolve, by cancelling and preserving, the given contradiction in objective reality. As part of this praxis, determinate negation also requires critical attention be directed toward the unstated and hidden agendas at the heart of society's contradictions.

The purpose of negative dialectics—indeed, the purpose of most normative philosophical systems—is to change the world for the better. Under the Socratic and Aristotelian traditions of philosophy this would be defined as a world where the fullest expression of *eudaimonia* is made possible. *Eudaimonia* may be defined in English as 'flourishing', or 'the good life'. However, it has a much richer meaning than that and so I might elaborate on this definition by saying that it is that form of happiness that comes from the full expression and self-definition of a being's essence, with all of the necessary freedoms in place to fully express that essence. But *eudaimonia* reaches beyond a being's essence because it situates that essence within a subject that is reconciled to the object. Knowing one's essence (identity, skills, needs and desires, etc.), and being able to express that it as a necessary part of the whole, is where meaning arises.

The first and highest-level descriptor of each category within the constellation is the category itself. Each of these categories describes a specific form of unfreedom or impediment to *eudaimonia* and thus each is presented in the negative. And, given the subject matter of this thesis, these categories are meant as descriptors of work as an object. Work, as an object, is open to change, as are all objects under a process-oriented philosophy. Therefore, while these categories are meant to describe the nature of work in the present, they are dialectical categories inevitably susceptible to change by means of the energy and movement contained in their historical and social contradictions. With this in mind, here are the categories contained in my constellation of work: alienation/reification, inequality, heteronomy, subject-object diremption[32], false consciousness, and passivity (contemplative attitude). Within each of these categories are

[32] Diremption: "A forcible separation or severance." (OED)

subcategories that describe specific elements of each unfreedom expressed in its subjective or objective terms. This scheme is best described in the following matrix:

Table 1 List of Categories Used in the Analysis

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Related Normative Concepts
Alienation/ Reification	*Subjective*	Object of intention is the wage or salary, not the object of production	Freely chosen work that fully aligns with one's needs, desires and values
			Worker's livelihoods not dependent on wages
	Objective	Worker alienated from object of production	Product of work serves as a direct mediator between the worker and society as a whole
		Surplus labour	All benefits of labour append to the worker
			Workers determine levels of reinvestment versus earnings
		Commodified labour-power	Labour no longer a commodity, but is a freely chosen expression of one's essence
Inequality	*Objective*	Merit-based system often privileges the lucky and is defined in market terms	Egalitarian principles of fair and equitable distribution
		Productivity-based system of reward often unjust, disproportionate, and based on singular measure of monetary value	Production to be based on societal needs
			Production based on democratic principles and not primarily market
			Plurality of values
		Systemic nature of income and wealth inequality: racialized peoples, historical class divisions, etc.	Fair distribution of income and wealth
Heteronomy	*Objective*	Market decides what and how skills or talents are valued and	Workers democratically choose production process and thus have a

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Related Normative Concepts
		how workers must express those talents	say in terms of the skills to be developed
			If market is retained, it is guided by democratic principles and is a subsidiary institution in society
		Systemic limits on freedom and autonomy from the hierarchical 'master-slave' relationship of the typical work environment.	Freely chosen work and democratic control of supervisory hierarchy
Subject-Object diremption	*Subjective*	Having no work, or having work that is not meaningful, stunts our Being.	All citizens who wish to work must be granted the opportunity to work
			Work opportunities must focus on praxis: on the meaning that inheres in the participation of a collective "healing of nature" in all its forms
		Separation of body and mind in labour process	Work designed by workers; intellectually stimulating and embodied
			Technological development designed to accommodate this human need
	Objective	Estrangement from non-human nature	All production to be scientifically and democratically vetted to ensure sustainability
			Economic growth imperative to be eliminated or redefined to qualitative growth over quantitative
		Detachment from our species-being and from society	Work linked to praxis
		Detachment from our own bodies	Work is embodied and addresses libidinal and aesthetic needs and desires
False-consciousness	*Subjective*	Worker's double bind: consciousness of alienation	Worker's livelihoods not dependent on wages

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Related Normative Concepts
		limited by economic dependence on the system	Worker ownership and management
		Worker's failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism	Access to information on the full impact of one's individual actions on society as a whole through worker ownership and management of production process.
		Worker's failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence; its goals, desires, and potential.	Through worker ownership and control consciousness of one's own needs, desires and skills is heightened. The product of production now becomes a true social mediator between the worker and society, and between the worker and non-human nature.
	Objective	Built-in antimonies within society itself that prevent full consciousness	Consciousness of antimonies through the fostering of reflectivity; a process inherent to the empowerment of workers.
Passivity, contemplative life	*Subjective*	Workers become passive spectators in work, politics and culture—culture becomes spectacle	Education includes critical studies and aesthetic education
			Work, as part of praxis, addresses need to participate in the social and aesthetic reshaping of society
	Objective	Hierarchical, identarian society—positivism	Praxis! Being part of a collective effort to subjectively redefine and objectively restructure society, according to some mutually agreed utopian imaginary, exposes the lie of stasis.
		Instrumental reason	When the 'big picture' is part of a collective praxis means and ends combine. The current means become a way to prefigure the future in the present. Reason becomes holistic.

In my analysis, I (mostly) avoid the temptation to engage in technical debates over the economics of each policy. Those arguments are outside the scope of this thesis and outside my area of expertise. They are also, frankly, not aligned with the normative foundation of this thesis, which I outlined in chapters two and three. All too easily these technical arguments are premised upon the very instrumental reason that Horkheimer and Adorno criticized. If one views the world as a frozen set of behavioural and social 'facts', then critics will always redirect discussion toward those assumptions. Once that maneuver has succeeded, an impressive arsenal of 'established' and orthodox economic theory and mathematical paradigms is brought to bear. Alternative paradigms and normative values are neutralized in the process. This does not mean, however, that I eschew the methodology of immanent critique in this analysis, only that I do not engage in immanent critique at the detailed level of mainstream economic analysis. My immanent critique is focussed on the normative claims of these policies in comparison to the normative framework I provided in chapters two and three.

Policy Analysis

Basic Income Schemes

Basic income schemes are front and centre at this point in time and have been for a number of years now. Their salience has only grown during the Covid-19 pandemic, primarily due to the massive and sudden increase in unemployment that has swept globe early on in the pandemic's trajectory (Dyer) (Wignaraja and Horvath). Employment may be affected in the long-term by the reductions and shifts of demand. Companies are likely to react to these demand shocks by reducing their numbers of employees and/or reducing wage and salary levels. Without employment and income, demand drops even further in a self-perpetuating cycle. As I discussed in chapter one, this situation is not new. In fact, it has been on a steady increase since the mid-1970's. To be clear, employment levels have waxed and waned during this time, but the returns to wage and salary earners have not kept pace with the returns on capital, and employment precarity has increased dramatically. This is why the idea of a basic income has once again taken on a new life.

Before I assess the various basic income schemes for their potential to alleviate the categories of social negation in the above constellation, a brief description of these schemes, along with their history, is in order. Basic income schemes can be classified according to the following attributes: (1) scheme funding source; (2) universal versus means-tested; (3) timing and periodicity of payments; (4) recipient income amount; and (5) conditional versus unconditional.

Funding sources can vary from personal and corporate income taxes, to other taxes such as financial transaction taxes, wealth taxes, sales and value added taxes, and Pigouvian taxes (e.g. carbon tax). They can also be sourced from government budget realignments such as cuts in military spending, elimination of corporate subsidies for industries (such as oil and gas) that are major emitters of greenhouse gases, or by means of the reduction of other social programs. Sovereign wealth funds, such as those in Alaska and Norway (funded from decades of royalty revenues from the oil and gas sector), are being used to fund current BI programs in those jurisdictions. Finally, a more stringent pursuit of tax loopholes, tax avoidance schemes, and offshore tax havens has also been suggested as a source of funding.

Universal versus means-tested simply refers to whether or not the basic income scheme chosen is applicable to all citizens, regardless of income and wealth, or if some form of exclusion criteria is applied based on income levels (individual or family), net worth, etc. The latter is often termed ‘means-tested.’

Timing and periodicity of payments refers to whether the income is received as a lump sum amount up front and at the beginning of one’s adult life (a kind of endowment) or if it is a periodic and regular payment at defined intervals (annual or monthly). This attribute category also encompasses the requirements for pre-payments and the subsequent tax refunds or payments upon filing of annual tax returns. This is primarily applicable to the negative income tax form of basic income.

The recipient income amount refers to the magnitude of the income itself. The suggested amount of that income varies widely from those who believe it should only represent a minimal floor (i.e., basic survival needs), to those, like Van Parijs, that believe it should represent a citizen’s complete source of income, one that enables a full and meaningful life (Van Parijs and

Vanderborght). Under the former, work is still meant to make up the bulk of one's income and so work under this scenario falls within the current scope and lived experience of capitalist labour. For the latter, work is not meant to compensate for one's efforts monetarily, rather, it is meant to be unrecompensed and freely chosen.

Finally, conditional versus unconditional refers to whether there are conditions placed upon recipients in order to 'earn' their basic income. Unconditional means exactly that, there are no strings attached to the earning of basic income. Conditional means that certain conditions are required of the recipient prior to, and during, the receipt of basic income. These requirements range from having to be a citizen of the country providing the income to requiring the citizen to hold a job and/or perform some form of socially desirable volunteer work. Here is a table summarizing the various basic income categories and their attributes (Van Parijs and Vanderborght) (Susskind) (Weeks):

Table 2 Basic Income Categories and Their Attributes

Basic Income Scheme	Funding Source	Universal versus Means-tested	Timing and Periodicity	Recipient Income Amount	Conditional versus Unconditional
Universal Basic Income (UBI)	Varies	Universal	Usually monthly, but could be annual	Various depending on design	Usually unconditional
Conditional Basic Income (CBI)	Varies	Undefined	Usually monthly, but could be annual	Various depending on design	Conditional; employed or engaging in volunteer activities
Basic Income (BI)	Varies	Means-tested	Usually monthly, but could be annual	Various depending on design	Varies
Universal Endowment, or Stakeholder Grant	Varies	Universal	Up front, one-time payment when one enters adulthood	Varies depending on design	Unconditional
Negative Income Tax	Personal Income Tax	Universal in scope but by design it filters out high income individuals	Monthly	Varies depending on design, but usually designed as a floor	Unconditional
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Personal Income Tax	Universal in scope but by design it filters out high income individuals	Monthly	Floor	Conditional: only available to those who are employed
Wage subsidies	Varies	Means-tested: only available to low wage earners	Monthly	Floor	Conditional: only available to those who are employed

Basic income itself has a long history with the first mention of it being made by Thomas Paine in a pamphlet written in 1796, which was meant as an egalitarian response to a bishop's sermon that he had heard. In this sermon, the bishop stated that God created both rich and poor, thus granting rich landowners a divine justification for their outsized levels of income and wealth. In the pamphlet Paine argued that God would not create such inequality. He posited that the inequality seen in the America of his day was against God's intentions and suggested that a lump sum payment should be given to every citizen on an annual basis to help right the wrong of inequality (Susskind 181). Basic income, in one form or another, has since been promoted by people from both sides of the political spectrum: from Martin Luther King Jr., Bertrand Russell, John Kenneth Galbraith and Phillipe Van Parijs on the left to Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and President Richard Nixon on the right. For those on the right, the stated goal of basic income is to provide some form of social assistance while not disincentivizing hard work. However, the unstated goal is to reduce overall government expenditures on social programs (welfare or social assistance, unemployment insurance, public healthcare, child support, pensions, etc.).

On the progressive left, basic income is highly controversial, with ardent supporters and harsh critics existing in the same political and philosophical circles. Much of the disagreement is sourced in the fact that the concept of basic income has become a 'floating signifier'[33]. In other words, its variety of forms and variations (see above table) make it difficult to debate since its expression in the real world can be so diverse. Despite this, most progressive proponents agree on what the ideal forms of basic income would be. These usually include the requirements for an ample income amount beyond the bare necessities for survival, a delinking of the requirement to hold a job while earning a basic income, and a staunch refusal to allow the dismantling of other social programs in lieu of the basic income. The differences of opinion mostly centre around the question of the political feasibility of implementing a progressive version. This is an important point because the conservative versions of basic income, if and when implemented, would likely

[33] Floating signifier: "A signifier without a specific signified (*see* sign). Also known as an 'empty signifier', it is a signifier that absorbs rather than emits meaning." (Buchanan). The signifier in this case is 'basic income' and in being a floating signifier it connotes an ambiguity of meaning due to its wide range of interpretations and varieties. This is important because unless we are clear as to exactly what the attributes are of the basic income in question, we could be talking at cross purposes.

produce results exactly counter to progressive goals. However, to the uninitiated voting public, a basic income is a basic income.

Constellation Assessment: Basic Income

Before turning to the more theoretical possibilities of basic income, I would first like to provide a brief account of the experimental results of basic income trials throughout the world. It is critical that we acknowledge the very real benefits that are possible with the implementation of a basic income program. Canada's MINCOME experiment is one such example. The MINCOME experiment took place in the small town of Dauphin, Manitoba from 1974 to 1979. It is of particular importance because it was, and is to this day, the only 'saturation site' experiment[34] of its kind in North America. Every family in Dauphin—a town of approximately 12,500 people at the time—was granted the opportunity to participate in the program. The program provided 60% of the Statistics Canada Low Income Cutoff amount (varied by family size), but every dollar received from other sources would reduce benefits by 50 cents. Unfortunately, due to a change in political parties in both the federal and provincial governments, the program was cut short and its scope was reduced by abandoning the research component of the experiment's original project plan. The data archives of the project were later stored in an unpublicized location by the Department of National Health and Welfare. In the end, only a small subset of the data became accessible to researchers. Nevertheless, what the Dauphin MINCOME experiment showed out of the available data were significant positive health outcomes for its participants. Significant decreases in hospital visits related to both physical ailments and mental health issues was observed (Forget). Other researchers on basic income have supported these findings from the MINCOME experiment on the social determinants of health and have linked them specifically to UBI's poverty reduction impact. For example, poverty has been linked to higher rates of heart disease, depression, diabetes, and many other diseases (Meili and Martin 16-18).

Evelyn Forget and two of her Canadian colleagues summarize the empirical findings of basic income trials from all over the world, with particular focus on African trials in Malawi and

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[34] Saturation site experiment: a social experiment where the 'universe' of participants involved includes an entire site—in this case, the entire town of Dauphin, Manitoba. This is in contrast to a random sample of participants.

Kenya, as well as the abovementioned Canadian MINCOME experiment. Their findings point to basic income's ability to reduce risk for its recipients, which, in turn, has been shown to encourage long-term planning. This allowed people to feel more confident in making decisions for themselves and for their offspring. Risk reduction also enabled women in abusive relationships to more readily exit those relationships by reducing their risk of income insecurity. Basic income not only helped to reduce income inequality through poverty reduction for the poorest members of these communities, but also did so for their higher income individuals. It accomplished this by providing them with an opportunity to go back to school to update their skills for the job market. Basic income was also observed to enhance social interactions. This was primarily through the indirect action of the knock-on effects of crime reduction (i.e., by means of an increase in social trust) and by higher levels of education (Forget, Peden and Stobel).

Basic Income trials in Namibia (2008-2009) and India (2011-2013) showed additional benefits to women in terms of empowerment through education (Widerquist 57-59), and in the dual Seattle and Denver Income Maintenance Experiment (SIME/DIME), conducted between 1970-1976, women also felt freer to exit abusive relationships, likely a product of the risk reduction inherent in basic income's income support (Widerquist 51).

In terms of the progressive theoretical arguments for basic income I will first turn to the Belgian political economist, Philippe Van Parijs, who is perhaps the most prominent proponent of a radical version of basic income. In a paper entitled "A Capitalist Road to Communism", co-written by Robert Van der Veen (Van der Veen and Van Parijs), Van Parijs and Van der Veen outline how basic income might serve as a Trojan Horse on the road to communism (their particular "thin" form of communism[35]). Using an analytical Marxist economics approach, they

[35] "Note that 'communism,' as defined, does not entail collective ownership of the means of production by the workers, i.e., 'socialism' as defined above. But it does entail collective ownership of the social product by society as a whole: while the owners of means of production, labor power, and skills decide whether and how to put them to productive use, society appropriates all income flows in order to distribute them 'according to needs' to all its members. This constitutes the etymological justification for our 'thin' definition of 'communism'" (Van der Veen and Van Parijs 653).

analyzed four different tax funding criteria[36] and their impacts on production and basic income levels. They followed up with a discussion on the impacts to freedom, amount and quality of free time, equality, production levels and sustainability for each criterion. The primary aim of Van Parijs's and Van der Veen's paper was to discuss how basic income—in its universal and unconditional form (an unconditional UBI or, in their terminology, a "universal grant")—could be instrumental in initiating a transition from capitalism to their version of communism. Their secondary aim was to show that regardless of the criteria chosen, each entails a system of trade-offs between maximizing freedom and abolishing alienation, on the one hand, and then addressing inequality, ecological damage and maintaining a sufficient amount of production and technological development to ensure continued human flourishing, on the other. Although they gave preference to the Marxian criteria, they were careful to point out that the realities of the moment may demand some form of compromise or hybrid solution. Key to their analysis was their conclusion that the material realities of labour-saving automation, combined with the limits imposed on material growth of the economy due to our ecological issues and resource constraints, will make the transition to their version of communism a "historical necessity". They see an unconditional UBI as the most logical and humane way to accomplish this transition. It is important to note that Van Parijs and Van der Veen do not identify the Marxian proletariat as the necessary agent of change. In their view, this agent of change is less an agent than it is an object, which, in this case, is the whole of society as it reacts to the systemic logic of an unconditional UBI that gradually leads to a constantly shrinking working day and an increase in the quality of work. This movement, according to them, results in the eventual shrinking of the very need for basic income as the money economy fades from view and work is abolished: "[a]t the limit, both

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[36] (1) *Growth-oriented criteria (maximize total product):* low tax rate; minimal basic income (enough to cover basic survival needs only); high production (or "social product" in their terminology): (2) *"Rawlsian" criteria (maximize absolute level of total basic income).* This criterion seeks to bring basic income to its maximum sustainable level in society, and so the tax rate is higher than the growth-oriented criteria. Note that the "Rawlsian criteria" is based on John Rawls' notion of the "difference principle" which states that the only inequalities permitted are those that help the least fortunate in society be as well off as possible; (3) *Marxian" criteria (approximated as the maximum level of the total basic income relative to total taxable income)*. This criterion requires the highest tax rate of the four and its primary goal is the expansion of freedom and the abolition of alienation. Equality is a secondary goal under this scenario, and it may also favour economic growth as much as the growth-oriented criteria;

(4) *Equality-oriented criteria (approximated as the ratio between total basic income and total product)*: This criterion requires a tax rate higher than the Rawlsian criteria, but not as high as the Marxian criteria. Its emphasis on maximum equality means that production is still an important concern.

processes converge in the abolition of work: free time fills the day and work is so attractive that it is no longer work." (Van der Veen and Van Parijs 649).

If Van der Veen and Van Parijs are correct, their theoretical position would satisfy both the subjective and objective criteria of the negation of alienation and reification over time. Workers would no longer be alienated because their work would be freely-chosen and therefore aligned with their values. The ample basic income itself would also relieve workers of their reliance on the capital-wage labour relation to earn their living. The worker's object of intention—their phenomenological intention—would be redirected back to the product of their physical and intellectual energies. Recall that one of the primary sources of alienation in the capitalist system is the disconnect between the *outcomes of a worker's labour-power* versus the *desire fulfillment* of the worker himself, a desire-fulfillment that is not only objectified in the money wage and its anticipated utility when spent, but also delayed in time.

The work of Kathi Weeks, who is a professor of Women's Studies at Duke University and who applies a feminist and Italian Autonomist (autonomist Marxism) approach to her work on women's issues and the post-work society, may be of some benefit here. Her arguments for basic income come from two critical studies' orientations: *perspectival* and *provocative*. Weeks wants to break the link between alienated waged labour in capitalist society from income distribution and self-identity. Her *perspectival* approach to basic income is one that provides both a *critique* of capitalism's waged labour, and its problems of unemployment, overemployment, precarity, etc., and a *constructive response* to that critique in the form of basic income. While seemingly mundane on the surface, her perspectival orientation is subversive. Weeks is suggesting that when citizens become aware of basic income, through political debate and media coverage, they encounter a concept that provides a spark of insight and self-consciousness; one that opens up a novel perspective. It prompts them to think about work and their income and how it might be possible to separate the two from each other. It offers them a new perspective on something that has been, up until then, uncritically accepted as a 'law of nature'. In doing so, it can grant them the opportunity to regain a sense of agency and autonomy.

Week's *provocative* critical orientation is perhaps a more salient one with respect to my critical approach. She asserts that the notion of basic income provokes an awareness of new

possibilities for enhanced freedom and an expansion of desire. These provocations are meant to jar one's thinking away from the standard, automatic thought processes that we are culturally programmed to engage in when discussing work and the work ethic and how these relate to income. Weeks' notion of freedom aligns with that propounded in this thesis, and therefore is not limited to the strictly negative freedoms of highly individualistic, libertarian societies. Rather, the freedom called for is an integrative freedom of collective autonomy. This is the freedom of praxis, ". . . the time and space for invention" (Weeks 145). According to Weeks, this is the freedom that inheres from a detachment from work.

It is here that I wish to make a point of departure from what I believe is Weeks' overly critical approach to work. While I agree with her critical focus, I believe that a more expansive definition of work could fit with her goal (and the goal propounded in this thesis) of a freedom tied to collective praxis. This may be an issue of semantics, but I believe that a more precise term, in terms of her target of critique, would be 'waged-labour.' According to my critical perspective, work, as an aspirational concept, is an activity not tied to income and is not an expression of ascetic slavery to the work ethic. It is, or can be, an activity tied subjectively to self-expression and self-fulfillment by virtue of its link to the collective creation of the object of the *eudaimonic* society (or totality). In my view, this process is the very definition of praxis. This aesthetic model of work has the potential to offer a renewed source of meaning for humanity, a universal replacement for the diminished and tarnished universals of religion and nationalism. The freedom expressed in this vision is the freedom from the meaningless existence experienced within consumerist bourgeois society and alienated labour.

Weeks' provocation of desire is the more controversial of the two. In referencing desire, she is indicting the denial of desire inherent within the work ethic culture. The 'work more, work harder' culture is ascetic in that it asks us to contribute our time and energy in the present by means of a delay in our gratification of desire. Of course, this culture suits the owners of capital quite well as it serves as an additional factor in skewing the labour versus leisure trade-off toward labour. Weeks' views the possibilities inherent in basic income as offering an expansion of needs and desires. However, it is important to be careful with this provocative view because it aligns somewhat with the Promethean promises of Fully Automated Luxury Communism which points to a future cornucopia of riches available to all (Bastani). This is an attractive proposal.

However, given the looming nexus of climate-induced calamities, mass extinction, and growing inequality, the case for a cessation of economic growth has grown much stronger. This calls into question any Promethean vision of the near future—capitalist or socialist! However, if we define 'luxury', 'expansion of needs and desires', and, indeed, 'economic growth' more in line with non-material (i.e., *eudaimonic*) riches, then these utopian visions seem more realistic.

In my view, the weakness of Van der Veen's and Van Parijs' position, as well as Weeks', is that basic income contains no systemic links from the individual to the rest of society. While they provide a utopian imaginary in their writings, I believe they fail to link that horizon dialectically to basic income. I view this a major flaw limiting basic income's ability to offer any sort of subject-object reconciliation. To be clear, I do not view this flaw as simply an omission of theorization; it is a structural flaw inherent to basic income itself. There is no collective and organized working-towards *eudaimonia* through praxis inherent to any of the basic income schemes. Its focus is on individual freedoms and self-determination, even in its most progressive forms. As I mention above in the empirical findings from basic income experiments throughout the world, there are indirect benefits to the community at large that emerge from the actions of individual recipients. However, I do not believe that they do not carry the system-altering dimension that is required. These links to collectivity may evolve objectively, as suggested by Van der Veen and Van Parijs, but this seems to rely on a mystification of its own. A dialectical working out of these concepts could theoretically solve this mystification but they offer none. Admittedly, the openings to consciousness-raising that basic income might offer would be a preliminary step towards a subject-object reconciliation; however, without a clear material foundation—a foundation of collective struggle—the necessary objective changes required to the *system* are not at all evident.

Eric Olin-Wright has attempted to address this problem of finding the link between basic income and systemic overhaul. He views basic income's revolutionary potential arising from three main principles of challenge: (1) strengthening the power of labour relative to capital; (2) decommodifying labour-power; and (3) strengthening the power of civil society to shape the use of social surplus and economic power/activity (E. O. Wright, Basic Income as a Socialist Project). Wright believes that basic income might help strengthen the balance of power between labour and capital in labour's favour first by tightening the market for labour-power. Workers

with a guaranteed basic income are more likely to demand more in terms of wages, benefits and improvements in working conditions if they have a fall back. This gives individual workers, and even labour unions indirectly, more bargaining power. It may also grant workers who are not currently represented by a union to be more demanding in terms of organizing to certify a union. In line with this argument, basic income has often been described as an inexhaustible strike fund. In terms of decommodifying labour, basic income would do so to the degree that the level of basic income covers individual and family expenses. If, for example, basic income covered a basic level of subsistence for a worker, and that worker was content with the level of income it provided, and then he turned to work that he was passionate about, that work would be fully decommodified. In terms of the last principle, namely the use of the social surplus and economic activity, Wright's example of the arts is pertinent.

Artists today rely on government support to a great extent in order to earn a living. Arguably, the greater the critical integrity and artistic expression of a body of artwork, the greater reliance by the artist on government support. As mentioned in chapter three with regards to Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of the culture industry, creative works that are well rewarded in the market, are market-friendly. They support the status quo. Their critical content, if any exists, must remain within acceptable bounds, and the art work's return on investment to its sponsors (record companies, movie studios, etc.) must be as great, or greater than the sponsor's opportunity cost. Basic income to artists is a transfer from the capital sector to the 'social economy'. Artists can, to the extent that their basic needs are cared for, engage in the creation of art that fulfills the needs and desires, not only of themselves, but of society's need for critical perspectives. However, this would be nullified to the extent that they use that additional time to produce market-driven art. The same principle applies to societal care-giving activity, which is de-valued by capitalism, but yet is critical for the health of the community.

On the other side of the debate, John Clarke of The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty has, through the years, mounted a convincing argument against basic income. Clarke, a British native living and working in Canada, is an anti-poverty activist and teaches at York University. He is in general agreement with the progressive potential of basic income schemes in their most radical forms; however, his critique is based primarily on the question of political feasibility. Social change arises out of social struggle, it does not fall into the lap of those demanding

change. Capital has too much wealth and power at stake to permit a generous basic income plan to be adopted in any jurisdiction. The more progressive or radical the scheme, the less likely it is to be adopted. Economic coercion is essential for the asymmetric power relationship between capital and labour to hold. The highly successful de-unionization program of the 1970's and 1980's is evidence of that.

Clarke (and other critics of basic income) is also sceptical of basic income because of the support it receives from conservatives and right-wing libertarians. Not only Milton Friedman, but Charles Murray (the "Bell Curve" eugenics apologist), and various Silicon Valley Tech billionaires are increasingly pushing for the implementation of basic income. According to Clarke, basic income offers these individuals the opportunity to push for the cancellation of most, if not all, of the current government social programs to reduce their tax burden and to privatize social services. This could include the complete privatization of healthcare, education, transportation and housing. Under this scenario, basic income becomes a tidy singular payment that not only reduces corporate taxes but offers up new or expanded opportunities to earn profit. Once these neoliberal expansions of the market are established, they are very difficult to reverse. As Clarke suggests, basic income in these neoliberal incarnations is designed to expand our role as consumers rather than citizens. When social services are privatized the scope of our democratic agency shrinks as capital gains more opportunity for siloed profiteering (The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty 19-25).

See the following pages for the Constellation Appraisal of Basic Income.

Table 3 Constellation Appraisal: Basic Income

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Alienation/ **Reification**	*Subjective*	Object of intention is the wage or salary, not the object of production	BI does not directly address the issue of alienated labour. However, it indirectly influences this relationship, in the worker's favour, by reducing the risks inherent to dissent.
	Objective	Worker alienated from object of production	BI does not directly address the systemic alienation inherent to capitalist labour. The revolutionary potential of BI is dependent on the version implemented, which is highly dependent on political feasibility.
		Surplus labour	Only addressed to extent that reliance on alienated labour for overall income is reduced.
		Commodified labour-power	"
Inequality	*Objective*	Merit-based system often privileges the lucky and is defined in market terms	Capitalist merit-based system remains with BI.
		Productivity-based system of reward often unjust, disproportionate, and based on singular measure of monetary value	Capitalist productivist system remains with BI.
		Systemic nature of income and wealth inequality: racialized peoples, historical class divisions, etc.	BI's ability to lessen inequality is dependent on the system chosen and how it is funded. If other social programs are reduced or cut to fund BI program, some citizen groups may be adversely affected by BI. Issues around the political feasibility of implementing a progressive version of BI are also applicable here as the likelihood is very small.

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Heteronomy	*Objective*	Market decides what and how skills are valued and how workers must express those talents.	BI has a proven ability to enable education or re-education. The worker therefore has an enhanced ability to select her field of work. However, choices are still limited by market priorities.
		Systemic limits on freedom and autonomy from the hierarchical 'master-slave' relationship of the typical work environment.	BI does not directly address the heteronomous nature of the capitalist worker/employer relationship, other than to grant a greater risk tolerance to dissent.
Subject-Object diremption	*Subjective*	Having no work, or having work that is not meaningful, stunts our Being.	BI does not directly address the availability or nature of capitalist labour. It may contribute to people leaving the workforce altogether if BI income is sufficient to support a subsistence living. This is not conducive to finding freely chosen work that enhances Being. As noted above, revolutionary versions of BI may have this potential over the long run but are dependent on the political feasibility of implementation.
		Separation of body and mind in labour process	Basic income schemes do not directly address the issue of the content of work. Most politically feasible schemes leave the nature and content of capitalist labour untouched.
	Objective	Estrangement from non-human nature	BI does not directly address the systemic 'metabolic rift' between capitalism and non-human nature (i.e., exploitation of nature). Means of production, along with the growth imperative, remain intact.
			Undemocratic nature of production process is retained thereby granting continued priority to the profit motive.
		Detachment from our species-being and from society	Basic income contains no systemic links from the individual to the rest of society. No collective and

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			organized working toward *eudaimonia* through praxis. Focus is on individual freedoms and self-determination.
False-consciousness	*Subjective*	Worker's double bind: consciousness of alienation limited by economic dependence on the system	BI provides some detachment from economic dependence on the system and thus may provide room for a more honest cognitive appraisal of the alienating nature of capitalist waged labour.
		Worker's failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism	As per Weeks, BI as a concept changes one's perspective on possibilities. It challenges the work ethic and the inevitability of the capitalist waged labour relationship as a 'law of nature'. These new perspectives might be achieved even with less progressive versions of BI.
		Worker's failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence; its goals, desires, and potential.	As per Weeks, BI provokes an awareness of new possibilities for enhanced freedom and an expansion of desire. These provocations jar one's thinking away from the standard, automatic thought processes that we are culturally programmed to engage in with regards to work and the work ethic and how these relate to income. These provocations may be possible even with less progressive versions of BI.
	Objective	Built-in antimonies within society itself that prevent full consciousness	BI on its own does not have the capacity to resolve deep-seated bourgeois antimonies. In fact, none of the policy options being examined here retain that capability on their own. What is being examined here is the policy option's capacity to foster awareness of these antimonies so that the design of praxis incorporates a move toward resolution.

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Passivity, contemplative life	*Subjective*	Workers become passive spectators in work, politics and culture—culture becomes spectacle	BI programs do not directly address the issue of individual passivity versus praxis.
	Objective	Culture Industry: culture as spectacle, capitalism's publicist	BI programs do not directly address the systemic sources of passivity.
		Hierarchical, identarian society—positivism	BI has limited capacity to challenge hierarchical society by means of its 'permanent strike fund' capacity and risk reduction.
		Instrumental reason	Without a wholesale shift to a post-capitalist economic and political system, the deeply ingrained one-dimensional nature of bourgeois reason and ontology is unlikely to change. BI is not up to the challenge. It is too limited in its scope.

What stands out in this analysis of basic income as a policy alternative is, first of all, its limited scope. These limitations come from two sources. First, basic income itself, regardless of form, does not directly confront the nature of work in society and the worker's ability to shape that work. On its own, basic income cannot negate the source of alienation, false-consciousness, and the subject-object diremption. Second, the political feasibility of implementing a form of basic income that might begin to tackle the systemic problems of capitalism is highly questionable. As noted above in John Clarke's writings, political feasibility is the limiting factor as to what form basic income ultimately takes on the real world if indeed it is ever implemented. Given the stakes involved, the rich and powerful are unlikely to voluntarily agree to a policy option that leads to higher taxes, more power ending up in the hands of workers versus capital, and greater democratic control of the means of production. Systemic changes, if they come, are only feasible through struggle and dissension. They will not arrive out of a friction-free policy change of limited scope.

This does not translate into a wholesale rejection of basic income, however. There are elements of basic income that are likely useful in a transition strategy incorporating one or more of the other policy options that I will consider next. Basic income's primary benefits appear from the empirical evidence to be in realm of: (1) individual improvements to physical health, through the alleviation of poverty; (2) improvement to mental health, through the alleviation of income risk and stress, leading to greater autonomy; and (3) opportunities for re-education. These are very real improvements to the lives of individuals and thus should be given their due. However, even these individual benefits presuppose a form of basic income that does not source its funding through the gutting of existing social programs. Basic income is unlikely to succeed on its own as a catalyst for systemic change. This is why I suggest its impact is greatest as a supplementary policy and only in a progressive form: conservative formulations of basic income are likely to leave many recipients in a worse situation over time.

Job Guarantee

Job guarantee programs have a revolutionary history going back to the French Second Republic. During the 1848 revolution, a diverse range of Parisian activists and armed workers

demanded that right-to-work[37] legislation be guaranteed to all working-age civilians. This push came from socialists and liberals alike who recognized that the liberal institution of property rights, and the income that was enabled from those rights by property owners, was not met by an equivalent right to income for those who did not own property. These activists saw right-to-work legislation as a minimum requirement to satisfy that gap. Soon afterward, the government created National Workshops for the unemployed (McKay). These National Workshops, which were unsuccessful and only lasted for a few months, were nevertheless the precursors to today's job guarantee programs. Their failure was due to their charity design rather than a design based on real employment (Bouchet 577-578).

The most well-known of job guarantee programs, however, were those implemented by Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of his First (implemented 1933-1934) and Second (implemented 1935-1936) New Deal programs in the United States. These programs were constructed from the normative social welfare traditions of the 'right to work' and the ideal of providing income security for all citizens. Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies were put in place to achieve full employment without triggering major price shocks. The pursuit of these goals was achieved through a combination income security and employment assurance. Income security was achieved by means of the Social Security Act; a support program provided to all citizens in need of support but who could not work. The employment assurance goal was addressed by a combination of: (1) directly funded government works programs, and (2) private company contracts to design and build infrastructure projects on behalf of the federal government. The direct government employment strategy was achieved by means of a wide variety of government works programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Civil Works Administration (CWA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Farm Security Administration (FSA), Emergency Work Relief (EWR) and others. These direct programs were supplemented by indirect support to private industry was through the auspices of Public Works Administration (PWA) (P. Harvey, Wage Policies and Funding

[37] It is important to note here that right-to-work legislation in this original 19th century context meant just that—the right to work, to have a job, and to contribute to society. This is not to be confused with today's cynical re-definition of this phrase to push for the conservative agenda of de-unionization. Specifically, this refers to a technique of encouraging non-unionized workers to fight for the right to work in a closed-shop union environment by means of a legislative weakening of union rights.

Strategies for Job Guarantee Programs 39-42). The vast majority of projects undertaken in these programs related to transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, viaducts, airports, etc.). However, programs were undertaken in other areas of the economy as well such as ecological restoration work, flood control, sewer and water utilities, education, the arts, parks and recreation, and many others. These programs not only helped bring the United States out of the Great Depression, but they also increased employment, reduced poverty and brought lasting improvements to the nation's infrastructure and morale (Tymoigne).

The job guarantee of today is very similar to those programs of the New Deal era in the United States. It is a progressive economic and social policy with strong links to the Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) school of post-Keynesian economics, but not limited in its associations to MMT. It is outside the scope of this thesis to explain MMT in detail, however, a brief introduction is necessary in order to understand the modern job guarantee of today.

MMT's theoretical foundation is Chartalism, which is founded upon the notion that money is a social creation (specifically, a legal, or contract settling instrument), not an invention of individual utility maximizers to replace barter. With Chartalism, it is the state's responsibility to establish an institutional form of debt pricing and repayment through the use of money. The purpose of money is seen, primarily, as a token of legal obligation, with the prime legal obligation being the payment of taxes to the state. The example provided by the founder of the Chartalist school, George Friedrich Knapp, is that of the coat check token at a theatre. The token is of a consistent shape and colour and is individually identified by a number. The token is an acknowledgement by the theatre that they have an obligation to safeguard and return one's coat. According to the economist L. Randall Wray, the settling of private debt obligations was the origin of markets, not the barter of commodities. Only after these credit/debt markets were established did the familiar commodity markets emerge (L. Wray). The Chartalist school positions itself in opposition to the 'metalist' school of the theory of money, which says that money is simply a representation of a certain amount of precious metal (usually gold). That metal is held in reserve as an asset base and represents the 'real' form of money (L. Wray).

What does the above explication of Chartalism have to do with job guarantees though? It becomes the theoretical defence of MMT and its goal of full employment through the use of

government debt. According to MMT economists, a state can and should increase government spending, financed through debt, to the point at which there is full employment within the state. In doing so, the State becomes the "employer of last resort": another name for the job guarantee. MMT economists see the other side of the debt incurred on the balance sheet as the asset of tax receivables. The funds required to finance direct spending on jobs through a job guarantee program sets up an offsetting tax receivable. MMT economists assert that this does not distort prices (i.e., cause inflation) because it is counter-cyclical. In other words, when an economy starts growing again and people who were previously paid through a job guarantee program obtain a job in the private sector, the state's spending (and thus borrowing) is reduced. At the same time, taxes are raised (in a progressive form). The payment of those taxes not only reduces the offsetting taxes receivable on the state's balance sheet, but also the money supply. This, according to MMT theory, is the automatic stabilizing force on prices. This why MMT economists refer to the pool of people employed through a job guarantee program as "buffer employment" or the "Job Guarantee Pool" (Tymoigne).

In terms of contemporary job guarantee theory, the normative foundations are similar to those of the New Deal programs: (1) full employment for all those willing and able to work through the stimulation of private employment and the provision for public employment; and (2) non-stigmatizing income support for those who are unable to work. However, most contemporary job guarantee programs go one step further by tying their normative guide to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following are those articles specific to work (P. Harvey, 2012):

> **Article 22**
>
> Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.
>
> **Article 23**
>
> 1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
> 2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

One approach to the job guarantee is the provision of income level that is uniform (i.e., Uniform Basic Wage, or UBW) and is uniform at the equivalent of a minimum wage with benefits (healthcare, free childcare, vacation time, sick leave, etc.). This version would only assure a subsistence level of income, one just above the poverty level. However, for those who argue for the application of the abovementioned UN Declaration on Human Rights to be applied as the minimum normative standard of any job guarantee program, the uniform basic wage comes up sorely lacking. The UBW is challenged by article 23(2) which calls for equal pay for equal work. Some recipients of income from a job guarantee program will have skills that they bring to the table that would call for higher than minimum wage, and with the inclusion of vocational training that is a part of most job guarantee programs, wages should reflect that training. The just-above-poverty income level could also be interpreted as contravening articles 23(3) and 25(1). This is why others like Philip Harvey, an economist and legal scholar from Rutgers Law School, have proposed a more generous job guarantee design that not only allows income level flexibility but also insists that the minimum level be based on a more humanistic interpretation of the above UN articles.

Despite his more generous version of a job guarantee program, Harvey insists that the cost of a well-designed job guarantee program is much less than an equivalent basic income program. In fact, he estimates that it is between one third to one half of the basic income equivalent (P. Harvey, 2012 6-7). Harvey's job guarantee design offers jobs comparable in both pay and responsibility to those occupied by similarly qualified and experienced workers in the

regular labor market. There are two additional stipulations in Harvey's design. First, supplemental income-assistance up to the level implied by the abovementioned UN articles should also be provided to those not capable of working. To those who are capable of working, job training should be provided to enable unskilled and/or inexperienced workers to meet the minimum qualifications inherent in any work environment. Second, participants in the job guarantee program who fill managerial or professional roles should be offered salaries that align with those in the public sector, not the private sector. Harvey notes that his more expansive policy may imply an increased risk of inflation; however, he suggests that these tendencies can be mitigated through temporary wage scale adjustments to enhance the buffer stock of workers effect. He also believes that, even with non-uniform wages, job guarantee programs have built-in counter-cyclical tendencies due to the higher tax revenues and savings during economic upswings (this eliminates "demand-pull inflation" tendencies) and the focus on marginalized communities with higher-than-average unemployment. In other words, the impact on the cost of wages in the private sector would be negligible (i.e., negligible "cost-push inflation") from his program (P. Harvey, Wage Policies and Funding Strategies for Job Guarantee Programs 45-46).

Job guarantee programs are an important policy consideration in the context of this thesis not only because they are taken seriously as policy options, but also because they now form part of the economic platforms of many progressive political parties and their leaders. U.S. Democratic Party members such as representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders have a job guarantee as a prominent part of their platforms. Both link their job guarantee programs to their proposal for a Green New Deal. Job guarantees are also an official part of the Green Party of Canada's platform and was part of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party platform in his failed bid for Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 2019.

Let us now have a look at how job guarantees perform against my constellation approach. Job guarantee programs are, by their very nature, a form of top-up for the capitalist wage labour system. As such, their ability to address any of the constellation categories seems limited from the outset. Since the majority of the working population would experience very little change with a job guarantee program the alienation inherent to working life under capitalism would also remain unchanged. For those who directly benefit from the job guarantee program as recipients, the issue is a little more complex. Alienation due to surplus labour would not be applicable to

those whose job was directly related to a public works program. For example, if an individual were to obtain a job helping to clean up a polluted wetlands area as part of a government-sponsored remediation project, no surplus labour would be involved because no surplus value would be created; profit would not be earned off of the employee's labour, in other words. In terms of the object of intention, depending on the degree of choice exercised by the employee as to the program and/or project they work on, this form of alienation might also be reduced. For example, working on an environmental remediation project, if freely chosen, might fully represent an object of intention in line with one's values, needs and desires. On the other hand, even in this scenario, workers would have neither a democratic say in the work process or the supervisory hierarchy, nor would they maintain any ownership of the process.

Similar to basic income, job guarantees offer a partial, but very limited, remedy for income inequality. Some transfer of wealth from the wealthiest individuals to those workers most in need would occur through the counter-cyclical increase in taxes during economic upswings. However, one can also imagine a strong political resistance to job guarantees precisely because of this necessary aspect of job guarantee funding. The class antagonism already present in capitalist society would likely increase as a result due to the systemic nature of inequality. Job guarantee programs alone cannot address this issue because most job guarantee programs are based on a minimal level of income for recipients.

However, running counter to the above is evidence from the history of the New Deal programs themselves. Michael Dennis, associate professor of history at Acadia University, examined the legacy of the full employment movement during the New Deal era and discovered a progressive subversiveness belying its liberal, Keynesian origins (Dennis). In fact, as Dennis recounts, these tendencies were subversive not only to laissez-faire capitalism, but to the Keynesian economics inherent to the design of the New Deal itself. One of the main challenges to orthodox economic theory was evidence showing how state involvement in the labour market, and to the economy in general through the centralizing tendencies of state-wide infrastructure projects, did not negatively distort the market, as was commonly predicted. Also, Dennis makes reference to the observations of several progressive economists of the New Deal era to bolster his point regarding the subversive tendencies of full employment. He makes reference to the work of the institutional economist Alvin Hansen; the heterodox Polish economist Michal

Kalecki; and John Maynard Keynes himself. Keynes and Kalecki both agreed that full employment often necessitates government intervention into the economy as well as income redistribution measures. Hansen also acknowledged that fiscal control over the economy, of the type and magnitude required by full employment, was a destabilizing and egalitarian force against the capital class. Under laissez-faire economic policies profit margins balloon during periods of high growth but are unevenly shared. Temporary full employment may be 'naturally' reached during those periods, but the bounty is unevenly shared, with most of it going to capital. And, when bust periods follow, the resulting hardship falls mostly to the working class who become unemployed or suffer wage cuts. Most interesting in Dennis' account of the New Deal era's push for full employment was the work of Roosevelt's National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) whose researchers "…advocated for the "democratic participation of working people" in the determination of working conditions, wage rates, and hours." (Dennis 76).

In terms of heteronomy, properly constructed job guarantees could permit more choice to its recipients in terms of the type of work they choose. Freedom of choice in terms of how many hours per week one wishes to work and democratic participation in the workplace may or may not be available depending on the design of the system. Also, workers under any job guarantee program—whether a direct public program or subsidized labour in the private sector—must maintain the right to organize and negotiate through a union. However, without some form of proletarian ownership in the organization—such as that of worker co-operatives—democratic participation and workplace freedom are unlikely features of any job guarantee program.

Perhaps the most interesting possibilities for job guarantees arise with regards to the reconciliation of the subject/object within individuals and within society. Unlike basic income schemes, job guarantees are based on income from work. While I have repeatedly critiqued the prevailing work ethic of bourgeois culture, this does not mean that I promote a culture of idleness. Over the long-run, a culture of idleness runs the risk of promoting a regression in human subjectivity in the form of a return to pre-reflective consciousness. I take seriously the subject-forming and mediating power of work, and I believe that this is where job guarantees

hold an advantage over basic income[38]. Conditional basic income schemes are not the solution to this inherent weakness either. Their requirement that recipients must either have a job or must volunteer in order to receive basic income, combined with the fact that they provide no institutional support to obtain those jobs/volunteer positions, is punitive.

If job guarantees are tied to specific government projects whose goals reach beyond simple production for production's sake, and instead move toward the higher goals of healing the breach between human society and non-human nature and toward a collective expression of *eudaimonia*, then the notion of real praxis might come into play. Admittedly, this is asking a lot of a state-sponsored employment policy. However, if we look to the example of the 'Green New Deal' being proposed in one form or another by progressive politicians around the world, we might allow ourselves to experience a spark of hope. At a minimum, this growing popularity of the idea of a Green New Deal points to a desire on the part of the world's citizens to address the existential issues of our day. One can easily critique the Green New Deal's design (and even the intent by some of its adherents), but it points to openings for increased consciousness. Earning a living, even if minimum wage, by being part of a larger movement to address climate change shifts the emphasis away from the ego and points towards a reconciliation between self-interest and the object—in this case, the object of non-human nature. Manual labour, when accompanied by a recognition of one's contribution to the whole, is also a form of reconciliation between the subject and the object—in this case, the subject's own body. Throughout the history of the development of capitalist forms of labour, as well as its forms mechanization and automation, domination of our sensuous nature has been commonplace. There is, however, no law of nature that mandates this approach to the development of technology and labour processes. When this development is shaped by the profit motive, the needs of capital come first, often at the expense of the worker. When workers direct this development, the realization of the worker's full potential—body and mind—is more likely.

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[38] There is much research to indicate that there are many harmful effects from chronic unemployment. These range from the effects on individual health and well-being (mental health, life satisfaction) to social pathologies (crime, spousal abuse, etc.). (Puig i Barrachina, Malmusi and Martinez); (Corson); (McKee-Ryan, Zhaoli and Wanber); (Lucas, Clark and Georgellis)

To be clear, I am not suggesting that job guarantees are the ultimate solution. Too few people would participate and benefit from this type of program to make a difference all on its own. The vast majority of workers would still work under the alienated system of capitalist waged labour. However, as we have all witnessed several times in the last few decades, sudden, paradigm-shifting change can happen fast, and can be triggered by a relatively small group of people. Witness the relatively fast acceptance (admittedly not a complete acceptance) of LGBTQ+ rights over the past couple of decades and the global movement of support for Black Lives Matter during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I believe that job guarantees, while not a solution on their own, might form part of an overall strategy of systemic change.

I believe the above comments equally apply to the social negativity of false-consciousness. The key here is the consciousness-raising potential of the link between one's work—in whatever capacity—and the whole. It is perhaps those job guarantee recipients who have spent many years in the private sector workforce who are most receptive to an awakening of false consciousness. Becoming unemployed after years of working is a stressful and often liminal[39] period of one's life. Despite being a period of anxiety and emotional pain, it can also be a trigger for life-altering change. A truly liminal experience is one where there exists two objective states and a subjective in-between state; a doorstep, as it were, from the 'before' state to a range of possible 'after' states. It is both stressful and enlivening at the same time. There is often a strong pull to retreat to the 'before' state. However, if acted upon, that retreat is a lost opportunity for growth. If the individual in a liminal state chooses to cross over the threshold an opportunity for the awareness and remediation of one's false consciousness presents itself.

The above comments regarding false-consciousness apply equally to the negativity of the contemplative life. To the extent that the awareness and mediation of false-consciousness can be

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[39] Liminal, or liminality, are terms originally used analytically in anthropology. They are derived from the Latin word for 'threshold' (*limen*) and were used in anthropology to describe states of social transition, or 'rites of passage.' Liminality is an 'in-between' state of being and consciousness that is characterized by contingency and an ambiguity over structure versus agency: where dividing line exists between one's being or subjectivity versus the structures of society becomes blurred. Liminality is also characterized by a higher receptivity to the inter-connectedness of the parts to the whole. When one is in a liminal state one is open to new experiences, new thought processes and even to a change in one's life course. (Andrews and Roberts). On an individual level, these states can be triggered through traumatic life experiences (divorce, loss of faith, near-death experiences, job loss).

achieved by job guarantee recipients, some awareness of the passivity of bourgeois life might also be achieved. This is a beginning, but a true and full negation of this negation cannot be achieved until a post-capitalist future has been achieved. It is too deeply ingrained in capitalist institutions and culture for a singular policy to affect it with any degree of success.

See the following pages for the Constellation Appraisal of job guarantees.

Table 4 Constellation Appraisal: Job Guarantee

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Alienation/ **Reification**	*Subjective*	Object of intention is the wage or salary, not the object of production	There is opportunity here to align the recipient's object of intentionality toward a reconciliation of self-interest and the other, depending on the nature of the program the recipient is assigned. However, to the degree that the wage obtained from the job guarantee falls short of fulfilling basic needs and desires, or if being a recipient leaves one open to social stigma, this subjective re-focus may be sidelined by continued anxiety.
	Objective	Worker alienated from object of production	The 'object of production' is key here. If a job guarantee program incorporates *eudaimonic* and sustainability goals, a very real opportunity exists for a reduction of this form of alienation. In fact, it would contain within it a precursor of true societal praxis.
		Surplus labour	In the context of a public works program surplus labour does not technically exist (i.e., the profit motive is not applicable). However, for job guarantee programs that are structured as government subsidies of private industry employment, the usual alienation inherent to the profit motive continues to exist.
		Commodified labour-power	Commodified labour-power would continue to exist throughout the majority of the economy under a job guarantee program. Only a relatively small percentage of the working population are ever envisioned as having need for these programs. In fact, by design, job guarantee programs are seen to be the producers of a 'buffer stock' of workers relative to the private sector.

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Inequality	*Objective*	Merit-based system often privileges the lucky and is defined in market terms	Job guarantee programs do assist in mitigating inequality, however, their bias towards minimal support means that their efficacy is highly constrained.
		Productivity-based system of reward often unjust, disproportionate, and based on singular measure of monetary value	Minimal support of most job guarantee programs does not address the issue of the injustice of disproportionate rewards. Capitalism's one-dimensional focus on monetary measures of value is also left untouched.
		Systemic nature of income and wealth inequality: racialized peoples, historical class divisions, etc.	The scope of job guarantee programs in and of themselves is too limited to have any significant impact on the systemic sources of income and wealth inequality. However, the fact of increased state involvement in the economy, both in terms of funding and production choices, may carry with it some long-term potential for systemic change.
Heteronomy	*Objective*	Market decides what and how skills are valued and how workers must express those talents.	If structured correctly job guarantees could provide more choice in the type of work recipients are able to choose. Workers must retain the right to organize and negotiate through unions.
		Systemic limits on freedom and autonomy from the hierarchical 'master-slave' relationship of the typical work environment.	Freedom of choice in terms of how many hours per week one wishes to work and democratic participation in the workplace is not likely under any existing form of job guarantee. Without some form of ownership—such as is the case with worker co-operatives—democratic participation and workplace freedom are unlikely to be features of any job guarantee program.
Subject-Object diremption	*Subjective*	Having no work, or having work that is not meaningful, stunts our Being.	Job guarantees have an advantage over basic income in that they are based on work, not paid free time. Basic income runs the risk of forming a culture of idleness, thus risking a

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			long-term regression to pre-reflective consciousness, or at a minimum, a resistance to praxis.
		Separation of body and mind in labour process	If work from job guarantee program aligns with one's values and points toward praxis, then manual labour, when accompanied by a recognition of one's contribution to the whole, becomes the foundation of an integration of body and mind in the labour process, and in the rest of one's life.
	Objective	Estrangement from non-human nature	Job guarantees linked to programs such as Green New Deal may help to awaken consciousness of this estrangement. The work itself may also contribute to healing the wound to nature.
		Detachment from our species-being and from society	As above.
False-consciousness	*Subjective*	Worker's double bind: consciousness of alienation limited by economic dependence on the system	Job guarantees provide some detachment from economic dependence on the capitalist waged-labour system. This may provide room for a more self-conscious appraisal of the alienating nature of capitalist waged labour.
		Worker's failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism	Job guarantees are likely to be utilized by individuals who have previously been employed within the capitalist waged-labour system. Many may enter the program during a liminal period in their life. Existing in this liminal state often frees one from frozen ways of thinking and living. It might also initiate a heightened awareness of false-consciousness and of new possibilities.
		Worker's failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence; its goals, desires, and potential.	Notwithstanding the above comments, the prescribed nature of even the most progressive of job guarantee programs

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			would limit the worker's ability to shape his or her own work according to their essence.
	Objective	Built-in antimonies within society itself that prevent full consciousness	As noted above in the basic income section, none of the policy options being examined here retain the capability to address bourgeois antimonies on their own. What is being examined here is the policy option's capacity to foster awareness of these antimonies so that the design of praxis incorporates a move toward resolution.
Passivity, contemplative life	*Subjective*	Workers become passive spectators in work, politics and culture—culture becomes spectacle	To the extent that the awareness and mediation of false-consciousness can be achieved by job guarantee recipients, some awareness of the passivity of bourgeois life might also be achieved. This is a beginning, but a true and full negation of this negation cannot be achieved until a post-capitalist future has been achieved. It is too deeply ingrained in capitalist institutions and culture for a singular policy to affect it with any degree of success.
	Objective	Culture Industry: culture as spectacle, capitalism's publicist	The content and structure of job guarantee programs, in and of themselves, does directly address the structural foundations of bourgeois life that lead to the passive, contemplative life. Their potential lies in their "destabilizing and egalitarian force" arising out of the necessity of state involvement in the economy.
		Hierarchical, identarian society—positivism	As above
		Instrumental reason	As above

Based on this analysis, I believe that the job guarantee policy option has a greater potential for societal change than basic income. Its focus on work and the continued participation of its recipients in civil society is a key difference. Key questions remain as to the harmful effects of the stigma that might be attached to participation in the program, but these questions seem moot when compared to the stigma attached to chronic unemployment. A well-structured, and well supported job guarantee program that includes education, on-the-job training, and participation in important societal projects, should temper such stigma. The prejudice against public employment is very much a North American phenomenon based, at least partially, on the American emphasis on free enterprise and laissez-faire economics. There is no reason why a strong public works and employment sector, based on excellence, service, skill development, and participation in important public works, cannot be fostered. Many European countries have strong public sectors in whom its citizens are proud, and which attract the some of its most talented workers. Also, during the Covid pandemic, on a global basis we are seeing the importance of strong public sectors. In fact, those countries having strong public sectors are, so far (as of June 2020), performing much better in terms of controlling the spread and lethality of the disease. And, in line with my dual subject/object approach, these relatively positive outcomes result from both better public healthcare infrastructure (objective) and higher receptivity to the advice of experts and the attitude of collective responsibility and care amongst citizens (subjective).

The scope of job guarantee programs may be limited in terms of the percentage of workers who would take advantage of them, however, this scope would expand and contract inversely to the state of the economy as a whole. As noted above, there are two attractive features of job guarantee programs for our purposes here: (1) their ability to heighten awareness and self-consciousness of the alienating aspect of work under the capitalist system amongst individual workers, and (2) their ability to introduce—albeit with limited scope—a destabilizing and egalitarian force into the economy due to state involvement. Under a job guarantee program, the state would regain some of its power to direct the economy. However, this too comes with a warning as state involvement also introduces the possibility of creeping authoritarian governance and misdirection of normative aims towards the interests of the elite. Recall my normative position: work as praxis toward a humane, egalitarian and *eudaimonic* society that heals the wounds to nature and to each other. I also reiterate my warning of the job guarantee's limited

scope and its continued reliance on the waged labour of the capitalist private sector. And, while its cost has been estimated to be one half to one third that of basic income, political backlash from the necessary increase to taxes during economic 'good times' threatens to limit its chances for implementation. I do believe, however, that it could represent a viable supplementary policy choice in combination with other measures discussed below and is superior in many ways to basic income.

Reduced Working Hours

The modern history of the today's 40-hour work week is illuminating for its lessons regarding the importance of social struggle in gaining ground over capital. This lesson is applicable not just to the reduction of working hours, but to all of the policy options under discussion here. Capital will not voluntarily concede ground in the class struggle and so any policy option that does not take this essential requirement for political and social struggle into consideration is doomed to fail. Also, once gains have been won the fight must continue. It must continue not only to make new gains possible but to retain the gains already won. In the case of the 40-hour work week, we know that ground has been lost over the past few decades as unpaid overtime and the increasing need for low-income workers to take on more than one job in order to survive has increased (Schor). In addition, while 40-hour workweeks might be the 'official' length of the workweek, the realities of working from home on laptops or smartphones during workday evenings or on the weekend, combined with long commutes, makes for a workweek often approaching 50-60 hours, particularly for white collar workers (Fleming, The Death of Homo Economicus 130-131). Economists and sociologists debate the cause of these working hour increases. Mainstream economists, taking their cue from their *a priori* 'methodological individualism', take the subjective point of view and assert that longer working hours are simply the efficient outcomes of the rational preferences of workers for higher incomes. The other side argues that the higher hours are caused by capital's desire for higher productivity and are thus forced, or at least coerced, from workers. Others accept the former explanation but suggest that the source of the 'subjective' motivation in desiring more income (and thus more hours) is the objective increase in marketing and advertising; a coercive pressure to desire greater income through the auspices of higher consumption (George).

The 8-hour day, and later the 5-day work week, are relatively recent improvements to labour laws throughout the world, with the United States amending their Fair Labor Standards Act to stipulate the 40-hour week in 1940. In Canada, the 40-hour week was not codified into law until the early 1960's. These gains for workers came after a century of struggle. Indeed, for Marx, the struggle over the length of the working day was the very quintessence of the class struggle. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution workers and labour unions fought to limit the working day first to 12 hours and the workweek to 6 days. In 1819, England enacted a law mandating a maximum 12-hour day for child labourers in cotton textile factories. England followed up with a law in 1847 mandating a 10-hour day maximum for children and women with the Factory Acts. Note that child labour itself was not addressed in either of these laws (Hermann 110). France enacted a 12-hour day maximum for all workers in 1848. In first half of the 19th century several jurisdictions within the United States fought for a 10-hour day (still within a 6-day work week, however) and were successful in many states. It was shortly after these wins that workers, by means of strikes and political action, began the fight for the 8-hour day. During the second half of the 19th century, mass strikes forced concessions from capital and the state permitting the establishment of 8-hour days in the northern United States in cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, Jersey City, Buffalo and Albany. In Chicago, on May 1st of 1886, the historical source of May Day, a general strike was declared. By May 3rd, violence against a man crossing the picket lines was met by police firing into the crowd. Four demonstrators were killed. The same evening demonstrators protested at Haymarket Square. When a bomb was hurled at police killing one officer, the police responded by opening fire again, killing one person and injuring others. From that date forward, and for the next several decades, union membership grew across the world. Concessions were granted, progressively reducing the workday down to nine hours and then to eight (King).

Throughout all of these struggles, capital fought back with dire warnings of economic collapse and threats of automation. While the threat of automation was not, and is not, an idle one, the economic collapse did not happen. What did happen was an adjustment of income share from capital to labour and thus a decrease in inequality. In an analysis of the move to an 8-hour workday in Sweden in 1920, economic historians Erik Bengtsson and Jacob Molinder show how employment, living standards, inflation-adjusted wages and profit margins were affected as a result. While employment levels were negatively affected in some sectors and positively in

others, overall, absolute wage levels increased despite the reduction of daily hours. Capital did move toward mechanization to compensate, which in turn raised productivity. Overall, however, when they looked at this period from a more holistic economic/social justice aspect, the two authors conclude the following:

> The very turbulent years when European economies went from wartime profiteering, an all-time high in inequality and mass social unrest to major social and political reforms—universal suffrage, workday shortening and profits taxation—and massive redistribution from capital to labour stand at the beginning of the historically equal period from around 1920 to about 1980. (Bengtsson and Molinder 164)

Today, we are seeing a resurgence of interest in reducing the workweek. Calls for a 35-hour, 32-hour, and even a 21-hour workweek (Simms, Coote and Franklin) are seen throughout not only the academic literature, but from some business leaders as well, particularly in the high-tech sector where companies like Amazon already permit some of its technical personnel to work 30-hour weeks. The firm Perpetual Guardian in New Zealand piloted a 32-hour work week for their employees and found that productivity not only increased on a per-hour basis, but on an absolute basis. They are now considering making the 32-hour workweek standard (Kotecki).

However, these calls for the reduction of the workweek from neoliberal business leaders and academics must be carefully analyzed. Their focus is purely on 'economic rationality'. Callouts to economic justice, freedom, "work-life balance", etc. are suspect. If the decision is left entirely to the private sector, only job categories where net gains in productivity, and therefore profitability, are observed would we likely see the implementation of a reduced work week. The Austro-French Marxist and economics journalist, Andre Gorz, wrote extensively on transitional political and economic policies. In his *Critique of Economic Reason* (Gorz) he pointed out the dangers of relying on this form of economic rationality in any future implementation of a reduced work week: "…society would continue to be split with, on the one side, an aristocracy of labour earning, for a twenty to thirty-hour week, as much as or more than the great mass of workers—particularly women—who, in hospitals, education, and the catering and distributive trades would remain subject to the traditional full working week." (Gorz 191). Gorz concludes by reminding us that all members of society have contributed through their collective labour (compensated or not) to the enablement of work week reductions; "[t]hese savings are the work

of society as a whole" (Gorz 191). Gorz sees an across-the-board reduction of the work week as something that should proceed slowly and in increments, with progressive moves to shorten the work week made once every four years to allow time for the economy and its citizens to adjust. Gorz also suggests a flexible, desynchronized (i.e., beyond the typical nine-to-five day, Monday to Friday work week) approach, with reductions to the maximum level of hours categorized not just on a daily or weekly basis but on a monthly or yearly basis, and perhaps even over a worker's lifetime[40], depending on the desires of the workers themselves and the nature of their work (Gorz 195-199).

Gorz comes at this problem from a philosophical tradition and normative value system similar to what this thesis is based upon. His call for a progressive shortening of the work week is on completely different grounds from the limited and self-serving reasons that some business leaders use to defend the idea. Gorz sees the free time that gradually accrues to the worker over time as a source not of *leisure*[41], per se, but rather as a source of *meaning*. Capital's reasons for shortening the work week are purely related to worker productivity. If, as the data seems to be indicating (Glaveski), workers typically put in a maximum of six hours per day of productive work, and if they are more focussed and energetic when they come to work, then it is logical that businesses would want to take advantage of some of the cost-saving implications of this. Office space might be reduced. Employee retention might improve. Economic rationality is indeed rational, albeit in an instrumental and therefore partial and one-sided form. Gorz's reasons for supporting reduced working hours within the capitalist system are more complex and run counter to capital's rationale. He sees an opportunity for a subversive undermining of capitalism's economic rationality and of the capitalist system as a whole. In a manner reminiscent of my previous discussion of Schiller's play drive, Gorz has this to say regarding free time:

> 'free time will have gained the upper hand over unfree time, leisure the upper hand over work'; 'leisure will no longer simply be rest or compensation but essential

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[40] Flexible hours over a person's lifetime is a "life course" approach which, theoretically, permits workers to freely choose periods of non-work throughout their lives and which accommodates the changing priorities we typically have as we go through life's stages. This would include paid leave for education, for child-rearing, partial retirement, etc. This would be offset by longer hours during freely-chosen periods of work (Hermann 145-147).

41 Adorno refers to leisure (in his terminology "free time") as ". . . nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labour" (Adorno, The Culture Industry 194).

> living time and the reason for living, work having been reduced to the status of mere means.'. . . [o]ne only has to think of the upheaval there would be in our society if creativity, conviviality, aesthetics and play came to predominate over the values of efficiency and profitability involved in work.' . . . [i]t is nothing short of an art of living . . . (Gorz 183)

It was important to include this quote because a number of ideas are being presented. First, work under capitalism (i.e., work whose values relate to efficiency and profitability) is "unfree time." Second, leisure takes on a new meaning beyond what we think of leisure time under capitalism. It becomes the "reason for living." Notice that he is not arguing for idle time, rather, he is redefining work toward a Kantian 'purposive purposelessness' that favours meaning-rich, creative, aesthetic and social activities not defined by economic rationality. Does this undermine my point in this thesis that work is essential to our subjectivity and to our Being? I submit that, to the contrary, it actually supports my position. That is because I am arguing for a redefinition of work that is twofold in terms of its temporal stance: praxis in the present to bring about a post-capitalist society, and a creative play-like form of work beyond, which is in alignment with Gorz's utopian horizon in his redefinition of leisure time.

My criticism of Gorz's call for increased free time under capitalism relates to my initial temporal definition of work: its praxis form. Calling for more free time under capitalism is a subjective and, one could argue, a passive approach to the problem of economic rationality. It does not address the systemic and objective nature of the problem. There is no organized and collective response inherent to this approach. It leaves the subject open to the same forces of false-consciousness and reification that Lukács warns us about, and the same identarian pressures of contemporary culture that Adorno and Horkheimer identified. With capitalist economic, political and cultural systems still intact, the ability for individuals to develop the critical awareness and theoretical insight to rise above their false-consciousness is limited. In fact, it becomes highly likely, given the trajectory of society since the Industrial Revolution when free time started its ascent, that false-consciousness remains untouched and leisure time remains defined under capitalist priorities. Bourgeois leisure time is not only an extension of our reified capitalist existence, but there is also some evidence that its expansion carries with it the threat of negative environmental impacts through increased consumption and energy use (Pullinger).

Let us now summarize this examination of the working time reduction policy using our constellation (see next pages).

Table 5 Constellation Appraisal: Reduced Working Hours

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Alienation/ Reification	*Subjective*	Object of intention is the wage or salary, not the object of production	More free time might enable individuals to become more aware of their true needs and desires. This might increase their desire for self-definition in ways outside of market parameters. Whether this policy, on its own, would lead to self-awareness of a subject's alienated state is questionable given the siloed aspect of this additional free time. Consciousness of alternatives does not arrive out of thin air; rather, it requires exposure to organized forms of dissent and exposure to positive alternatives, both in theory and in praxis.
	Objective	Worker alienated from object of production	There is nothing inherent in the working hour reduction policy that replaces or even alters the capitalist form of production. It reduces the time directly exposed to this form of production in terms of commodified labour-power but does not inherently alter it.
		Surplus labour	As above
		Commodified labour-power	As above
Inequality	*Objective*	Merit-based system often privileges the lucky and is defined in market terms	Working time reductions might have some positive effect on inequality due to its potential to increase employment. However, the increase in employment is more likely to occur if working time reductions are met with commensurate reductions in wages and salaries. The net effect on inequality is therefore unlikely to be of much significance.
		Productivity-based system of reward often unjust, disproportionate, and based on singular measure of monetary value	Working time reductions are unlikely to be granted in a capitalist framework unless capital itself gains the significant portion of savings from the reductions. Rewards to workers are

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			in the form of free time. Structurally, this does very little to combat inequality.
		Systemic nature of income and wealth inequality: racialized peoples, historical class divisions, etc.	As Andre Gorz reminds us, the working hour reduction is likely to be granted in a class discriminatory manner with benefits being first and foremost to middle, and upper class, earners. Those below them on the income scale ("the great mass of people") would likely not benefit.
Heteronomy	*Objective*	Market decides what and how skills are valued and how workers must express those talents.	Market prerogatives, including workplace hierarchies, power dynamics and marketable skills, remain under work hour reduction schemes. Systemic heteronomy therefore remains.
		Systemic limits on freedom and autonomy from the hierarchical 'master-slave' relationship of the typical work environment.	As above
Subject-Object diremption	*Subjective*	Having no work, or having work that is not meaningful, stunts our Being.	Work hour reduction policies may lead to higher employment. Content of work would remain largely the same.
		Separation of body and mind in labour process	Content of work would remain largely the same.
	Objective	Estrangement from non-human nature	Increased free time may open up avenues for a reconnection with nature. However, the potential for this increase to translate into a simple increase in capitalist leisure time is strong without a collective praxis to guide its form and content.
		Detachment from our species-being and from society	As above

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
False-consciousness	*Subjective*	Worker's double bind: consciousness of alienation limited by economic dependence on the system	This double bind might intensify as any increase in subjective self-consciousness obtained from increased free time could lead to a stronger cognitive dissonance. No independence from the system is offered with work hour reductions, only greater temporary relief.
		Worker's failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism	As noted above, additional free time might offer workers the ability to see through to their underlying alienated existence. Again, without organized forms of dissent and exposure to positive alternatives, these subjective illuminations lack revolutionary potential.
		Worker's failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence; its goals, desires, and potential.	Exposure to more free time might open up a worker's consciousness to their wider, non-market, non-commodified selves: their true 'essence', in other words. But its potential is limited due to the continued 'atomization' of the individual worker.
	Objective	Built-in antimonies within society itself that prevent full consciousness	Work time reductions are unlikely to affect the societal consciousness or reality of the foundational contradictions of capitalist society.
Passivity, contemplative life	*Subjective*	Workers become passive spectators in work, politics and culture—culture becomes spectacle	More free time might enable individuals to become more aware of their passive status. It might also grant them more time to get involved on a political level. However, this remains an unguided, individualistic potential only. The potential also exists for self-consciousness to remain untouched with increased free time devoted solely to increased bourgeois leisure.
	Objective	Culture Industry: culture as spectacle, capitalism's publicist	There is nothing inherent within the work hour reduction policy that directly addresses the passivity of bourgeois

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			society. Capitalist hierarchies remain, identarian political, cultural and philosophical pressures remain, and reason's domain remains tied to means rather than ends. As noted above, the subjective potential for increased free time is not reliable; therefore, it holds a dubious status in terms of its ability to foment systemic, objective change.
		Hierarchical, identarian society—positivism	As above
		Instrumental reason	As above

Before concluding, it is important to point out some problematic elements inherent to working hour reductions. First, without government mandated (or internal corporate policy-mandated) enforcement of maximum work week hours, there would be a strong behavioural pull for some workers to flout the policy and work longer hours. This defiance could be motivated both for perceived competitive advantage and for greater renumeration. This behavioral tendency, if not controlled in some way, would lead to a subversion of the policy's original intent. Second, there is strong evidence showing how capital has already manipulated the drive for reduced work weeks in their favour. With weakened union power, these 'concessions' are being granted in a way that ends up handing full advantage to the corporation. In addition to gaining cost savings from partial or even zero wage coverage of the forgone hours (e.g. from 40 to 35 hours), corporations are codifying flexibility in terms of when the work is performed (i.e., flexible shift times and length, weekend work, etc.) and by including hourly averaging periods of up to one year. These averaging periods retain the letter of the law of the policy, in terms of staying within the specified *average* weekly maximum but do so in a way that permits long shifts, weekend work and *no overtime* (Hermann 167-168).

In some ways, working hour reductions have a similar outcome profile in relation to our constellation as basic income schemes. Both policies take the focus off of work and place it instead on free time. Both policies also attempt to address the laudable goal of increasing individual autonomy. However, as the above constellation analysis shows, these are unmediated forms of intervention. What I mean by this is that the primary object of these policy interventions is the individual subject (worker/citizen) not the system of production. The basic philosophical assumptions and contradictions of capitalism (i.e., the bourgeois antimonies) are left intact. Granted, basic income, by its very nature, contains a systemic modification in the form of state-sponsored income. However, true mediation would mean inter-subjective and objective involvement, in other words, a collective approach. Basic income and work hour reductions leave the subject stranded in a sense. They are still left atomized and without a common goal with which to focus their newly acquired autonomy and time. The systemic sources of our current malaise are left untouched.

Notwithstanding the above, working hour reductions do retain important advantages. Its position as one of the key points of struggle for the international labour movement attests to that.

Even in its unmediated form, it retains the *potential* for heightened self-consciousness: a basic necessity in moving collective struggles forward. Therefore, working hour reductions are best seen as an adjunct policy option. If paired with a more holistic and engaged policy, working hour reductions might well contribute positively to the goal of systemic change. The last policy option that I will analyze is the worker co-operative.

Worker Co-operatives

I have put forward an argument for the continued importance of work and have done so because I believe work will continue to be crucial to the task of subjectivity formation and self-consciousness. It will also continue to be the prime means of recognition through its mediating role in intersubjectivity. Finally, work is how we actualize collective praxis. By logical extension, I have also put forward the notion that the working class continues to be a prime locus of revolutionary potential. Despite the ravages to working class power and solidarity that almost five decades of neoliberalism has wrought, the working class still retains a degree of organization, representation, and pure raw numbers that is essential in developing revolutionary potential. They do this partially through their ability to arrest the continued extraction of surplus value thereby putting the reins on the expanded reproduction of capital as a whole. As discussed, no other group appears in the present, nor are any visible on the horizon, that has these necessary elements. If this assumption is correct, then the conversation must turn to the question of revitalization rather than replacement. Labour unions have lost power and legitimacy over these intervening neoliberal decades. In addition to corruption, unions face problems of dwindling membership, influence and power. To mitigate these losses, unions have moved away from their radical roots and moved toward corporate interests. Workers themselves have fallen prey to neoliberal anti-union rhetoric, which often lays the blame of chronic unemployment at the feet of unions. As a result, both unions and union members have identified with the aggressor (Gandesha). Many workers themselves actively support contemporary right-to-work legislation, which, in contradiction to its original, pro-worker intent, shuts down closed shops and weakens union bargaining power and resources. To a great extent, unions have also lost their connection to a broader sense of solidarity with disenfranchised and marginal groups, relegating their activity to contract negotiations and enforcement. This loss has all but eliminated the consciousness-raising potential that unions once had.

Worker co-operatives have the potential to revitalize worker agency and to re-collectivize workers granting them more power. Before we begin the analysis of this policy combination, let us first define the worker co-operative and then provide a brief history.

The worker co-operative is one form of co-operative amongst many, so to understand worker co-operatives, one must first understand the overall co-operative category. According to the International Co-operative Alliance, a co-operative organization is one that is "…an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise." (International Co-operative Alliance). As mentioned, within the co-operative category there exists a number of forms (Webb and Novkovic 3):

1. **Consumer co-operatives:** Consumers of various commodities such as food, insurance, funerals, financial services, travel services, consumer goods, etc. Consumer members have some degree of democratic input into the operations and long-term goals of the organization.
2. **Worker co-operatives:** These co-operatives are owned (in whole or in part), and often managed by, their employee members. All members, regardless of position or occupation, receive an equal vote.
3. **Producer co-operatives:** These co-operatives process and market their members' products and services directly while others may also sell the input necessary to their members' economic activities.
4. **Multi-stakeholder (or solidarity) co-operatives:** The membership of these co-operatives is made up of different categories of members who share a common interest in the organization. The categories may include consumers, workers, community representatives, investors, suppliers, etc.
5. **Community co-operatives:** These are co-operatives whose membership is drawn widely from the community and is not limited to employees. The original co-operatives were of this form.

Co-operatives are the forgotten child of enterprise forms. Capitalist forms such as limited liability corporations (LLC's), partnerships, sole proprietorships, trusts, not-for-profits, etc. are common and well-known. Co-operatives, on the other hand, are often thought of as a niche form of organization best suited for smaller organizations engaging in the production of boutique

commodities or services. However, co-operatives of all types employ almost three hundred million people across the globe and have over a billion members. The combined annual revenue of the top three hundred co-operatives in the world (out of a total of approximately one million) is greater than two trillion dollars (USD). While consumer co-ops (predominantly banking), producer co-ops (predominantly agricultural) and mutuals (insurance) dominate the list of the top 300, large worker co-ops from Spain, Italy and South America are also on the list (World Cooperative Monitor 7-31).

The history of co-operatives dates back to early 19th century Britain where the first socialists emerged as a reaction to the poverty and degrading and exploitative working conditions of the Industrial Revolution. Individuals such as the textile manufacturer and market socialist Robert Owen are one such example. He attempted to establish the first co-operative community in the small Scottish town of New Lanark, and it was here that he established a new school to educate the children who were working in the mills. He limited the workday for children and refused to employ them if they were under ten years of age. He also established a pension for all of his workers. In early nineteenth century Britain, these were revolutionary advances. Owen's attempts to convince other industrialists to adopt his reforms failed. The more radical William Thompson, an Irish political philosopher who was a friend of both Owen and the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, established an ethical foundation for co-operatives. Unlike his friends Bentham and Owen, Thompson was a radical who saw no redeeming qualities to capitalism. Thompson believed that happiness is obtained through social relations and not through individualistic pursuits. This stress upon social relations led him to promote democracy and cooperative community behaviour as well as worker ownership of the community's land and capital property (Restakis 27-33).

Owen's New Lanark experiment failed, as did his other cooperative community experiment in New Harmony, Indiana. However, Owen's and Thompson's cause was taken up by Dr. William King. King was a polymath, a scholar of history, philosophy, political economy and a medical doctor. After he settled in Brighton, England, King established a monthly periodical called *The Cooperator* which set forth not only his philosophical underpinnings for the necessity of co-operatives but laid out practical steps in setting them up and operating them. He also laid out the core principles of sound co-operative management. These included allowing

no sales on credit, establishing a board of trustees, the use of established accounting standards, regular operations meetings, etc. His vision of building co-operative communities where the community comes to own all of its land and productive capacity, and provides meaningful employment to all of its citizens, was to start on the ground floor by first establishing co-operative retail stores in the community. Like Marx after him, King believed that workers under capitalism were alienated from their labour. He proposed that taking the capitalist out of the production system was the key to eliminating this alienation. This re-patriation of capital from the capitalist to the community and workers would have to be a gradual process, according to King, and could only be done by means of a capital pool. A portion of the proceeds from co-operative enterprises would go towards these pools, as would membership subscriptions.

The first successful co-operative enterprise was established in 1844 in Rochdale, England (near Manchester). It was started by a group of twenty-eight weavers and cobblers. Despite its very humble beginnings, it became a success in its own right. More importantly, it became a model for the co-operative movement worldwide (Restakis 34-38). Members found not only a place to purchase goods, but a place to meet and socialize. In 1855 a wholesale store was added. Next, a library was built as well as a meeting hall and a school. By the end of the 19th century, The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was a retail giant. The consumer co-operative model was copied throughout Britain and the rest of world. By the late 1930's, consumer co-operatives retained over 10 million members (Zamagni 8-9).

The first *worker* co-operatives to emerge were in France beginning in 1831. These started out as societies for tradespeople. Carpenters, goldsmiths, stonecutters, and bakers were the first trades to form co-operatives. By 1848, in Paris alone, there were 255 such co-operatives (Zamagni 9). During this period, co-operatives flourished in Germany, however, the focus there was on the banking sector, with the first credit unions being established. In fact, they were so popular that by 1933 there were 50,000 co-ops with 9 million members. These were all effectively eliminated as soon as the Nazi regime took power in Germany. However, in Scandinavia, the farmer's co-operative (a form of co-operative incorporating elements of producer, supplier and worker's co-operatives), flourished. These started in Denmark with a particular emphasis on the dairy sector, but later spread to butchery and meat packing, and even

forestry. These co-operatives were extremely successful with half of Denmark's population having membership in at least one of its many co-operatives by the early 1930's (Zamagni 9-10).

Co-operatives of all categories have continued to grow throughout the world from those humble beginnings in the 19th century until our day. In the context of the subject matter at hand, however, I want to concentrate on two areas where co-operatives have flourished and which are based upon progressive worker co-operative principles: (1) the Emilia Romagna area of northern Italy, and (2) the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation of Spain's Basque region. All of Italy took to the co-operative model after World War II. However, there was a distinct north-south division in terms of normative foundations and what types of co-operatives were developed. This was due to the fact that the co-operative movement was led by political parties in Italy. In the Catholic and conservative south, co-operatives tend to be organized under the Catholic Confcoopertive umbrella organization, while northern co-ops are organized under the socialist Legacoop umbrella. A third liberal umbrella organization, AGCI, represents the remaining co-ops. It is the Legacoop organization of northern Italy that has set the normative standard for all of its member co-operatives, and that standard is a socialist worker-focussed approach. In fact, labour unions were instrumental in forming new worker co-operatives from the ashes of bankrupt capitalist organizations in northern Italy. This saved thousands of jobs in the process (Thornley). In Emilia Romagna alone there are approximately 25,000 worker co-ops, and co-operatives of all categories account for 30% of the region's GDP (Sammallahti).

The most well-known co-operative, and by far the largest, is Spain's Mondragon. The co-operative movement in Spain got its start in the late 19th century but was largely dismantled under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. It was a parish priest by the name of José Maria Arizmendiarrieta of the town of Mondragon who re-instated the co-operative movement in Spain. In the early 1940's, after establishing a vocational school for young people in the Mondragon, Arizmendiarrieta founded Fagor, a domestic and commercial appliance manufacturer which was also a worker's co-operative. Founded in 1956, it became the world's largest industrial worker's co-operative and remained so for several decades. Mondragon continued to add a diverse range of organizations to its federation. In the beginning, all of the Mondragon co-operatives were organized and financed by the Mondragon's worker's co-operative bank, the Caja Laboral, which was founded in 1959. The Lagun-Aro insurance co-

operative was established in the same year. In 1969, the large retail chain, Eroski (a worker's co-operative, not a consumer co-operative) was also established. By the 1969, Mondragon had 41 co-operatives in its federation (Zamagni 14).

During Mondragon's first 30 years of operation, it was by all accounts an incredible success. Starting in 1956 with very little in the way of assets, by the late 1980's it had grown to 166 co-operatives employing 21,000 people. The group's efficiency exceeded that of Spain's largest corporations by 7.5%. It also had higher labour productivity and outperformed most private Spanish firms (Malleson 131-132). During first phase of operations Mondragon was a highly successful federation of co-operatives. It defied the prognostications of failure from some mainstream economists who predicted under-capitalization and high debt. Mondragon avoided these problems partially through the support of its own centralized Caja Labor credit union, which offered both low interest loans and capital injections. Caja Labor also provided management consulting services to all of Mondragon's member co-operatives. Mondragon also benefited from a highly developed parliamentary system of democratic governance and a clear set of guiding principles (Malleson 129-133), which are as follows:

(I) *Open admission*: no one can be denied entry based on gender, ethnicity, etc.

(II) *Democratic organization:* one-member one-vote

(III) *Sovereignty of labour:* members control the co-op and distribute its surplus

(IV) *Instrumental character of capital:* co-ops pay a just but limited return on invested capital, and ensure that owning capital does not give any additional rights of governance beyond membership

(V) *Participation in management:* ensure member participation and the ongoing development of skills necessary to manage

(VI) *Pay solidarity:* limit the differential between highest and lowest paid

(VII) *Intercooperation:* cooperation among the co-ops

(VIII) Social transformation

(IX) *Universality:* emphasizing solidarity with all workers

(X) *Education:* ongoing and focused on cooperative values and technical skills

The above principles helped ensure a different kind of success than is typically achieved with capitalist firms. Financial success was also a part of Mondragon's story; however, their social and community success came in the form of egalitarian wage structures, workplace democracy, and a reduction of alienated labour due to worker ownership and participation in management. In the first phase of operation, Mondragon's worst pay differential between the highest and lowest paid workers was 6:1. This compares to today's ratio of 300:1 for the average CEO in the United States. While this inevitably means that the highest earners earn less than what a comparable position earns in the capitalist market, managers often stay due to their own personal ethical commitment to the co-ops as well as the increased security of worker co-operative employment. Job loss was virtually non-existent during its first thirty years of operation (Malleson 135-141).

Mondragon's second phase began in the 1990's when it restructured to become a co-operative corporation rather than a federation of co-operatives. They did so to address the increased competition that all of its member co-operatives were facing from globalization. Part of this restructuring also included the expansion of employment to non-members. Also, a number of subsidiary firms were added to the corporation that were not co-operatives. In fact, most of the international firms Mondragon added outside of the Basque region in Spain (which retained the worker co-operative structure) were traditional for-profit firms lacking employee membership and ownership. This led to a kind of capitalist ownership mentality filtering into the employee-owner group at Mondragon. Growth became paramount and so now the employee-owner group are benefiting from the alienated labour of low-paid workers in Mondragon's international firms. This has also led to the familiar, but paradoxical, problems of management/labour confrontation as labour unions in the firms that are not worker co-operatives fight for their rights against a management group that is itself a group of worker-owners (Malleson 141-150).

These problems are not unique to co-operatives, however. Globalization, and the race to the bottom in terms of wages, lack of legal protections for workers, de-unionization, reduced or non-existent environmental regulation, pose problems for all types of firms within today's neoliberal political economy. None of this cancels the attractiveness of worker co-operatives as a policy focus in my view. The extent to which worker co-operatives have failed is the extent to which they have had to react to the pressures of globalization. Our current state of crises leaves

us with an imperative for change away from the current model of globalization and toward a more self-sufficient model. Mondragon's early success as well as the success of the worker co-operatives of northern Italy demonstrate that they remain valid models.

In his highly influential book *Envisioning Real Utopias*, the American sociologist Erik Olin Wright takes a hard-headed look a variety of anti-capitalist strategies paying attention not only to their revolutionary potential but also to their feasibility as transition strategies. Wright devotes a section of his book to worker co-operatives. He concludes, in a manner similar to Marx, that worker co-operatives have a place in the pantheon of transitional strategies given their emphasis on worker control and ownership. He also acknowledges their weaknesses in the context of globalized capitalism: (1) their susceptibility to a reliance on debt for their capital requirements rather than equity; (2) their competitive disadvantages compared to international corporations who have the ability to draw upon cheap labour-power in unregulated (labour and environmental) markets; and (3) their institutional misalignment with the prevailing capitalist institutional infrastructure, history and legal framework. Rather than bending to pressures to reform worker co-operatives to more capitalist-friendly forms in order to make them more viable, Wright suggests a 'doubling-down' of their inherent strengths of workplace democracy and worker empowerment. For worker co-operatives the size of Mondragon, which do have the ability to compete against large global firms, he suggests a decentralized structure between the co-operative parent and its subsidiaries. In this model, subsidiaries, rather than taking on a typical capitalist form as is the case of many Mondragon subsidiaries, instead become largely autonomous. With this model, subsidiary firms gain the benefit of the 'corporate' services (finance, legal, IT services, etc.) provided by the parent, but are left to their own devices in terms of day-to-day operations and strategy. However, the important difference in Wright's approach is that the parent encourages (and institutionally supports) its subsidiaries to develop their employees as owners-in-development. Employees are thus empowered through union membership, participation and representation through worker councils and, I would add, through management training. (E. O. Wright, Envisioning Real Utopias 234-246)

I believe the reason why worker co-operatives remain valid is the cooperative core itself. Co-operatives, by their very structure, are focussed on collectively providing members with their needs, needs that go beyond profit. The raison d'être of capitalist for-profit organizations sees the

notion of cooperation as something antithetical to its primary form of interaction, namely competition. However, according to the economists Carlo Borzaga and Ermanno Tortia, insights from institutional, behavioural and evolutionary economics point to the positive organizational effects of cooperation:

> . . . evolutionary economics focuses on structural and institutional change informed by adaptive behaviours, which can lead to the emergence and sustainability of new organizational routines and institutions based on co-operation and supporting mutual benefit as an evolutionarily stable and progressive organizational pattern. Among the main reasons for this result is the fact that such routines can overcome contract failures and internalize behavioural traits connected with trust, positive reciprocity, and fairness better than hierarchy. (Tortia and Borzaga 8-9)

Contrary to the polarized philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, who believed that humans are inherently selfish and "brutish" (Hobbes 115-116) versus that of Jean Jacques Rousseau who, in directly challenging Hobbes' views, asserted that humans are inherently good and altruistic and only exhibit selfish and destructive traits as a result of the corrupting influences of civilization (Rousseau and Cranston 98-107), human social behavior is capable of demonstrating both selfishness and altruism, competition and cooperation. The reality is likely closer to what the Russian scientist and anarchist Peter Kropotkin put forward in his book *Mutual Aid* (Kropotkin). Kropotkin provides numerous examples from the animal kingdom (Kropotkin 22-137) and from human history (Kropotkin 138-487) to show how cooperation is an evolutionary strategy employed to reduce wasteful expenditures of energy and risk of injury or death. Competition is also a viable strategy under specific circumstances, but it is not often the optimal strategy, nor is it the most prevalent. This runs counter to the usurpers of Darwin's theory of natural selection, the 'social Darwinists' of his day and ours. It seems both intuitive and logical that both social behavioural strategies evolved given the dynamics of environmental and social pressures that the human species had to endure throughout its evolution. Survival undoubtedly would require both potentialities. However, given a situation of plentiful intra-specific resources but within the context of a hostile environment, and in the situation of inter-specific predator/prey pressures, intra-species cooperation would yield higher survival rates. Even in an inter-specific setting, cooperation often wins the day. The example of shorebird species and their rich diversity of behavioural and morphological expressions bear this out. On a single beach, one can observe a number of different species co-existing with each other with no competition for space or

resources. Each species is adapted to exploit a specific food source: differences in bill length, width and shape; leg length; foraging behaviors; etc. While this evolutionary result displays cooperation as an unconscious epiphenomenon, it nevertheless shows how evolution, in favouring adaptations that are economical and efficient in terms of energy, often leads to the rise of co-operation.

While the above example, and many others like it, are morphological and instinctual forms of cooperation, conscious forms of cooperation have also been noticed by biologists in recent decades. It has not only been studied in relation to humans but to non-human animals as well. The economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have studied the origins of altruism using game theory and have convincingly shown how cooperation can evolve in a social species and how it enhances the species' prospects for survival (Bowles and Gintis 46-77). One example of empirical support for Bowles' and Gintis' theoretical model is the work on Olive Baboons in Kenya by the primatologists Robert M. Sapolsky and Lisa J. Share. From 1978 to 1996 the two observed the behavior of a troop of baboons. In 1982 the most aggressive males of the troop began regularly feeding at a garbage pit near a tourist lodge. Within one year infected meat killed off all of those males. The troop was left with only its low-ranking, but cooperative males. By 1993, high ranking immigrant males had moved in and established themselves in the troop. Despite their high rank, however, the females of the troop, who had by now experienced life with cooperative males (and had much lower levels of chronic stress as a result), only accepted those high-ranking males that exhibited the same cooperative, non-confrontational behaviour that the males who they had been living with since 1983 displayed. These new males quickly learned cooperative behaviour from the cultural influences of the troop. Remember, these new males did not receive these behaviours through genetic inheritance as they were unrelated immigrant males. In this case, the environmental and social context made the cooperative form of behaviour the most adaptive (Bower).

The above provides some evidence for the behavioural and social justifications for the co-operative form of production. However, the normative justification of the co-operative goes beyond its roots in evolutionary history. The co-operative form of production provides a social environment of cooperation that serves as an adaptive space for the promulgation of a larger societal sense of cooperation. This is a space of praxis, a space for the prefigured reconciliation

of subject and object. The difference between the cooperative form of worker ownership (i.e., worker co-operatives) versus capitalist investor ownership has been summarized as follows:

> The co-operative model is people-centred, while the investor-owned model is wealth-centred. The co-operative manager has an obligation to meet member and community need. The investor-owned business manager has a (perceived) fiduciary responsibility to maximise shareholder value. The co-operative business purpose resonates with the human spirit with its blend and balance of individual and social needs. This is a business model that reflects the fullness of the human spirit rather than simply the acquisitive slice of individualism. (Webb and Novkovic 2)

There is one more enabling aspect of the worker co-operative, and workplace democracy in general, that is important to consider here, and that is the application of praxis to technological development. I am guided here by an excellent paper by the political philosopher Ian Angus entitled "Logic of Subsumption, Logic of Invention, and Workplace Democracy: Marx, Marcuse, and Simondon" (Angus). With modern industrial production, regardless of political ideology—authoritarian fascism, state communism, or western democratic capitalism—technology has followed a development course that has been led by the instrumental reason of production for production's sake (or, more accurately, for profit's sake). Workers have long since lost control over the design and choice of their tools. Instead, they have had their work redesigned for them by the inherent logic and 'path dependence' of the technology itself. Workers have had to adapt their desires, their intellectual and physical needs, and even their bodies to the demands of technology. Technology has therefore developed a kind of subjectivity while workers have been objectified in the process. As Angus points out from his reading of philosopher Gilbert Simondon, the technologies we live with and use in our society today should not be thought of as individual pieces or even individual categories of technology, but rather as an integrated "technical ensemble" (Angus 619). This technical ensemble has been developed in concert with capitalism, thus its passive users are dominated by it and in a position of servitude toward it. Workplace democracy has the capacity to turn this relationship on its head. Workers may not only have a democratic say in what gets produced and how, but they can have a direct say in the development of their own tools, as well as their modes and processes of production. In the words of Angus, workers would have the capacity for "continuous adjustment of the production process." (Angus 624). Having experienced this emancipation in their working lives worker-citizens might then extend that mindset out beyond the world of work to the rest of their lives.

They might demand a more direct and active say in the choice and design of consumer and infrastructure technologies as opposed to passively accepting what capitalist consumerism foists upon them.

See the following pages for a summary of findings of worker co-operatives based on our constellation approach:

Table 6 Constellation Appraisal: Worker Co-operatives

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
Alienation/ **Reification**	*Subjective*	Object of intention is the wage or salary, not the object of production	Object of intention is directed more to the object of production. The social and collective worker co-operative principles, and the education that worker co-operatives often provide, offers a transparency of the mediating power that the object of production enables between the individual worker-subject and the community-object.
	Objective	Worker alienated from object of production	The form of the worker co-operative, including its worker participation in management and workplace democracy allows for greater insight (and input) into the sources of inputs as well as the social and environmental impact of its output. With a typical capitalist for-profit enterprise, this information is often "out of sight, out of mind."
		Surplus labour	In a worker co-operative, surplus labour is most often cycled back into the organization to maintain or enhance capital assets. Often, a certain percentage of surpluses are mandated to be donated to community causes. In any event, the treatment of surpluses from surplus labour is decided by the worker-owners themselves.
		Commodified labour-power	A worker co-operative does not eliminate the problem of commodified labour-power. Workers are still paid according to how many hours they work and so they still 'sell' their labour-power. However, the abovementioned aspects of working within a worker co-operative alleviate some of the alienation associated with this commodification of labour.
Inequality	*Objective*	Merit-based system often privileges the lucky and is defined in market terms	The differential between the highest and lowest paid employees is considerably lower in worker co-operatives than in capitalist for-profit firms. This leads to a situation where market-based remuneration is not the leading influence on

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			wages. More highly-trained and experienced individuals often accept much lower wages that are available in the market and do so for non-monetary values. In doing so, they also demonstrate solidarity with their fellow co-operative workers and the community.
		Productivity-based system of reward often unjust, disproportionate, and based on singular measure of monetary value	Worker co-operative remuneration levels are chosen by the workers themselves. Due to the democratic nature of worker co-ops, these choices are made with full transparency and debate. While this might lead to differentials of remuneration, gross inequalities are not likely to exist. Also, in a manner similar to Marx's vision, they may be, at least partially, based on individual need.
		Systemic nature of income and wealth inequality: racialized peoples, historical class divisions, etc.	Worker co-operatives are only one piece of the transition puzzle. On their own, they are unlikely to unseat the hegemony of the capitalist waged labour system. However, as mentioned above, they offer a model of what is possible and a means to embody and actualize the change we wish to see for the future.
Heteronomy	*Objective*	Market decides what and how skills are valued and how workers must express those talents.	To the extent that worker co-operatives are networked into the community in which they operate, they are more likely to require skill sets that are the natural product of that community. Given that workers are also owners and have a democratic say in the operations, they may also have greater input into how they express their talents.
		Systemic limits on freedom and autonomy from the hierarchical 'master-slave' relationship of the typical work environment.	One of the greatest advantages of the worker co-operative is its workplace democracy. This does not mean an automatic leveling out of all hierarchy. On the contrary, some hierarchy is necessary to carry out complex operations. However, hierarchy does not have to equal a 'master-slave' relationship.

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			It can also mean a democratic assignment of management/supervisory responsibilities based on expertise.
Subject-Object diremption	*Subjective*	Having no work, or having work that is not meaningful, stunts our Being.	Worker co-operatives have a proven record of employment security, even during economic downturns. As noted above, worker co-operatives often provide a transparency of the mediating power that the object of production enables between the individual worker-subject and the community-object.
		Separation of body and mind in labour process	The very nature of workplace democracy and ownership adds a dimension of reflection and intellectual work. Also, the element of praxis that worker's co-operatives are potentially able to provide to workers could enable a full mind-body integration into their work.
	Objective	Estrangement from non-human nature	With the profit motive largely replaced by worker security, community support and capital asset maintenance, worker co-operatives have the capacity to exemplify a broader examination of values. How a co-op attends to the life-cycle impact of its operations and production can be built directly into their processes rather than added as a marketing afterthought.
		Detachment from our species-being and from society	The cooperative approach, worker solidarity and the outward attention to community all open up opportunities for a reconciliation between self-interest and collective interest. The atomistic focus on the individual subject is broken down by the cooperative approach.
False-consciousness	*Subjective*	Worker's double bind: consciousness of alienation limited by economic dependence on the system	The contrast between the working environment in a worker's co-operative versus that of the average worker in a capitalist for-profit organization is likely to amplify the consciousness of alienating labour. The higher level of job security, as well as

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			the ability to participate democratically in the operations of the co-op, lend a certain freedom to the development of a critical consciousness.
		Worker's failure to see how one's day-to-day actions are dictated by the inherent logic and demands of capitalism	The abovementioned contrast also has the potential to expand the consciousness of co-op workers through their heightened agency and autonomy as owners and democratic participants in their work.
		Worker's failure to come to a full understanding of one's own essence; its goals, desires, and potential.	While the content of work in a typical worker co-operative is not necessarily substantively different from equivalent work in a capitalist for-profit firm, the abovementioned increase in agency and autonomy allows for a type of participation in work that is more all-encompassing and thus more rewarding.
	Objective	Built-in antimonies within society itself that prevent full consciousness	Work in a worker's co-operative, perhaps more than any other policy category considered so far, has the potential to expose bourgeois antimonies. This is because this category has the strongest link to praxis. Exposure to praxis, to the participation in a collective process of building a more egalitarian, sustainable and *eudaimonic* world, is also a step toward resolving those antimonies.
Passivity, contemplative life	*Subjective*	Workers become passive spectators in work, politics and culture—culture becomes spectacle	As noted above, work in a worker's co-operative is an active form of work in that it requires more from the worker than simply 'clocking-in' and 'clocking-out'. It requires a deeper commitment and a more complete expression of one's being. This active form of work might then open one to a more active form of civic and political participation.
	Objective	Culture Industry: culture as spectacle, capitalism's publicist	Worker co-operatives, on their own, will not affect the objective forms of passivity in our society. Culture will largely remain profit-focussed and commercial. Citizens will largely

Category	Category Type	Subcategory	Assessment
			remain objects of identical consumers. These objective, systemic foundations are only replaced by collective struggle, which, in turn, only begins with a consciousness of the problem.
		Hierarchical, identarian society—positivism	Same comment as above, with an additional clarifying point that the hierarchy experienced in a worker co-operative is a democratically chosen hierarchy for the purposes of management. In this regard it is no different from the hierarchy inherent to any collective form of democratic governance. The hierarchy referred to in this portion of the constellation grid is the non-democratic, class-based hierarchy endemic to capitalism.
		Instrumental reason	To the extent that workers in a worker co-operative engage in praxis they become exposed to a form of reason beyond the instrumental. Through their increased participation in the organization's overall activities, they may gain insight into the extended (in time and space) impacts of their organization's actions. They may come to see that means that do not adhere to collective, societal ends are not rational in the long-term.

According to this analysis, worker co-operatives emerge as a policy option with significant potential for affecting systemic change. Worker co-operatives are not without their problems, as evidenced from Mondragon's recent corporatization in response to neoliberal globalization. However, even Mondragon retains the capacity to fully return to its worker co-operative roots (which it has retained in most of its Spanish operations). Many of the bourgeois negations that we have identified in our constellation are addressed with the worker co-operative, at least in nascent form. The subjective forms of alienation, false-consciousness, inequality, etc. are partially addressed by means of the exposure to work that is more equal and more participatory. The deep-seated objective forms of bourgeois negation might at least be exposed to a heightened consciousness and thus a renewed collective desire for change.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

No one policy option from those considered in chapter four will affect the kind of change that we require. Systemic changed requires a multi-pronged approach. Furthermore, it requires an organized collective approach. The lone individual—even if considered globally and additively—will not affect this change. There must be an organizing force, or some "collective agent of change" as I mentioned in my introduction. That is why we must reconsider our attitudes to organized labour and examine what, if any, role it has in organizing the effort to implement these policy options. Before addressing this topic, however, a final commentary is in order in terms of what I believe is the outcome of my constellation analysis.

I went into this project with a bias. I was cognizant of this bias and took great care to avoid letting it effect my approach or my conclusion. That bias was a preference for the conscious-raising potential of free time. This is why I suspected that universal basic income, perhaps combined with reduced working hours, would be the preferred recommendation. I thought that it would only be through free time that we could hope to abandon our alienated selves imprisoned by the Protestant work ethic. I have defended basic income in debate and, up until a year ago, I would have continued to defend that position. After going through this process, however, I have come to realize that work is essential to our being. I have also come to realize that no praxis toward a utopian horizon is possible without organized effort: organized work! Obtaining more free time than is commonly available to most of us in our overworked society is indeed a valuable goal. We need free time to engage our minds, to rejuvenate, and to engage with our physical and libidinal selves. However, the life of pure idleness, like that of Odysseus and his seven year stay with the enchantress Calypso, can drain one of vital energy and the need to give expression to one's full potential. Odysseus, while enchanted with Calypso, yearned for a return to his home and family and to the life of activity. Is this just another version of the Protestant work ethic? Not at all. The Protestant work ethic is a borrowed and culturally imposed compulsion to work for the benefit of capital. It is grounded in the thought of eternal damnation and is therefore propelled by a metaphysical fear; a fear that

has extended even to its contemporary secular adherents. It is an alienated form of work in an alienated culture. The mode of work I am putting forward is freely-chosen, autonomous, and one that is aligned to a global praxis of rejuvenation. Ultimately, it is a form of work that ceases to be a separate domain of one's life, but instead integrates with one's whole being. This is the 'work as play' vision of Schiller, Marcuse and Marx; work as a 'purposive purposelessness' in its autonomy (i.e., not work for the sake of someone else's purposes) but extended in terms of its contribution to a subject-object reconciliation. Finally, this is a form of work that has the potential to bring an end to the social and historical diremptions that give rise to the bourgeois antimonies.

In light of the above, I believe that the work-based policies analyzed above are those policies having the greatest potential for triggering systemic change. Federal job guarantees for work on rationally-chosen projects such as infrastructure renewal, public transit, renewable energy, public childcare, public housing, etc. not only support the worker, but bring lasting benefits to all of society. If these projects are funded in a progressive manner through such means as a shifting of budget priorities and the implementation of a wealth tax, higher corporate taxes, and/or financial transaction taxes, they may also serve the purpose of reducing inequality. Job guarantees can also help eliminate the 'reserve army of labour' of the unemployed and thus strip capitalism of one of its main disciplining forces designed to limit wages and labour demands. Worker self-consciousness might also be raised if the projects chosen within a well-designed job guarantee program are those that promote collective and cooperative behavior towards building a sustainable and more egalitarian future. Notwithstanding these beneficial aspects, job guarantees alone cannot fulfill the progressive demands for system change. The work in these programs is still prescribed by the state and therefore not freely chosen. Also, job guarantees are designed as supplemental interventions into the capitalist economy and are thus limited in their ability to challenge the one-dimensional nature of bourgeois society.

Worker co-operatives have the potential to create a more direct impact on both subjective emancipation from alienation and objective structural reform. Workers have an ownership stake as well as a democratic voice in the co-operative's operations and long-

term strategy. Worker co-operatives can also have mandates or mission statements (solidified in their very management structure and processes) that extend governance to outside stakeholders, with community, government and other stakeholders mandated to have representation on their boards[42]. Worker co-operatives still operate within the capitalist market economy and so competitive pressures stemming from traditional firms remain, as do system-wide institutional barriers. The capitalist market is set up for big business and the profit-motive. When a co-operative enterprise extends its mandate beyond that of profit, it is burdened by additional competitive pressures simply by virtue of the fact that their business decisions are pluralistic in terms of their interests and values and are thus more costly and less nimble. Notwithstanding the large and successful examples of worker co-operatives such as Mondragon and the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, worker co-operatives are still very much in the minority position with respect to business organization forms throughout the world. To be of significant import to a global movement toward worker emancipation and system change, worker co-operatives must be part of a larger suite of policy interventions, which, as I mention above, could include a job guarantee program.

A critical mass of participation in these non-capitalist forms of work must be reached on a global scale before system change is likely. This is where labour unions become essential. Labour unions have been justifiably criticized for their acquiescence to capital over the intervening decades since the neoliberal revolution of the mid-1970's. However, part of this shift was for reasons of survival given the concerted union-busting efforts of both corporate and state interests. The survival of unions, despite those pressures, attests to their organizational and institutional strength. Unions must, however, revitalize themselves by expanding their mandates beyond the simple representation of their member's needs. Unions must take on the mantle as organizers of resistance to capitalist alienation. They can do this by aligning themselves with human rights and environmental organizations, including Black Lives Matter and other anti-racist

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[42] In the case of the multi-stakeholder co-operative model, this stakeholder approach has been codified into a more formalized structure. In addition to workers, other stakeholder groups have equity stakes in the co-operative as well as representation on the board (British Columbia Co-operative Association)

movements, LGBTQ+ organizations, feminist leaders and activists, climate change activists and conservation groups, anti-poverty organizations, including public housing advocates, etc. They can become active in the drive to reduce the work week. They can also facilitate the employee purchase of capitalist firms threatening to go out of business in order to convert those firms to worker co-operatives. By expanding their reach, labour unions and their members could gain a sense of connection to the broader community. In the act of extending its reach beyond its own self-interest, a labour union can become a source of consciousness-raising once again. Manning Marable, an American historian and African-American Studies scholar, spoke of this need to cast a wide net of solidarity between labour unions and the broader progressive community:

> The place to begin is to identify and bring together all groups which experience alienation, discrimination, and oppression within our society: members of trade unions; women; gays and lesbians; the unemployed, the homeless, and people on fixed incomes; people of color—African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, and others; and all Americans who do not have a basic quality of life, such as health insurance, adequate shelter, and education. We must go beyond interest-group politics, which looks at social change like a game of poker in which someone wins, while others must lose. In our new democratic society, everyone must win. (Marable 121)

Note that what is common amongst these groups is their state of alienation, discrimination, and oppression. The negation of these societal negations of basic humanity can serve to unite a cross-section of peoples to fight for a common cause. Labour unions, with their well-established institutional knowledge and structure, are well prepared to lead that charge. In fact, unions have proven their worth to society as a whole as they took the lead in the struggle for health care, unemployment insurance, health and safety regulations, working hour reductions, etc.

While the broad range of union revitalizing research is beyond my scope here, a few final comments are necessary to show that there are encouraging signs of union resurgence and renewal. The extensive literature points not only to a wide range of strategies for revitalization, but also to examples throughout the world of revitalization success. For example, in the United States, unions are beginning to recruit and organize new members. They are mobilizing members to participate in direct action and even

street protests. These revitalization efforts are often led by members who did not have a voice in the past: youth, minorities, women and immigrants. Perhaps as a result of this broader constituency, unions are now increasingly involved in extra-labour concerns such as civil rights and economic justice for those beyond the realm of their particular representation (Voss and Sherman 311). One Belgian study of union renewal found that young members often have a connection to unionism that goes beyond the simple instrumental needs of security and higher wages. A desire for the involvement of their union in social activism was observed as was their desire to directly participate in that activism (Vandeale). Another study of young union members in Germany, the United States, France and the United Kingdom found a similar desire for a deeper collective engagement with the broader community from their union (Tapia and Turner).

During the COVID-19 pandemic the structural failings of capitalism have been laid bare: systemic racism; gross inequalities of income and wealth; crumbling long-term care and healthcare infrastructure; and a death-cult-like preference for the early re-opening of economies in the midst of a rapidly expanding case load and death count. Those countries faring best so far in the pandemic (as of July 2020) are those with a greater commitment to social support systems and community solidarity. The far-right leadership of the United States, Brazil, and the United Kingdom have shown their true colours in terms of their preference for preserving the interests of the capital class. The elitist and racist core of the capitalist justification for inequality has been exposed in its raw and primal essence. No more are these justifications hidden within a liberal cloak of economic rationality. Given these highly visible signs of moral decrepitude it is possible that we have entered a liminal moment of history. The true underpinnings of our present state of multiple crises are transparent; therefore, the time is ripe for labour unions and other progressive groups to join forces and seek an intersectional allegiance.

In my introduction I mentioned that the overarching concern of this thesis was the multiple existential crises that we are facing today and how we might collectively address these issues. However, as discussed in chapter three, our present-day society is completely shaped by capitalism. What little there is in society, in culture, and even in non-human nature that has not been commodified is well on its way to being

commodified. These increasingly small pockets of freedom from capitalism represent 'monetization' opportunities to the capitalist, and so there is no reason to expect that they will be spared if capitalism is not challenged. Even in the language of sustainability and environmental economics, where 'weak' and 'strong' versions of sustainability exist, the dominant form in practice is the 'weak' form. Weak sustainability is defined as that form of sustainability which seeks to sustain non-human nature just so long as the economic benefits it provides is greater than the next best, man-made alternative. As soon as capital discovers a means to replace the 'services' of nature with a man-made substitute that provides the same services more economically (in terms of opportunity costs) non-human nature will have lost its relevance and its reason for existing. And this assumes long-term planning is applied. In reality, rainforests are being burned to the ground at an unprecedented rate, fisheries are being decimated, and fossil fuels are being extracted and converted into carbon emissions, etc. all in a bid for short-term profits, the source of which cannot even meet the 'weak' criterion of sustainability. We are cannibalizing our planet. The final outcome of these crises and the chances for us to initiate a global reset to save civilization and non-human nature are far from guaranteed. Thus the need to examine what, if any, agent of change might emerge and what policies might we pursue to strengthen the formation of that change agent.

Using the long tradition of German Idealism and its progenitors—Marx, Lukács, Frankfurt School, and phenomenology (via Marcuse's 'Heideggarian Marxism')—I first established a philosophical definition of work and labour: from Hegel's allegorical telling of the origins of consciousness through the mediation of the object (i.e., the object created through work) in his 'Master-Slave' narrative, to Fichte's argument that our expression of spontaneity, or free will, is directly linked to our work. I also discussed Friedrich Schiller's work-as-play philosophy. Schiller's vision for a reconciliation between our sensuous and form drives into an aestheticized play drive anticipates Lukács' criticism of positivism in the social sciences and Horkheimer's and Adorno's critique of instrumental reason a century and a half later. Being held hostage to the formal and instrumentally rational leaves us outside of the realm of life. We exist, almost as automatons, faithfully adhering to the 'laws' of singular value and economic rationality, playing our part as producers and consumers, but never fully conscious of ourselves and

the alienating forces driving our lifeworlds. Work under these alienating conditions adhere to a different defining set of attributes and normative assumptions. Indeed, work under these conditions is a 'disutility', an antagonistic activity that we must endure in order to obtain our necessities and earn some leisure time. In this regard we discussed both the definition of labour from the standpoint of mainstream economics as well as Marx's immanent critique of capitalism's theory of labour through his analysis of alienation.

Throughout all of these various definitions of work, we have uncovered its dialectical nature: it contains both the alienating aspects of capitalist labour as well as the recognition-gaining, consciousness-creating and the praxis potential of freely-chosen, autonomous work. It is not so easily dismissed then by those who claim that the key to freedom is the end of work. Of course, not all work is created equal. In terms of meeting life's necessities, many forms of work are forms of drudgery: boring, degrading or even unhealthy. In this respect, our current trend toward roboticization and automation should be seen as a possible avenue of freedom. On the other hand, if the choice of technology, and the speed at which it is taken up, is left within the hands of capital, the resulting loss of humanity's connection to work could cause irreparable damage to any potential for change from the labour movement. This, in my analysis, is the strongest argument against the implementation of any politically feasible version of basic income. There is a very real possibility that such a program would weaken the link between work/labour and political agency. With lost income from labour being replaced by a basic income (likely at subsistence level), capital is left that much freer from the constraints placed upon it by labour.

Work is not important because it fulfills some austere and righteous proof of virtue. Laziness should not be moralistically judged as some sort of personality fault or lack of character. Through no fault of their own, the lazy might simply be incapable of gaining enjoyment or fulfillment from anything resembling what we currently define as work. Seen this way, laziness might simply represent a personality type, or an expression of inherited low levels of energy or ambition. In any imagined utopian future where all necessities are produced through automation of the production process, there can and

should be room for laziness. However, most of us want to work. Most of us want to gain recognition and distinction. Most of us want to express ourselves and be creative—to produce 'works.' It is through work, particularly freely-chosen, unalienated work, that we best accomplish these things. This is how we gain meaning in our lives. This playful version of work, the Kantian 'purposive purposelessness', might best be viewed as a utopian horizon. And it is praxis, or the practical working toward this horizon, that might be the best and most complete redefinition of work we could hope for.

If we go back the beginning and address our need for radical system change, what falls out of my analysis is a strong case for the centrality of work. It is important not only for subjective reasons of involvement in civil society and the important contributions that it makes to one's sense of self-worth and meaning. Perhaps even more importantly, the institution of work—either organized through the labour movement to counter the alienating pressures of capital and the state, or through worker co-operatives—still represents our best hope for forming a collective and powerful agent of change of our totality.

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