

Manuscript of 1857-58 (*Grundrisse*)

3 ‘Introduction’

The ‘Introduction’ (*‘Enleitung’*) was written at the end of August 1857, a month or so before Marx wrote the actual 1857-58 Manuscript itself.¹ Although it is an important text, it is not easy to say what it is the ‘introduction’ to, exactly. The 1857-58 Manuscript was never intended for publication, but seems to have been an exercise whereby Marx could set out his ideas in written form. The ‘Introduction’ is clearly not an introduction to this manuscript. When Marx did publish a version of his economic theories, at least in part, in the form of the 1857 *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, he wrote a ‘Preface’ to it, in which he remarked that a ‘general introduction [to my work], which I had drafted, is omitted, since on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general.’² It is generally agreed that the ‘general introduction’ that Marx refers to in the 1859 Preface is the August 1857 ‘Introduction’, although it is not entirely clear to which specific ‘results’ Marx’s comment makes reference.

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I Production, Consumption, Distribution, Exchange (Circulation)

1. Production

The ‘subject to be discussed’, Marx tells us, is ‘*material production*’.³ ‘Individuals producing in a society—hence the socially determined production by individuals[—]is of course the point of departure.’⁴

Now, while it *is* evident that production is carried out by individuals, Marx points out that production is always carried out by individuals *in society*. The *isolated* individuals that feature, for example, in the depiction of early societies in the writings of Smith and Ricardo (‘[t]he individual and isolated hunter and fisherman’⁵) are the product of the eighteenth-century fashion for Robinsonades.⁶ But this vision

¹ For reasons I have discussed elsewhere, of the two full English translations of the 1857-58 manuscript—Karl Marx, *Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58 (First Version of Capital)*, trans. Ernst Wangermann and Victor Schnittke, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx Engels Collected Works* (hereafter MECW) vols. 28 and 29; and Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth, 1973)—the MECW version is to be preferred. With regard to the ‘Introduction’ alone, there are two other English translations that I am aware of: Karl Marx, ‘The *Introduction* (1857)’, in Karl Marx, *Texts on Method*, trans. and ed. Terrel Carver (Oxford, 1975), pp. 46-87; and Hans G. Ehrbar, ‘Annotations to Karl Marx’s Introduction to Grundrisse’, Hans G. Ehrbar’s Annotations to Marx’s ‘Capital’, August 26, 2010, <<https://content.csbs.utah.edu/~ehrbar/introduc.pdf>> (this latter including the German text from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1981-) (hereafter W), Bd. 39 alongside Ehrbar’s translation and commentary.

² MECW, vol. 29, p. 261.

³ ‘Introduction’, in MECW vol. 28 (hereafter I), p. 17.

⁴ I, p. 17.

⁵ I, p. 17.

of the human being as *primordially* an individual is itself a product of the reification of the individual in that takes place in ‘bourgeois society’ (*‘bürgerlichen Gesellschaft’*), a ‘society of free competition [in which] the individual seems to be rid of the natural, etc., ties which in earlier historical epochs made him an appurtenance of a particular, limited aggregation of human beings.’⁸ In this view of society (and of history) the defining characteristic of the human being *is* their individuality; and then because classical political economy takes bourgeois social relations as the result of human nature it retroprojects this ideology of bourgeois individualism into past—precapitalist—social structures (this is where the Smith-Ricardo Robinsonade narrative comes from⁹).

Against this, Marx points out that, first, the isolated individual in history is a myth. ‘The further back we go in history, the more does the individual, and accordingly also the producing individual, appear to be dependent and belonging to a larger whole.’¹⁰ But in addition to this, the *bourgeois* individual is also a myth: it is no *less* the case that bourgeois individuals produce within a ‘larger whole’ than any other individual. What is (unwarrantedly) retroprojected back into history by the ‘political economists’ is not a false reading of *pre*-bourgeois societies but a false reading of the *bourgeois* one.

(The notion that the *premise* of human activity is the isolated individual can be seen clearly in modern neoclassical economic theory, as too in modern neoliberal political thought, as in, for example, Margaret Thatcher’s dictum (the second couplet of which being routinely forgotten) that there was no such thing as society, only individuals and their families.¹¹)

However, ‘the human being is, in the most literal sense, a “political animal”, not just a social animal, but an animal that can only isolate itself in society. Production by an isolated individual outside society

⁶ ‘Robinsonades’ is that literary genre characterised by the separation of the social individual from society—as exemplified by Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (the term was coined by Johann Gottfried Schnabel in 1731 in his enormously popular *Insel Felsenburg*, a tale of a shipwrecked seaman washed up on an island, where he sets up a utopian society). On the application of the Robinsade phenomenon in economics, see Steve Hymer, ‘Robinson Crusoe and the Secret of Primitive Accumulation’, *Monthly Review*, September 1, 2011, <<https://monthlyreview.org/2011/09/01/robinson-crusoe-and-the-secret-of-primitive-accumulation/>>; for the use of the concept particularly in Marx, see WSheasby, ‘[Marxism] Marx on Robinsonades in Das Kapital’, marxism@lists.csbs.utah.edu, accessed May 25, 2023, <<https://marxism.csbs.utah.narkive.com/qeQK04SD/marx-on-robinsonades-in-das-kapital>>.

⁷ W, Bd. 42, p. 20. The original text of the ‘Introduction’, not smoothed into uniform German, is in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1975-) (hereafter MEGA2), II, 1 (i.e. *Abteilung 2, Band 1*), pp. 17-45. 1857/1858 original manuscript Mega 21

⁸ I, p. 17

⁹ Interestingly, Marx excepts Sir James Steuart from this view: ‘Steuart, who in many respects was in opposition to the 18th century and as an aristocrat tended rather to regard things from an historical standpoint, avoided this naive view.’ (I, p. 18)

¹⁰ I, p. 18. ‘At first, he is still in a quite natural manner part of the family, and of the family expanded into the tribe; later he is part of a community, of one of the different forms of community which arise from the conflict and the merging of tribes.’

¹¹ As she said in an interview with *Woman’s Own* magazine in 1981. The full quotation is: ‘[...] who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first.’ (Margaret Thatcher, ‘Interview for Woman’s Own (“no such thing as society”)', Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed May 25, 2023, <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>>)

[...] is just as preposterous as the development of language without individuals who live *together* and speak to one another.’¹²

Hence, production is *always* production within a given social configuration (‘production at a definite stage of social development, production by social individuals’¹³). All production, in all social epochs, has determinate features common to it: ‘production in general’, in this sense, is an abstraction, but it is a ‘reasonable abstraction’¹⁴ (*verständige Abstraktion*)¹⁵. It is reasonable in that ‘it [...] emphasises and defines the common aspects and thus spares us the need of repetition.’¹⁶ (Thus ‘reasonable’ here I take to mean ‘sensible’, or ‘useful’, in the sense that it helps us to understand, by illuminating something.¹⁷) Those determinations that all epochs of production have in common are those that in their absence would make production itself unthinkable; but failure to distinguish what is common to all manifestations of production and what is specific to certain epochs (the bourgeois epoch in the case in hand) is what leads the political economists to claim the *transhistorical* nature of *present-day* determinations.

(Marx says at this point that ‘in order to speak of production [...], we must either trace the historical process of development in its various phases, or else declare at the very beginning that we are dealing with one particular historical epoch, for instance with modern bourgeois production, which is indeed our real subject-matter.’¹⁸ What he is saying here is we might do either one of these two options—trace the historical development of production or investigate one specific historical period—but we cannot simultaneously do *both*: we cannot take the historically common features of production and imagine they individuate a given historically specific period; neither can we take the individuating features of a given period and take them as common features of production in *different* historical periods. This latter is the error of the political economists.)

If ‘production in general’ is an abstraction (albeit a ‘reasonable’ one), then so too is ‘general production’¹⁹—the totality of productive activities at a given moment. This latter too is an abstraction, for, in the concrete, ‘[p]roduction is always a particular branch of production—e.g., agriculture, cattle-breeding, manufacture, etc. [...].’²⁰

Marx then says, a little cryptically: ‘Political economy, however, is not technology. The relation of the general determinations of production at a given social stage to the particular forms of production is to be set forth elsewhere (later).’²¹ I presume that the ‘general relations of production’ he refers to here are

¹² I, p. 18 (translation modified).

¹³ I, p. 23.

¹⁴ I, p. 23 (italicisation added).

¹⁵ W, Bd. 42, p. 20.

¹⁶ I, p. 23.

¹⁷ The Nicolaus translation gives ‘rational abstraction’ for ‘*verständige Abstraktion*’, which makes the concept sound more philosophically important than I suspect it really is (both Carver and Ehrbar translate ‘*verständige*’ as ‘sensible’). To my way of looking at it, the adjective here does not signal a *category* of abstraction; rather, it points to its usefulness. I thus find David Harvey’s ‘categorical’ contrast between ‘rational abstraction’ and ‘concrete abstraction’ unhelpful (David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx’s Grundrisse* (London and New York, 2023)).

¹⁸ I, p. 23.

¹⁹ Which is how I interpret Marx’s comment that ‘[i]f there is no production in general, there is also no general production. (I, p. 23)

²⁰ I, pp. 23-4.

²¹ I, p. 24.

technological relations, which do not belong to (because they are secondary to) an account of *social* relations.

In addition, if production is always a particular branch of production, it is also what Marx calls a ‘social subject’. Production is *social* process—i.e. it is far more than the black-box combination of ‘inputs’ that sits at the heart of neoclassical economics (or on which much of Sraffian economic theory is based). Marx again signals that he will return to this point.

The political economists posit in their work (1) the *general* conditions of production, i.e. those conditions without which production cannot take place, and (2) the conditions which *promote* production (i.e. the circumstances within which production occurs and which are propitious to its continuation).²² But in this procedure we see again the projection of particular bourgeois characteristics on the whole of history, thus reifying them: ‘production [...] is [...] presented as governed by eternal natural laws independent of history, and then *bourgeois* relations are quietly substituted as irrefutable natural laws of society *in abstracto*. This is the more or less conscious purpose of the whole procedure.’²³

With regard to the conditions that promote production, Marx notes that the political economists will cite ‘property’; and then the ‘safeguarding of property’, i.e. as carried out through the operation of the judiciary, police, etc. With regard to the first of these, ‘[a]ll production is appropriation [i.e. conversion into property] of nature by the individual within and by means of a definite form of society,’ Marx notes;²⁴ if, from this, one says therefore that ‘property’ (which means appropriation) is a condition of all production, this, precisely *because* it is true for all production, it is no more than a tautology (since production *without* appropriation would be a contradiction in terms). But again, to say this says nothing about the *type* of property that obtains at any given historical point. With regard to the second, property’s safeguarding, Marx notes that ‘each form of production produces its own legal relations, forms of government, etc.’²⁵ If ‘[t]he bourgeois economists only have in view that production proceeds more smoothly with modern police than, e.g., under club-law[,] [t]hey forget [...] that club-law too is law, and that the law of the stronger survives, in a different form, even in their “constitutional State”.’²⁶

Marx now summarises what he has said in this part of the text: ‘there are determinations which are common to all stages of production and are fixed by reasoning as general; the so-called general conditions of all production, however, are nothing but these abstract moments, which do not define any of the actual historical stages of production.’²⁷

2. The general relation of production to distribution, exchange and consumption

The ‘obvious’ categories (‘in general’), notes Marx, are these.

- ‘in production members of society appropriate (produce, fashion) natural products in accordance

²² Marx references, as examples, John Stuart Mill’s *Principles of Political Economy* and Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*.

²³ I, p. 25.

²⁴ I, p. 25.

²⁵ I, p. 26.

²⁶ I, p. 26.

²⁷ I, p. 26.

with human needs’;²⁸

- ‘distribution determines the proportion in which the individual shares in these products’;²⁹
- ‘exchange supplies him [the aforementioned ‘individual’] with the particular products into which he wants to convert the portion accruing to him through distribution’;³⁰
- ‘in consumption the products become objects of use, of appropriation by individuals.’³¹

In other words:

Production creates articles corresponding to needs; distribution allocates them according to social laws; exchange in its turn distributes what has already been allocated, according to the individual needs; finally, in consumption the product drops out of this social movement, becomes the direct object and servant of an individual need, which its use satisfies.³²

Understood like this, production, distribution, exchange and consumption appear as a ‘regular syllogism’. ‘Production thus appears as the point of departure, consumption as the final point, distribution and exchange as the middle, which has a dual aspect since distribution is determined as actuated by society, and exchange as actuated by individuals. [...] [P]roduction represents the general, distribution and exchange the particular, and consumption the individual case which sums up the whole.’³³

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²⁸ I, p. 26.

²⁹ I, p. 26.

³⁰ I, p. 26.

³¹ I, p. 26.

³² I, p. 26. Marx evidently has James Mill in mind here.

‘The Science of Political Economy, thus defined, divides itself into two grand inquiries; that which relates to Production, and that which relates to Consumption.

‘But after things are produced, it is evident that they must be distributed, before they are consumed. The laws of Distribution, therefore, constitute an intermediate inquiry, between that which relates to Production, and that which relates to Consumption.

‘When commodities are produced and distributed, it is highly convenient, for the sake both of re-production and consumption, that portions of them should be exchanged for one another. To ascertain, therefore, the laws according to which commodities are exchanged for one another is a second inquiry, preliminary to that which relates to the last great topic of Political Economy, Consumption.’

(James Mill, *Elements of Political Economy* (London, 1824) pp. 3-4)

Later (in the *Theories of Surplus-Value*, written over the course of 1862, Marx would say this about Mill. ‘Mill was the first to present Ricardo’s theory in systematic form, even though he did it only in rather abstract outlines. What he tries to achieve is formal logical consistency. The *disintegration* of the Ricardian school therefore begins with him.’ (MECW, vol. 32, p. 274)

³³ I, pp. 26-7. ‘In production the person acquires an objective aspect, in the person the object acquires a subjective aspect; in distribution, society in the form of general, dominating determinations takes over the mediation between production and consumption; in exchange, they are mediated by the chance determinateness of the individual.’

Let us step aside from the text for a moment to look at what a syllogism is, and what Marx means here by defining one in this way.

A syllogism is a logical figure in which a conclusion follows deductively from a set (two, in its classical, Aristotelian form) of premises. For example:

Socrates is human.

Humans are mortal.

Socrates is mortal.

That Socrates is mortal flows logically (deductively) from the preceding two premises.

The classical syllogism consists of three statements (two premises and a conclusion), and three terms: a ‘major term’, a ‘minor term’ and a ‘middle term’. The conclusion pairs the minor term (the ‘subject’, i.e. the subject of the verb) and the major term (the ‘predicate’, the object of the verb); the middle term only appears in the two premises (and never in the conclusion). The premise in which the major term occurs (along with the middle term) is called the ‘major premise’ and that with the minor term the ‘minor premise’.

In the example above, the minor term is ‘Socrates’, and the major term ‘mortal’. ‘Human(s)’ is the middle term. ‘Socrates is human’ is the minor premise and ‘humans are mortal’ the major premise.

In his *Logic*, Hegel discussed what he called the ‘qualitative syllogism’ at length.³⁴ There are two ideas of his here that are important to our interpretation of what Marx has just said in the ‘Introduction’.

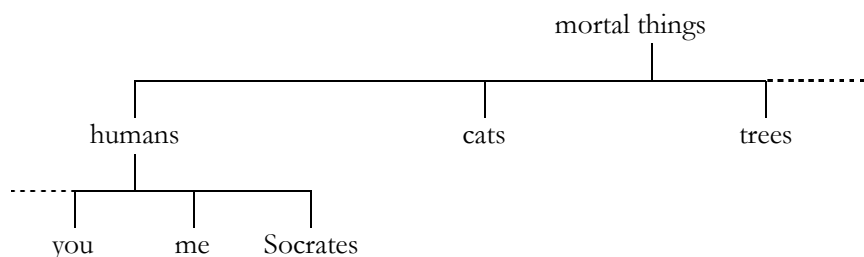
First, any phenomenon which we are presented with, any object of knowledge, will consist of these ‘moments’ of generality, particularity and singularity. Second, any proposition, any statement about something that exists in the world, can be taken as the concluding proposition of a syllogism. Let us look at these two ideas in more detail.

First. Take Socrates. Socrates is a singularity (he is—or was—an ‘individual’). But an individual *what?* He was a human being. And although all human beings may be differentiated among ourselves by what makes us different, we all share characteristics in common (which collectively one might say constitute our ‘human-ness’). We are (you, me, Socrates) all individual members of a ‘species’ (‘species here understood in the philosophical—rather than the biological—sense). Focusing on the species, we see what we have in common; focusing on the individual, we see what makes us different. But the species of human being also shares characteristics with other—non-human—things. We are mortal (we die). So are cats. And trees. Humans, cats and trees (and a very long *etcetera*) are individual members of a higher level species (a ‘genus’), of ‘mortal things’.

Here, the individuals (you, me and Socrates) represent the singularity; the different species (humans, cats and trees) the particularity; and the genus of ‘mortal things’ the generality.

We might picture it like this:

³⁴ In ‘the *qualitative syllogism*, [...] a subject as individual is *joined together*, through a quality, with some *universal determinacy*.’ (Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline: Part I, Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O Dahlstrom (Cambridge, 2010) (hereafter E), p. 256 (§ 183).



For Hegel, the unity expressed in the conclusion of a syllogism is achieved through the *mediating* action of the middle term (the logic being the same as the unity expressed when we say that if $A = B$ and $B = C$, then we can infer that $A = C$, B being the mediating middle term³⁵). When Hegel classifies syllogisms in the *Logic* he does so by citing them in the order *minor term-middle term-major term*. Thus, in the example above, where Socrates is our minor term (the subject of the conclusion), mortal beings the major term (the predicate of the conclusion), and the class of human beings the middle term, given that these terms are, respectively, singularity, generality and particularity, Hegel would cite this syllogistic structure as *singularity-particularity-generality*, or S-P-G.

This schema (of singularity, particularity and generality) is naturally endlessly recurring. I am the singularity with regard to the particularity of ‘human’ and the generality of ‘mortal things’ in the example above, but I am also the ‘particularity’ (as are you) with regard to the fact that my body is (as is yours) made up of individual cells. And if we classify the cells of which I am made up (skin cells, bone cells, brain cells, etc.) I am also the generality (the ‘genus’). In this way, any given thing, any given object of knowledge, exists within a triadic system (a ‘syllogism’) of singularity, particularity and generality; but any given thing can also occupy any of the three positions (singularity, particularity and generality) of any other triadic syllogistic system we might wish to construct around it. This is the sense in which Marx, in the previous section, contrasted ‘production in general’ (configured by the determinate features common to production in all historical epochs), ‘general production’ (the totality of productive activity at a given moment), and production as a given *branch* of production (agriculture, cattle-breeding, manufacture)—the same term (‘production’) functioning respectively as generality, particularity, and singularity.

This brings us on to the second idea, that any proposition—any statement that ‘X is Y’³⁶—could itself be interpreted as the conclusion of a syllogism. Given that the premises of a syllogism are themselves propositions, each may therefore be taken as the conclusion of a another, logically prior, syllogistic step.

For example. In the above-cited syllogism, ‘Socrates is mortal’ is the conclusion of the two premises ‘humans are mortal’ and ‘Socrates is human’. But we can take the first of these, ‘humans are mortal’, as the conclusion of a prior syllogism. If we do, then ‘human’ is our minor term (the subject of the conclusion) and ‘mortal’ is our major term (the predicate). But ‘human’ is the particularity in the original syllogism, and ‘mortal’ the generality. The middle term of our new syllogism would have to be a singularity, and its structure, following Hegel’s nomenclature, would be P-S-G. This might lead us to construct something like this:

This living thing is mortal.

³⁵ In what Hegel calls ‘the *quantitative* or *mathematical* syllogism’ (E, p. 260 (§ 188))

³⁶ Here, the ‘is’ (the ‘copula’) could also be ‘is not’, ‘might be’, etc.

This living thing is a human.

Humans are mortal.

(The conclusion is in this figure of course valid only if the individuals are sufficiently numerous and of a kind as to preclude negative instances, i.e. non-human mortal living things.)

What about the other premise in our original syllogism ('Socrates is human')? Following the same procedure we arrive at a S-G-P syllogism.³⁷ Perhaps we might construct something like this:

Socrates is a thinking animal.

Humans are thinking animals.

Socrates is a human.

This syllogism is now only valid if it can be stipulated that the defining characteristic of the particularity (the class of human beings) is exclusive to it and constitutive of the generality ('thinking animals'); if it can not, this syllogistic form can only serve to prove a negative.³⁸

This procedure can be repeated *ad infinitum*, since each of the two premises in each of the two subsidiary syllogisms that we have just constructed may in turn be taken as a proposition in turn demanding syllogistic proof.³⁹

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Let us return to Marx.

Effectively paraphrasing James Mill, Marx has identified in his analysis production as a starting point in a process that ends in consumption, with these two end points being mediated (i.e. separated *and* brought together) by distribution and exchange. This looks like a 'syllogism', he says: 'production'—the 'generality' ('determined by general laws of nature'⁴⁰)—is conjoined to 'consumption'—carried out by individuals, the 'singularity'—through the intermediation of distribution and exchange. There is some truth to this picture, admits Marx, but its representation is a 'superficial' one.

(Why are there two intermediating categories here, distribution *and* exchange? The 'middle' in the syllogistic figure he has identified, Marx notes, which consists of distribution and exchange, 'has a dual aspect[,] since distribution is determined as actuated *by society*, and exchange as actuated *by individuals*.'⁴¹ What Marx means here by 'distribution' is the allocation of the social product *according to social class*. Under a regime of capitalist production relations, the social product is *distributed* in the form of wages, surplus-value and rent (and then there is a further distribution of surplus-value in the forms of profit and interest). Only *after* this distribution has taken place, does market exchange—in which distributed

³⁷ Minor term: 'Socrates' (a singularity); middle term: a generality; major term: 'human' (a particularity).

³⁸ For example: A cat is not a thinking animal. Humans are thinking animals. A cat is not a human.

³⁹ 'This contradiction of the syllogism expresses itself again through an infinite *progression* as the demand that each of the premises likewise be proven by means of a syllogism; since this syllogism, however, has two immediate premises of the same sort, this demand then repeats itself and, indeed, as a demand constantly doubling itself, *ad infinitum*.' (E, p. 258 (§ 185))

⁴⁰ I, p. 27.

⁴¹ I, pp. 26-7 (italicisation added).

social value is converted into commodities—occur. This stands counterposed to present-day mainstream bourgeois economic theory, which holds that the distribution of the social product *only takes place in the market*, according to the laws of supply and demand. In reality, of course, what is distributed in market exchange is not the total social product but a part of the social product which has *already* been allocated.)

This view—the identification of these categories, and their relation—Marx takes as representative of the ‘political economists’. Before elaborating his own view, Marx notes that the ‘opponents’ of this interpretation (‘whether within or without the latter’s [i.e. the political economists’] domain’⁴²) fail in their critique either by not differentiating correctly the categories, or by treating them as independent and unconnected. Marx will now take a closer look at what is involved.

I Production and consumption⁴³

To start, Marx takes the relation between production and consumption. In the first place, he notes, they are the same thing ‘directly’ (*unmittelbar* is Marx’s word in the original, i.e. ‘unmediatedly’), i.e. they are *the same thing in the one act*. Firstly because ‘the individual, who develops his capacities while producing, expends them as well, using them up in the act of production’;⁴⁴ secondly because means of production ‘are used and expended and [...] broken down into the basic elements’,⁴⁵ and ‘raw material, which does not retain its natural form and condition’⁴⁶ is also consumed. ‘The act of production itself is thus in all its moments also an act of consumption’.⁴⁷ *[D]eterminatio est negatio*, says Marx, quoting Spinoza.⁴⁸

Marx notes that the political economists, with their concept of ‘productive consumption’, are already familiar with this identity between consumption and production *in production*,⁴⁹ but he suggests that the effect of this understanding is to separate off the consumption that production *necessarily* entails from ‘consumption proper’ (this latter considered—by the ‘political economists’—as ‘the destructive antithesis

⁴² I, p. 27. Marx does not specify who these ‘opponents’ are, but he will have had in mind those thinkers today classified under the not terribly helpful rubric of the ‘Ricardian socialists’ (see his comments in the *Theories of Surplus-Value* under the heading ‘Opposition to the Economists (Based on the Ricardian Theory)’ (MECW vol. 32, pp. 373ff.)).

⁴³ My own headings in these notes appear in sans-serif font. (Marx subdivides this part of the text with the markings a¹, b¹ and c¹; in this part of the text these divisions coincide with my own headings.)

⁴⁴ I, pp. 27-8.

⁴⁵ I, p. 28.

⁴⁶ I, p. 28.

⁴⁷ I, p. 28.

⁴⁸ Or maybe quoting Hegel quoting Spinoza. ‘That determinateness is negation posited as affirmative is Spinoza’s proposition: *omnis determinatio est negatio*, a proposition of infinite importance.’ (George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George Di Giovanni (Cambridge, 2010) p. 87)

⁴⁹ Cf. Mill, *Elements of Political Economy*, pp. 214-15. ‘In productive consumption, three classes of things are included. The first is, the necessaries of the labourer, under which term are included all that his wages enable him to consume, whether these confine him to what is required for the preservation of existence, or afford him something for enjoyment. The second class of things consumed for production is machinery; including tools of all sorts, the buildings necessary for the productive operations, and even the cattle. The third is the materials of which the commodity to be produced must be formed, or from which it must be derived. Such is the seed from which the corn must be produced, the flax or wool of which the linen or woollen cloth must be formed, the drugs with which it must be dyed, or the coals which must be consumed in any of the necessary operations.’

of production'.⁵⁰ But, notes Marx, *this* type of consumption is also production: '[i]t is obvious that man produces his own body, e.g., through nutrition, a form of consumption. But the same applies to any other kind of consumption which in one way or another produces man in some aspect.'⁵¹ This type of consumption Marx calls 'consumptive production', and he charges political economy with illegitimately positing *this* type of consumption as a different kind of consumption. For Marx, '[t]he direct unity, in which production coincides with consumption and consumption with production, allows their direct duality to persist.'⁵²

Despite this identity (or perhaps identities), Marx still insists that there is a '*mediating movement*' between production and consumption, for each provides the reason for the other to exist. 'Production mediates consumption, for which it provides the material; consumption without production would have no object. But consumption also mediates production, by providing for the products the subject for whom they are products.'⁵³

Marx now explores the claim that consumption creates production. It does so in two ways, he says. First, in 'that only through consumption does a product become a real product. [...] only consumption that, by dissolving the product, gives it the finishing stroke, for production is a product not merely as objectified activity, but only as an object for the active subject.'⁵⁴ Second, consumption creates the need for *new* production. There is no production without need, and it is consumption that continuously replenishes that need.⁵⁵

This second unity—that formed by the fact that consumption creates production—is belied by three further determinations, determinations which, in addition, indicate the *primacy* of production over consumption.

First, production supplies consumption with its *object*. 'Consumption without an object is no consumption'.⁵⁶ Second, in addition to supplying consumption with its 'object', it also gives it its *form*; it gives it its 'finish',⁵⁷ as Marx puts it. It provides the *mode* of consumption. 'Hunger is hunger; but hunger that is satisfied by cooked meat eaten with knife and fork differs from hunger that devours raw meat with the help of hands, nails and teeth.'⁵⁸ Third, production, in addition to providing the object to fulfil the need, also creates the need that requires the object. The *primacy* of production over consumption is expressed here in the way that the former plays a determining role in the social level—the level of 'culture', as it were—within which the latter occurs. 'When consumption emerges from its original natural crudeness and immediacy—and its remaining in that state would be due to the fact that

⁵⁰ I, p. 28.

⁵¹ I, p. 28.

⁵² I, p. 28.

⁵³ I, p. 28.

⁵⁴ I, p. 29. '[...] [A] dress becomes really a dress only by being worn, a house which is not lived in is [...] not really a house [...]' (A house that is not live in can of course become *capital*; but that, for the moment, is another story.

⁵⁵ 'Consumption furnishes the urge to produce, and also creates the object which determines the purpose of production. If it is evident that production supplies the object of consumption externally, it is equally evident that consumption posits the object of production ideally, as an internal image, a need, an urge and a purpose.' (I, p. 29)

⁵⁶ I, p. 29.

⁵⁷ I, p. 29; Marx uses the English word.

⁵⁸ I, p. 29.

production was still caught in natural crudeness—then it is itself, as an urge, mediated by the object. The need felt for the object is created by the perception of the object. [...] Production therefore produces not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object.⁵⁹

Hence it is the case *both* that production produces consumption (in that it produces what is consumed, how it is consumed, and the persons who consume it), *and* that consumption produces production in so far as it produces in the producer the inclination to fulfil the needs posed by consumption.

The unity formed by production and consumption is thus threefold. There is first an unmediated unity, i.e. the one is the other in the same act (even if the political economists still distinguish between consumptive production—i.e. reproduction—and productive consumption⁶⁰). Then there is how each stands as the *mediation* of the other: '[p]roduction creates the material as the external object for consumption, consumption creates the need as the internal object, the purpose of production.'⁶¹ Finally, each creates the other *as* its other. It is consumption that turns the result of production into a product, and she who produces into a producer.

One might think, therefore, that nothing would be simpler than to declare production and consumption 'identical'. This is a view that Marx imputes to what he calls 'socialist belletrists',⁶² and also to the French political economist Jean-Baptiste Say. To anticipate a little, it is worth looking at who Marx is referring to here, and what he might have found objectionable in their positions.

According to the editors of the *Collected Works*, among the 'socialist belletrists' Marx refers to are 'vulgar socialists like the German "true socialists" (in particular, Karl Grün)'.⁶³ Grün (1817-1887) was a German socialist and former young Hegelian, contemporary of Marx in his university days, and target of Marx and Engels' sarcasm in the *German Ideology*. Towards the end of the critique in the *German Ideology* of Grün's own critique of French socialism Marx and Engels admonish him for this remark. 'Production and consumption can be separated temporally and spatially, in theory and in external reality, but in essence they are one. Is not the commonest occupation, e.g., the baking of bread, a productive activity, which is in its turn consumption for a hundred others?'⁶⁴ Among other arguments against Grün, Marx and Engels point out that in positing the unity of production and consumption in this way Grün omits to mention that the consumption of a product manifests itself through the *demand* for it, and demand expressed in *money*. 'The economists too refer to the inseparability of consumption and production and to the absolute identity of supply and demand, especially when they wish to prove that overproduction never takes place,' they say.⁶⁵

Why Marx wishes to argue in the 'Introduction' that the identity between production and consumption cannot be reduced to a simple one now becomes clearer. If it really were the case that production and consumption were no more than the same act conceived of from different standpoints then of course there could be no crises. What was produced would be consumed automatically, by definitions, as it were. This is the relevance of the reference to Say, who is of course best-known now (and probably

⁵⁹ I, p 30.

⁶⁰ 'All investigations into the former are concerned with productive and unproductive labour, those into the latter with productive and non-productive consumption.' (I, p. 30)

⁶¹ I, p. 30.

⁶² I, p. 31.

⁶³ MECW vol. 28, p. 544, n. 13.

⁶⁴ MECW vol. 5, p. 515.

⁶⁵ MECW vol.5, p. 516.

best-known in Marx's day too) for the contention widely interpreted as implying that the supply of a product automatically and necessarily creates the demand for it (the notion known as 'Say's Law'), a proposition that rules out the possibility of crises. (In his 1803 *Traité d'économie politique* Say had argued that 'the terms, to *consume* to *destroy* the *utility*, to *annihilate* the *value* of any thing, are as strictly synonymous as the opposite terms to *produce*, to *communicate* utility, to *create value*, and convey to the mind precisely the same idea.'⁶⁶)

No, says Marx. Consumption and production are not two ways of perceiving the same act but two *moments* of a *single process* in which the latter is the point of departure and *dominant* moment. If society is analysed as if it were a single subject (as Say does⁶⁷) then it is production which predominates. 'The individual produces an object and through its consumption returns to himself, but he returns as a productive and self-reproducing individual. Consumption thus appears as a moment of production.'⁶⁸ But this is even more the case when society is viewed as *society*. Now the consumption of the product is *extrinsic* to the producer (i.e. it is consumed by somebody else). Between production and consumption now appears *distribution*.

II Distribution⁶⁹

Marx notes that in the works of political economy categories seem to appear twice: once under the heading of production, and once under that of distribution. The list of 'land', 'labour' and 'capital' as 'agents of production' seems to match that of 'rent', 'wages' and 'profit' (along with 'interest') as 'determined and determining forms' of distribution, i.e. sources of income.⁷⁰

But if we look closer we can see that '[t]he structure of distribution is entirely determined by the structure of production.'⁷¹ Profit and interest presuppose capital; wages presuppose wage labour (not labour in general⁷²); rent presupposes landed property (and not land in general).

⁶⁶ Jean-Baptiste Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy; Or the Production, Distributions and Consumption of Wealth*, trans. C R Prinsep (Philadelphia, 1834) p. 391. Marx points out that among the flaws in Say's position was that if the *entire* product of a nation were consumed in a given period there would be nothing left for the formation of means of production—an argument, Marx notes, already advanced by the Russian political economist Heinrich Friedrich von Storch (1766-1835), who had noted that '[p]our concevoir quelle partie importante du produit annuel se trouve soustraite par le capital au revenue disponible, il suffit d'observer qu'outre les produits qui servent à créer les denrées consommables, ces denrées elles-mêmes sont une portion du capital tant qu'elles restent dans les mains des leurs producteurs. Ainsi la masse des produits capiteux excède toujours de beaucoup celle des produits qui forment le fonds de consommation.' (Henri Storch, *Considérations sur la nature du revenu nacional* (Paris, 1824), p. 133). There is an interesting parallel here with Marx's subsequent (in *Capital*) critique of Adam Smith's 'resolution' of the price of the commodity into 'revenues', into wages, profit and rent, for here too there is no accounting for the formation of constant capital (see the discussion in Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (vol. 2), trans David Fernbach (London, 1978), pp. 438ff.).

⁶⁷ And which Marx criticises as a procedure as 'speculative'.

⁶⁸ I, p. 31, translation modified.

⁶⁹ Marx's subdivision 'b¹'.

⁷⁰ Profit and interest appear on both sides, 'since they are forms in which capital increases and grows, and are [also] thus moments of its very production.' (I, p. 32)

⁷¹ I, p. 32.

⁷² 'If labour were not determined as wage labour, then, as is the case, for instance, under slavery, its share in the products would not appear as wages.' (I, p. 32)

Distribution itself [then] is a product of production, not only with regard to the object, that only the results of production can be distributed, but also with regard to the form, that the particular mode of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, the form in which one shares in distribution.⁷³

The categories of distribution are specific to the society, i.e. to the set of social forms, in which they appear. It is thus ‘altogether an illusion to posit land in production, and rent in distribution, etc.’⁷⁴ What is posited in production alongside rent is *property* in land.

Ricardo, who is criticised (in the field of political economy) for only considering production, in fact treats the analysis of distribution as the *principal* task of political economy.⁷⁵ He does this because of having ‘instinctively treated the forms of distribution as the most definite expression in which the agents of production are found in a given society.’⁷⁶

There is a basis for this. For an individual producer, it is distribution that appears paramount: distribution appears as the social law that determines her position within the system of production. Even on the social scale, it appears that it is the modes of distribution that determine and regulate production.

A conquering people divides the land among the conquerors and in this way imposes a definite mode of distribution and form of landed property, thus determining production. Or it turns the conquered into slaves, thus making slave labour the basis of production. Or a people breaks up the large landed estates into plots in a revolution; hence gives production a new character by this new distribution. Or legislation perpetuates land ownership in certain families, or allocates labour [as] a hereditary privilege, thus fixing it according to caste. In all these cases, and they are all historical, distribution does not seem to be regulated and determined by production but, on the contrary, production seems to be regulated and determined by distribution.⁷⁷

But before distribution takes the form of the distribution of products it *first* takes the form on the one hand of the distribution of the means of the production of products and on the other of the distribution of the people within the structure of the production of the products (‘the subsuming of individuals under definite relations of production’⁷⁸). The distribution of products is subsequent to and a consequence of this double *prior* distribution of instruments of production and of people.

⁷³ I, pp. 32-3.

⁷⁴ I, p. 33.

⁷⁵ ‘The produce of the earth [...] is divided among three classes of the community; namely, the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated.

‘But in different stages of society, the proportions of the whole produce of the earth which will be allotted to each of these classes, under the names of rent, profit, and wages, will be essentially different; depending mainly on the actual fertility of the soil, on the accumulation of capital and population, and on the skill, ingenuity, and instruments employed in agriculture.

‘To determine the laws which regulate this distribution, is the principal problem in Political Economy [...]’

(David Ricardo, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, in Pierro Sraffa (ed.), *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis, 2004), p. 5)

⁷⁶ I, p. 33.

⁷⁷ I, p. 33.

⁷⁸ I, pp. 33-4.

What is more, this latter distribution, that of instruments of production and of people, is not only a precondition for the distribution of products (which is ‘automatically given by that distribution’⁷⁹) but is also itself a *moment of production*, and, because of this, analysis of production separate from it would be an ‘idle abstraction’.⁸⁰

The error of the political economists then is to take production as historically immutable; this leads them to self-restrict themselves to the analysis of distribution. By ‘treat[ing] production as an eternal truth, [they] [...] confine history to the domain of distribution.’⁸¹

The analysis of distribution in this sense, as a moment of production, obviously belongs to the analysis of production itself, in which, insofar as production must proceed from a given distribution of instruments of production, the distribution of these is antecedent to production. But the distribution of instruments of production is itself dependent on the form of production: ‘the employment of machinery altered the distribution of both the instruments of production and the products[.] [m]odern large-scale landed property itself is the result not only of modern trade and modern industry, but also of the application of the latter to agriculture.’⁸²

The question of the role of distribution in production boils down to that of the ‘role [that] [...] historical conditions generally play in production and how [...] production [is] related to the process of history in general’, and this in turn ‘clearly belongs to the analysis and discussion of production itself.’⁸³ Marx pursues the matter no further.⁸⁴

III Exchange⁸⁵

(‘Circulation’ is either no more than a moment of exchange, Marx notes, or it is simply a synonym for it. He thus pays the term no more attention.)

Exchange mediates production and distribution (the latter determined by production) on the one hand and consumption on the other. Since consumption (as we have established) is a moment of production, exchange is a moment of production too.

Within production, ‘the exchange of activities and capacities which takes place in production itself is a direct and essential part of production.’⁸⁶ The same is also true for the exchange of products where this

⁷⁹ I, p. 34.

⁸⁰ I, p. 34.

⁸¹ I, p. 34.

⁸² I, p. 34.

⁸³ I, p. 34.

⁸⁴ Other than the following observation. In the cases described above of the ‘conquering people’, which Marx describes as ‘trivial’, he notes that there are three possible outcomes: either the conquerors impose their own mode of production on the conquered (as the English did to the Irish and, in part, in India), or they allow the old mode of production to continue as before and content themselves with the extraction of tribute (the ‘Turks’ and the Romans), or the interaction between conquerors and conquered gives rise to new social formations (the Germans). In all these cases it is the mode of production that determines the mode of distribution that ensues. ‘Although the latter appears as a presupposition of the new period of production, it is itself a product of production, not only of the historical production in general, but of a definite historical production.’ (I, p. 35)

⁸⁵ Marx’s subdivision ‘c¹. Lastly, Exchange and Circulation’.

⁸⁶ I, p. 36.

exchange is part of the means for the production of articles of unproductive consumption. Then there is what Marx calls the ‘exchange between dealers and dealers’⁸⁷ (presumably referring to exchange between industrial capitalists and merchant capitalists, and among merchant capitalists themselves): this too is both ‘entirely determined by production and is itself a productive activity.’⁸⁸

Only insofar as exchange involves the exchange of products for the individual consumer does it appear as something external to production, but even here (1) there can be no exchange without a division of labour in production; (2) exchange involving private individuals supposes private production; and (3) ‘the intensity [...], [...] extent and nature [of exchange] are determined by the development and structure of production’ such that ‘exchange in all its moments appears either to be directly comprised in production, or else determined by it.’⁸⁹

* * *

In conclusion, this analysis of the *categories* of production, consumption, distribution and exchange has shown the following:

- the categories neither exist separately from one another, nor are they identical; rather, they stand as individual elements of a single totality;
- within this totality, production is the dominant moment, both with regard to itself as with the other elements;
- distribution, insofar as it involves the *agents of production*, is a moment of production itself;
- a given form of production both defines the forms of consumption, distribution and exchange and the relations of the different moments among themselves;
- production is, however, although the dominant moment, also determined by the other moments of the totality of which it forms a part: there is, as with any ‘organic unity’, ‘an interaction between the different moments.’⁹⁰

3. The method of political economy

I Analysis and synthesis; inquiry and presentation

With what should a political economic analysis begin?

It would seem to have to begin with the ‘real and [the] concrete’;⁹¹ thus it would seem natural to start with the category of *population*, ‘which forms the basis and the subject of the whole social act of production.’⁹² But this would be a mistake.

⁸⁷ I, p. 36.

⁸⁸ I, p. 36.

⁸⁹ I, p. 36.

⁹⁰ I, p. 36.

If no account is taken of the classes of which the population is composed, then ‘population’, as such, would be an ‘abstraction’. But then the notion of ‘classes’ too would be abstraction unless account is taken of the ‘elements’ (i.e. social relations) on which they are based (wage-labour, capital, etc.), for these social relations ‘presuppose’ the economic facts of (for example) exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. ‘Population’, unspecified, is an ‘abstraction’.

‘If one were to start [one’s analysis] with population, it would be a chaotic conception of the whole [...].’⁹³ It is in *this* sense that Marx calls population an ‘abstraction’. Why is it an abstraction? Because it is conceived of without reference to (‘abstracted from’) the multiple determinations of which it is composed. Why would such a conception be ‘chaotic’? Because what is being conceived is a complex of multiple determinations, but what these are, and how they collectively give rise to the totality, are ignored. The totality (‘the whole’, in the sentence quoted the start of this paragraph), which is the result of this complex of determinations, would stand, in thought, without having been, so to speak, ‘untangled’.⁹⁴ (‘In thought’, because what is ‘chaotic’ here is *not* the object under analysis but precisely the *conception* of it; that is why the analysis is no *more* than a ‘conception’ (*Vorstellung*). ‘Population’ as it exists in the world is not ‘chaotic’, but *complex*; a representation of population *in thought* without taking account of its complexity is chaotic *because* it takes no account of its complexity).

How then should one proceed? By taking the complex object and then examining ‘through closer definition [...] [to] arrive analytically at increasingly simple concepts’,⁹⁵ i.e. to follow a movement from the complex to the simple along the lines of that suggested by Marx earlier, from, for example, population, to the classes of which it is composed, to the social relations on which those classes rest, and so on.

In this way, Marx says, by ‘mov[ing] to increasingly thinner abstractions’, one passes ‘from the imagined concrete’ to ‘arriv[e] at the simplest determinations’.⁹⁶ Let us look at this sentence in more detail.

First, ‘imagined concrete’ in the original text is ‘*vorgestellten Concreten*’; *vorgestellten* is derived from the verb *vorstellen*, which is where *Vorstellung* comes from. *Vorgestellten* is ‘conceived’ in the same sense as *Vorstellung* is ‘conception’. The ‘concrete’ here is concrete because of its *real* complexity; hence, if here it is ‘conceived’ as a *Vorstellung*, then what Marx labels the ‘imagined concrete’ is synonymous with the ‘chaotic conception’ of earlier.

Second, the ‘increasingly thinner abstractions’ that are applied to move away from this ‘chaotic conception’ are ‘thin’ in their *simplicity*,⁹⁷ in that they suppose increasingly *fewer* determinations.

⁹¹ I, p. 37.

⁹² I, p. 37.

⁹³ I, p. 37. ‘Chaotic conception’ is ‘*chaotische Vorstellung*’ in the original (cf. MEGA2, II, 1, p. 36). ‘*Vorstellung*’ is a word that does a lot of heavy lifting in classical German philosophy. In Kant, it covered the range of the faculty of thought from that most immediate to the senses (‘intuition’, or ‘*Anschauung*’) to that which is furthest away, i.e. that in which reason is most implicated; for Kant, *Vorstellung* was the *genus* that encompassed different *species* of thought: *Anschauungen*, *Begriffe* (‘concepts’), *Ideen* (‘ideas’). In Hegel, on the other hand, *Vorstellung* is itself a specific kind of thinking (rather than indicating ‘thinking as such’); for Hegel, *Vorstellung* is a kind of cognition (i.e. it is *more* than mere sensation or intuition), but it is *immediate* (or unmediated) cognition: preliminary and approximate. It would seem that Marx is using the term in this latter, Hegelian, sense.

⁹⁴ This is my metaphor, not Marx’s.

⁹⁵ I, p. 37.

⁹⁶ I, p. 37.

Finally, if one follows this procedure, applying ‘increasingly thinner abstractions’, one arrives at the simplest determinations possible, i.e. one arrives at a point beyond which one cannot simplify further. To continue my analogy, at this point, the object which one is trying to conceptualise is now fully untangled: the determinations stand exposed, but, as a consequence of this *analytic* process, their unity has been undone.⁹⁸

Now begins the (opposite) work of *synthesis*: the object under consideration now needs to be reassembled *in thought* from the determinations already identified. But now, the object will not be a ‘chaotic conception’ but will be comprehended in function of its actual—‘real’—complexity. ‘From there [i.e. the end point of the analysis],’ Marx tells us, ‘it would be necessary to make a return journey until one finally arrived once more at population, which this time would be not a chaotic conception of a whole, but a rich totality of many determinations and relations.’⁹⁹ The task then, which consists of two cognitive stages—analytical decomposition; synthetic reconstruction—is to identify *in thought* the real ‘rich totality of many determinations and relations’. Then—and only then—can one begin to talk meaningfully about the object in question.

This procedure of course *exactly summarises* what Marx did in the previous section. He listed the set of determinations (as already identified by political economy) of production, distribution, exchange and consumption—a syllogistic figure, but a ‘superficial’ one; a *Vorstellung*, a ‘chaotic conception’. He then identified the set of mediations that operated between production and consumption, and established that the two form a unity, but a unity founded on ‘mediating movements’, in which production is primary. He then distinguished distribution as a *further* moment of production, a moment which plays a determining role in it but which is *ultimately* determined by production itself. Then he examined the mediating role of exchange in the (emerging) conceptual totality, and discovered that it, in all its moments, is either subsumed *under* production or determined *by* it. He finally arrived at an understanding of production as a complex and multiply-determined totality, composed of moments and the interactions between them: in short no longer a ‘chaotic’ superficiality but now ‘a rich totality of many determinations and relations’.

It is perhaps useful to compare what Marx writes here (in 1857) to what he would go on to write, commenting on his ‘method’, in the Afterword to the second edition of *Capital* volume one in 1873. ‘[T]he method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry,’ he would say. ‘The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection.’¹⁰⁰ This is the stage of analysis, the work described in the ‘Introduction’ as the examination ‘through closer definition [...] [to] arrive analytically at increasingly simple concepts’, by ‘mov[ing] to increasingly thinner abstractions’, and passing ‘from the imagined concrete’ to ‘arriv[e] at the simplest determinations’. ‘Only after this work has been done can the real movement be

⁹⁷ I (p. 37), Carver (p. 83) and Ehrbar (p. 71) give ‘tenuous’ for ‘*dünn*’; the ‘thin’ in Nicolaus (p. 100) is preferable, since the import of Marx’s argument is the insubstantiality (in the sense of simplicity) of the abstractions and not their conceptual *weakness*.

⁹⁸ ‘Analysis’, in the western philosophic tradition in which Marx moved, means exactly the breaking down of something multifaceted into constituent parts. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel put it like this: ‘The *analysis* of an idea, as it used to be carried out, was, in fact, nothing else than ridding it of the form in which it had become familiar. To break an idea up into its original elements [...] [and] to return to its moments [...]’ (G W F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A V Miller (Oxford, 1977), p. 18 (§ 32)) In this sense, the ‘opposite’ of analysis, the ‘(re)putting together’ of the concrete, is *synthesis*.

⁹⁹ I, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (vol. 1), trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 102.

appropriately presented,' he went on. 'If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we have before us an *a priori* construction.'¹⁰¹ This is evidently the analogue of the work of synthesis. Thus the distinction Marx makes in 1873 between the analytical stage of *inquiry* ('*Darstellung*') and the subsequent one of *presentation* ('*Forschung*') *exactly* parallels that of the separation of the stages of analysis and synthesis he makes in 1857.

Let us return to the 'Introduction'. The 'seventeenth-century economists,' Marx says (maybe Petty and Boisguillebert is who he has in mind¹⁰²) followed the analytical approach described above ('[t]he first course'¹⁰³): they 'always started with the living whole, the population, the nation, the State, several States, etc., but analysis always led them in the end to the discovery of a few determining abstract, general relations, such as division of labour, money, value, etc.'¹⁰⁴ From here, '[a]s soon as these individual moments were more or less clearly deduced and abstracted, economic systems were evolved which from the simple, such as labour, division of labour, need, exchange value, advanced to the State, international exchange and world market.' This work of synthesis ('[t]he latter'¹⁰⁵), of (re)constructing in thought the complex social reality under consideration, building the single complex out of the multiple simple, 'is obviously the correct scientific method.'¹⁰⁶

'The concrete is concrete because it is a synthesis of many determinations, thus a unity of the diverse,'¹⁰⁷ says Marx. But the 'concrete' here that he refers to is the concrete *in thought*, the real, complex, object, successfully reproduced in the intellect.¹⁰⁸ (The contrast here is with the 'chaotic conception'.) But the 'concrete' in thought is not *given*, it has to be constructed ('synthesised'): '[i]n thinking,' Marx says, 'it [i.e. the 'concrete'] [...] appears as a process of summing-up, as a result, not as the starting point [...]', even if the real object here represented *is* 'the real starting point', because it is, in addition to being what is captured in thought as concrete (if it is so captured), also 'the starting point of perception [*Anschauung*] and conception [*Vorstellung*].'¹⁰⁹ It is from the real object, and the thinking subject's engagement with it, that thought comes.

Marx summarises what he has identified. 'The first step [i.e. the step of *analysis*] dissipates the full conception [*Vorstellung*] into abstract determinations, the second [that of *synthesis*] leads from the abstract determinations to the reproduction of the concrete by the way of thinking.'¹¹⁰

II The 'dialectical method'

Marx now contrasts what he has said with the parallel process described by Hegel. The fundamental difference for him is that, for Hegel, the real is the *product* of thinking. 'Hegel [...] arrived at the illusion

¹⁰¹ *Capital* vol.1, p. 102.

¹⁰² See 'Bastiat and Carey, in MECW vol 28, p. 5.

¹⁰³ I, p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ I, p. 37.

¹⁰⁵ I, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶ I, p. 38.

¹⁰⁷ I, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ Marx cannot want to say that the *real* object is 'a synthesis of many determinations, thus a unity of the diverse', for that would be a trivial observation.

¹⁰⁹ I, p. 38.

¹¹⁰ I, p. 38, translation modified.

that the real was the result of thinking synthesising itself within itself, delving ever deeper into itself and moving by its inner motivation;¹¹¹ for Marx, on the other hand, ‘the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a mental concrete.’¹¹² Thinking does not *produce* the real, it *reproduces* it, in thought.

In the 1873 Afterword, Marx contrasted his method and that of Hegel like this.

My dialectical method is, in its foundations, not only different from the Hegelian, but exactly opposite to it. For Hegel, the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent subject, under the name of ‘the Idea’, is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the idea. With me the reverse is true: the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.

I criticised the mystificatory side of the Hegelian dialectic nearly thirty years ago. at a time when it was still the fashion. [...] The mystification which the dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.¹¹³

Again, the consonance between his account in 1873 and that of the ‘Introduction’ is clear.

Marx (in 1857) warns us however not to conflate the manner by which the real concrete is constructed in thought, and how the real concrete originates in the world. Take the simplest economic category, says Marx—exchange value, for example.¹¹⁴ In the realm of the real, exchange value, the price of a commodity in terms of another, ‘presupposes population, [a] population which produces under definite conditions, as well as a distinct type of family, or community, or State, etc.’; i.e. it is ‘an abstract, one-sided relation of an already existing concrete living whole [i.e. population].’ As a *concept*, however, as a *mental* abstraction, its existence is ‘antediluvian’,¹¹⁵ i.e. *pre-existing* of the social totality of which it forms a part. To an idealist consciousness (Marx calls it a ‘philosophical consciousness’¹¹⁶), the real person (the active subject) is reduced to ‘the comprehending mind’, and the real *world* to ‘the comprehended world’, i.e. to the comprehending mind’s own consciousness of it. Here, in this worldview, the ‘real act of production’ is ‘the movement of categories’;¹¹⁷ the real concrete is reduced to the conceived concrete, and the real totality to the conceived totality.¹¹⁸

Marx’s argument here is directed at the idealism (if not the dialectic) of Hegel, but it is not *only* directed at Hegel; such a worldview—in which *concepts* are given priority over what they are concepts *of*—does not *require* a Hegelian metaphysic,¹¹⁹ it only requires ‘the assimilation and transformation of *perceptions*

¹¹¹ I, p. 38.

¹¹² I, p. 38.

¹¹³ *Capital* vol.1, pp. 102-3.

¹¹⁴ Exchange value being the relative price of a commodity in terms of another.

¹¹⁵ I, p. 38.

¹¹⁶ I, p. 38.

¹¹⁷ I, p. 38.

¹¹⁸ ‘I do not proceed from “concepts” [...]. What I proceed from is the simplest social form in which the product of labour presents itself in contemporary society [...].’ (Karl Marx, ‘Marginal Notes on Adolph Wagner’s *Lehrbuch der politischen Oekonomie*’ (1879), MECW vol. 24, p.544)

¹¹⁹ For this view ‘is by no means a product of the self-evolving concept whose thinking proceeds outside and above perception and conception [...].’

[*Anschauung*] and *images* [*Vorstellung*] into concepts',¹²⁰ i.e. the taking of appearances, partial and one-sided, without having been subject to the kind of analysis described earlier, as good coin—'chaotic conception', instead of 'rich totality of many determinations and relations'.

Nevertheless, it remains the case that what is captured in thought, and what exists outside it—however the former be acquired—are different: what Marx calls '[t]he totality as a conceptual totality' is 'the *product* of thought, the 'product of the thinking mind, which assimilates the world in the only way open to it [...].'¹²¹ 'The real subject remains outside the mind and independent of it [...]. [T]he subject, society, must always be envisaged as the premise of conception even when the theoretical method is employed.'¹²² In other words, the rejection of an idealist worldview, whether sanctified theoretically (as in Hegel) or existing *de facto*, does not gainsay the necessity of the theoretical appropriation of reality; it simply means that the theoretical appropriation undertaken be grounded on the separation of the object and its theoretical appropriation, and that that theoretical appropriation proceed according to the kinds of procedures described above.

III The ordering of the categories

'But,' asks Marx, 'have not these simple categories also an independent historical or natural existence preceding that of the more concrete ones?' Maybe, he says. 'Hegel, for example, correctly takes possession, the simplest legal relation of the subject, as the point of departure of the philosophy of law.'¹²³ The simple category (possession) predates historically the more concrete (and more complex) juridical conception of property. Then there is the example of money. 'Money can exist and has existed in history before capital, banks, wage labour, etc., came into being.'¹²⁴ In these two cases, 'it can be said [...] that the simpler category can express relations predominating in a less developed whole or subordinate relations in a more developed whole, relations which already existed historically before the whole had developed the aspect expressed in a more concrete category.'¹²⁵ In both these cases, the order of historical development *coincides* with that of logical synthesis.¹²⁶

On the other hand, he notes the existence of societies with a sophisticated level of social development who do *not* use money, or use it little. There was no money in pre-Columbine Peru, he notes, even though there was cooperation and a highly-developed division of labour. 'Slavonic communities' mainly used money on their borders, rather than internally.¹²⁷ In antiquity money only played a dominant role in trading nations. 'Even in the most advanced antiquity, among the Greeks and Romans, money reaches its full development, which is presupposed in modern bourgeois society, only in the period of their disintegration.'¹²⁸

¹²⁰ I, p. 38; in the text *Anschauung* are 'perceptions' and *Vorstellung* 'images'.

¹²¹ I, p. 38. A 'way which differs from the artistic-, religious- and practical-intellectual assimilation of this world.'

¹²² I, pp. 38-9.

¹²³ I, p. 39.

¹²⁴ I, p. 39.

¹²⁵ I, p. 39.

¹²⁶ '[...] [T]he course of abstract thinking which advances from the elementary to the combined corresponds to the actual historical process.' (I, p. 39)

¹²⁷ In general, notes Marx, 'in the beginning exchange tends to arise in the intercourse of different communities with one another, rather than among members of the same community.' (I, p. 40)

¹²⁸ I, p. 40.

Hence it is not necessarily the case that simpler (i.e. less concrete) categories predate more complex (and more concrete) social unities: it may be the case that ‘the simpler category [...] existed historically before the more concrete’ (even if ‘its complete intensive and extensive development can nevertheless occur precisely in a complex form of society’), but it may also be the case that ‘the more concrete category [...] [be] more fully evolved in a less developed form of society.’¹²⁹

Why the apparent indeterminacy? the matter is complex, for three things (and their interrelations) enter into the matter: the social reality of which a given category is an intellectual representation; the category itself; and the social whole of which the particular social reality forms a single (simple and abstract) part. None of these elements is immutable.

Take, for example, the category of labour. On the one hand, labour is, at least on the face of it, ‘a very simple category’,¹³⁰ for ‘the notion of labour in [...] universal form, as labour in general, is also as old as the hills.’¹³¹ On the other, as an *economic* category, labour is as ‘modern’ as the relations that give rise to it. The notion that labour ‘as such’ is the source of wealth is a notion that only emerges fully for the first time in the thought of Adam Smith (a breakthrough, for Marx, both ‘difficult’ and ‘immense’¹³²). Previously, it had been thought that it was the precious metals that represented wealth in ‘pure’ form (the ‘Bullionist’ view, which is what Marx means when he refers to the ‘monetary system’ (*das Monetarsystem*¹³³)), while the Physiocrats had held that that it was only *agricultural* labour that was the source of wealth.

On the one hand then, the understanding of ‘labour in general’ as the source of wealth is ‘merely an abstract expression [...] for the simplest and most ancient relation in which human beings act as producers—whatever the type of society they live in.’¹³⁴ On the other, it is quite something else. The *abstraction* of labour in general—the presupposition that the specific *form* of a given labour is irrelevant to its nature as wealth-creating activity—is itself grounded in the actual nature of the society, in which of the ‘actually existing kinds of labour, none of which [is seen] is any more the dominating one.’¹³⁵ in which this abstraction is made. ‘[T]his abstraction of labour in general is not simply the conceptual result of a concrete totality of labours’¹³⁶ but the real result of the actual ‘abstraction’ of labour that occurs in a society in which the production of commodities predominates as a social form.

This state of affairs is most pronounced in the most modern form of bourgeois society, the United States. It is only there that the abstract category ‘labour’, ‘labour as such’, labour *sans phrase*, the point of departure of modern economy, is first seen to be true in practice. The simplest abstraction which plays the key role in modern economy, and which expresses an ancient relation existing in all forms of society, appears to be true in practice in this abstract form only as a category of the most modern society.¹³⁷

¹²⁹ I, p. 40.

¹³⁰ I, p. 40.

¹³¹ I, p. 40.

¹³² I, p. 41.

¹³³ I, p. 41.

¹³⁴ I, p. 41.

¹³⁵ I, p. 41.

¹³⁶ I, p. 41.

¹³⁷ I, p. 41.

Here we see clearly the dialectic noted above: that between the social reality being conceptualised, the conceptualisation itself, and the changing social-historical milieu within which the conceptualisation takes place.

The example of labour strikingly demonstrates that even the most abstract categories, despite their being valid—precisely because they are abstractions—for all epochs, are, in the determinateness of their abstraction, just as much a product of historical conditions and retain their full validity only for and within these conditions.¹³⁸

Marx now draws the following conclusions from what he has been arguing.

Bourgeois society is a result, and not a point of departure; it did not fall from the sky, but is, rather, the *product* of a prior process of development. This has consequences for how we understand it, and also for how we understand the societies that came before it. Thus, as ‘the most developed and many-faceted historical organisation of production’, ‘[t]he categories which express [bourgeois society’s] [...] relations [...] provide, at the same time, an insight into the structure and the relations of production of all previous forms of society the ruins and components of which were used in [its] creation.’¹³⁹

If there are ‘indications of higher forms in the lower species of animals can only be understood when the higher forms themselves are already known. Bourgeois economy thus provides a key to that of antiquity, etc.’¹⁴⁰ This is not to say, as those political economists who see the categories of bourgeois society as transhistorical features of an immutable ‘human nature’ do, that all societies are to some degree ‘bourgeois’: ‘[o]ne can understand tribute, tithe, etc., if one knows rent. But they must not be treated as identical.’¹⁴¹

Marx wants to distance himself from the kind of teleological vision that would see bourgeois society as immanent to the historical process, the view that would see ‘historical development [as] rest[ing], in general, on the fact that the latest form regards the earlier ones as stages leading towards itself.’ Such a view is capable of a critical attitude towards prior stages of development, but it is entirely incapable of *self-criticism*. But ‘bourgeois society is [...] a contradictory form of development, [and as such] it contains relations of earlier forms of society often only in very stunted shape or as mere travesties [...]’¹⁴² Thus it is only *superficially* true ‘that the categories of bourgeois economy are valid for all other forms of society, [...] for they may contain them in a developed, stunted, caricatured, etc., form, always with substantial differences.’¹⁴³ The key to the criticism of prior development is *criticism of the present*.

It was not until its self-criticism was to a certain extent prepared, as it were potentially,¹⁴⁴ that the Christian religion was able to contribute to an objective understanding of earlier mythologies. Similarly, it was not until the self-criticism of bourgeois society had begun that bourgeois economy came to understand the feudal, ancient and oriental economies. In so far as bourgeois economy did not simply identify itself with the earlier economies in a mythological manner, its criticism of

¹³⁸ I, p. 42.

¹³⁹ ‘Some of these remains are still dragged along within bourgeois society unassimilated, while elements which previously were barely indicated have developed and attained their full significance, etc. The anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape.’

¹⁴⁰ I, p. 42.

¹⁴¹ I, p. 42.

¹⁴² I, p. 42.

¹⁴³ I, p. 42.

¹⁴⁴ Marx uses the Greek ‘δυνάμει’.

them—especially of the feudal economy, against which it still had to wage a direct struggle—resembled the criticism that Christianity directed against heathenism, or which Protestantism directed against Catholicism.¹⁴⁵

Marx now turns to what all this means for the method of presentation of the critique of the economic categories of bourgeois society. As is the case with all historical or social science, the examination of the development of economic categories requires that they not be taken on their own terms. The object of study,¹⁴⁶ modern bourgeois society, ‘is given, both in reality *and in the mind*’;¹⁴⁷ this means the existing categories themselves ‘express forms of being, determinations of existence—and sometimes only individual aspects—of this particular society, of this subject [i.e. object], and that even from the scientific standpoint it therefore by no means begins at the moment when it is first discussed as such.’ One needs to distinguish between the understanding *given by* the categories and the understanding *of* the categories. This is important because ‘it provides the decisive criteria for the arrangement [of the material of the study of political economy]’.¹⁴⁸

Marx gives an example. ‘[N]othing seems more natural than to begin with rent, with landed property, since it is bound up with the earth, the source of all production and all life, and with agriculture, the first form of production in all more or less established societies.’¹⁴⁹ But this would be wrong.

There is, says Marx, ‘[i]n every form of society [...] a particular production which determines the position and importance of all the others, and the relations obtaining in this branch accordingly determine those in all other branches.’¹⁵⁰ In societies previous to bourgeois society this was agriculture. In the case of ‘pastoral peoples,¹⁵¹ the agricultural systems that sporadically emerge are based on communal property. In the case of settled agriculture, landed property predominates, and industry, for example, is completely dependent on it. Capital takes the form of landed property.

But in bourgeois society agriculture is reduced to a ‘branch of industry’, and as such is ‘completely dominated by capital.’¹⁵² This is the distinction between bourgeois society, and all societies which precede it. ‘In all forms in which landed property rules supreme, the nature relationship still predominates; in the forms in which capital rules supreme, the social, historically evolved element predominates.’¹⁵³ This the starting point in the analysis of bourgeois society is capital, ‘the economic power that dominates everything’.¹⁵⁴ Therefore it is *capital* which ‘must form both the point of departure and the conclusion and must be analysed before landed property.’¹⁵⁵

It would not be appropriate therefore ‘to present the economic categories successively in the order in which they played the determining role in history. Their order of succession is determined rather by

¹⁴⁵ I, p. 43.

¹⁴⁶ I.e. what is to be studied; Marx (confusingly) uses the word ‘subject’. (I, p. 43)

¹⁴⁷ I, p. 43, italicisation added.

¹⁴⁸ I, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹ I, p. 43.

¹⁵⁰ I, p. 43.

¹⁵¹ ‘[P]eoples living exclusively on hunting or fishing are beyond the point from which real development begins’. (I, p. 43)

¹⁵² I, p. 44.

¹⁵³ I, p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ I, p. 44.

¹⁵⁵ I, p. 44.

their mutual relation in modern bourgeois society, and this is quite the reverse of what appears to be their natural relation or corresponds to the sequence of historical development.¹⁵⁶

The question is not therefore ‘the place the economic relations took relative to each other in the succession of various forms of society in the course of history [...] but their position within modern bourgeois society.’¹⁵⁷

* * *

Marx concludes by elaborating the following ‘plan’ for the presentation of his work.

The arrangement has evidently to be made as follows:

- (1) The general abstract determinations, which therefore appertain more or less to all forms of society, but in the sense set forth above.
- (2) The categories which constitute the internal structure of bourgeois society and on which the principal classes are based. Capital, wage labour, landed property. Their relation to one another. Town and country. The 3 large social classes. Exchange between them. Circulation. Credit system (private).
- (3) The State as the epitome of bourgeois society. Analysed in relation to itself. The "unproductive" classes. Taxes. National debt. Public credit. Population. Colonies. Emigration.
- (4) International character of production. International division of labour. International exchange. Export and import. Rate of exchange.
- (5) World market and crises.¹⁵⁸

4. Production

The following—the last part of the ‘Introduction’—are a series of notes of subjects to be covered. Marx subtitles the section like this.

Means of production and relations of production.

Relations of production and conditions of communication.

Forms of the state and of consciousness in relation to the relations of production and of commerce.

¹⁵⁶ I, p. 44.

¹⁵⁷ I, p. 44. As a counter example Marx notes the appearance of capital as merchant or money capital in the ancient world, a world in which agriculture predominated. Capital ‘appears precisely in that abstract form where [...] [it] is not yet the dominant factor in society’ (I, p. 44); ‘Lombards and Jews occupied the same position in relation to mediaeval agrarian societies.’) This is an example of ‘the different roles which the same categories play at different stages of society’. (I, p. 45) Marx also notes the joint-stock company, ‘one of the most recent features of bourgeois society’, but which is also a feature in early-modern Europe ‘in the form of large privileged commercial companies with rights of monopoly.’ (I, p. 44)

¹⁵⁸ I, p. 45. Compare this ‘plan’ to that set out in the letter to Ferdinand Lassalle in February 1858: ‘The whole is divided into 6 books: 1. On Capital (contains a few introductory chapters). 2. On Landed Property. 3. On Wage Labour. 4. On the State. 5. International Trade. 6. World Market.’ (MECW vol. 40, p. 270)

Legal relations. Family relations.¹⁵⁹

Marx lays out a numbered list of ‘points which have to be mentioned here and should not be forgotten.’¹⁶⁰ It is not always clear what exactly he has in mind in each case.

- 1 He notes the influence of *war* on social and technological development: ‘*war* develops [...] certain economic conditions, e.g. wage labour, machinery, etc. [...] earlier than within civil society. The relation between productive power and conditions of communication is likewise particularly evident in the army.’¹⁶¹
- 2 ‘*The relation of the hitherto existing idealistic historiography to realistic historiography. In particular what is known as history of civilisation, which is all a history of religion and states.*’¹⁶²
- 3 *Secondary and tertiary* [relations], in general *derived* and *transmitted*, non-original, relations of production. The influence of international relations [...].¹⁶³
- 4 *Reproaches about the materialism of this conception. Relation to naturalistic materialism.*
- 5 *Dialectic of the concepts productive power* (means of production) *and relation of production*, a dialectic whose limits have to be defined and which does not abolish real difference.
- 6 ‘*The unequal development of material production and e.g. art.* In general, the concept of progress is not to be taken in the usual abstract form. With regard to art, etc., this disproportion is not so important and difficult to grasp as within practical social relations themselves, e.g. in culture. Relation of the United States to Europe. However, the really difficult point to be discussed here is how the relations of production as legal relations enter into uneven development. For example, the relation of Roman civil law (this applies in smaller measure to criminal and public law) to modern production.’¹⁶⁴
- 7 ‘This conception appears to be an inevitable development. But vindication of chance. How. (Of freedom, etc., as well.) (Influence of the means of communication. World history did not exist always; history as world history is a result).’¹⁶⁵
- 8 ‘The starting point is of course determinateness by nature; subjectively and objectively. Tribes, races, etc.’¹⁶⁶

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¹⁵⁹ I, p. 45.

¹⁶⁰ I, p. 45.

¹⁶¹ I, p. 45.

¹⁶² I, p. 46.

¹⁶³ I, p. 46.

¹⁶⁴ I, p. 46.

¹⁶⁵ I, p. 46.

¹⁶⁶ I, p. 46.

Finally, in a well-known (but enigmatic) passage, Marx notes the disjunction between periods of artistic flowering and ‘the general development of society, or, therefore, to the material basis, the skeleton as it were of its organisation.’¹⁶⁷

He notes that there are certain artistic forms (Marx cites the Epic) which can only appear in their classic form at an early stage of artistic development.

With regard to Greek art, Greek mythology is not only its ‘arsenal’, it is also its basis. Marx asks: ‘Is the conception of nature and of social relations which underlies Greek imagination and therefore Greek [artistic expression] possible in the age of selfactors,¹⁶⁸ railways, locomotives and electric telegraphs? What is Vulcan¹⁶⁹ compared with Roberts and Co.,¹⁷⁰ Jupiter¹⁷¹ compared with the lightning conductor, and Hermes¹⁷² compared with the Crédit Mobilier?’^{173,174}

The basis of all mythology, Marx notes, is the suggestion in the imagination of the subjection and domination of the forces of nature; this basis disappears when *real* domination is achieved. ‘What becomes of Fama¹⁷⁵ beside Printing House Square?’¹⁷⁶ [...] Regarded from another angle: is Achilles possible when powder and shot have been invented? And is the Iliad possible at all when the printing press and even printing machines exist?’¹⁷⁷

Marx’s point here is not that the fluorescence of Greek art belies the material conditions of its production; his question is as to why we attach so much importance to it in the present day. Marx’s answer is that it gives us pleasure in the same way that the ‘naivety’ of children does.

An adult cannot become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does not the naivety of the child give him pleasure, and must he not himself endeavour to reproduce the child’s veracity on a higher level? Does not the specific character of every epoch come to life again in its natural veracity in the child’s nature? Why should not the historical childhood of humanity, where it attained its most beautiful form, exert an eternal charm as a stage that will never recur?¹⁷⁸

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¹⁶⁷ I, p. 46.

¹⁶⁸ Marx refers to the self-acting spinning mule.

¹⁶⁹ The Greek god of fire and volcanoes.

¹⁷⁰ The machine tool and locomotive manufacturers.

¹⁷¹ The god of sky and thunder.

¹⁷² The herald of the Greek gods.

¹⁷³ The French joint-stock bank set up by Émile and Isaac Pereire.

¹⁷⁴ I, p. 47.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Fama’ is the latinised name for Pheme, the personification of fame and renown (and hence rumour and gossip).

¹⁷⁶ The headquarters in London of the *Times* newspaper.

¹⁷⁷ I, p. 47.

¹⁷⁸ I, pp. 47-8.

The 'Introduction' breaks off at this point. It is evidently unfinished, although how unfinished it is is unclear: the only clue to what Marx *would* have written is his set of headings and subheadings.

I Production, Consumption, Distribution, Exchange (Circulation)

1. Production
2. The general relation of production to distribution, exchange and consumption

a¹

b¹

c¹. Lastly, Exchange and Circulation

3. The method of political economy

4. Production

Means of production and relations of production.

Relations of production and conditions of communication.

Forms of the state and of consciousness in relation to the relations of production and of commerce.

Legal relations. Family relations.

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