

HEGEL AND MARX ON ALIENATION

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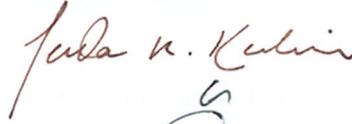
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Overcoming of Alienation

A. Abstract

Both for Hegel and for Marx, man is a construct of historical and social processes and these processes are necessarily defined by a stage of 'alienation'. By overcoming 'alienation', man leads to a stage in history at which he is 'free' with his community.

Hegel's alienation is a contradiction between Spirit, whose essence is freedom, and actuality. His Phenomenology of Spirit focuses on "experience" as a resolution between actuality and Spirit, through which Spirit realizes itself as Absolute Knowledge and overcomes alienation. For Hegel, the state of alienation is an ontological condition of and essential for *self-consciousness* to finally reach the state of Absolute Knowledge which is the "consciousness of freedom".

For Hegel, man achieves to grasp the truth of himself and of the objective realm he is encircled with, through Reason. Through Reason an ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) rises which inhabits all the material conditions for man to recognize and realize himself as a *free* being.

Marx also comprehends alienation as an historical state but for him it is created by material and economic conditions and has to be overthrown and overcome by changing these very conditions. This also is a critique that Marx directs to Hegel's philosophy. For Marx, Hegel creates a mystical and divine concept of Spirit which robs man of his powers to interfere and change the material conditions which necessarily are his own makings.

Marx thinks that the very makings of man himself throughout history stunt his own capacity to lead a free communal life. Therefore he advocates that by changing these conditions man will resurrect his own capacity to lead an ethical communal life.

For Marx at a *free and non-alienated* state of being, man will produce freely to realize his vital capacities with his fellow men.

In my thesis, I will first focus on Hegel to investigate his understanding of alienation as an ontological condition of consciousness and how consciousness sublates alienation to reach the level of Absolute Knowledge and finally attain freedom. Later, I will focus on Marx's conception of alienation as a continuation and yet also as a clear critique of Hegel's system. Marx conceptualizes alienation with a clear reference to Hegel's and yet he immensely criticizes his signifying alienation as an ontological character of consciousness and argues that it is a material condition which is generated by man's very makings through history. Although Hegel suggests that alienation will be overcome by Spirit's unveiling itself through Reason, Marx argues that it will be overcome by interfering and changing the very material conditions.

B. Öz

Hegel ve Marx için insan tarihsel ve sosyal süreçlerin bir sonucudur ve bu sürecin belirli aşamaları “yabancılaşma” ile tariflenir. İnsan, yabancılaşmayı aşarak toplumsal ve bireysel bir özgürlük inşa edebilir.

Hegel’de yabancılaşma, esası özgürlük olan Tin’in kendisinin erken tezahürleri ile olan çelişkisi olarak tariflenebilir. Tinin Fenomenolojisi, Tin’in tezahürleriyle aradığı uzlaşma tecrübesine odaklanır. Hegel için yabancılaşma, kendilik bilincinin özgürlük bilincine varana kadar geçtiği aşamaların temel karakteridir; ki bu aşama da Hegel’de “Mutlak Bilme”dir.

Hegel’de insan kendisine ve nesnesine ait bilince, Akıl ile ulaşır. Akıl ile insan, kendisini özgür bir varlık olarak deneyimleyeceği ve gerçekleştireceği ve etik yaşamı tesis edecek olan maddi koşulları oluşturur.

Marx için de yabancılaşma tarihsel bir süreç ve aşamadır; ancak Marx’a göre yabancılaşma maddi ve ekonomik koşulların sonucudur ve aşılması da mutlaka bu koşulların değişimiyle mümkündür. Bu, aynı zamanda Marx’ın Hegel’e yönelttiği en önemli kritiktir. Marx’a göre Hegel, mistik bir Tin kavramı yaratarak insanın kendi yarattığı koşullara müdahale etme ve bu koşulları değiştirme imkanını insandan çalmıştır.

Marx’a göre insanın kendi inşa ettiği maddi koşullar özgür bir toplumsallık içinde yaşama olanağını elinden almıştır. Ve ancak bu koşulları değiştirerek etik bir toplumsallık imkanına yeniden kavuşacaktır. Yabancılaşmanın aşılması ile insan tekrar özgürce üreterek, yaşamsal kapasitelerini toplumsallık içinde ifade etme imkanına kavuşacaktır.

Tezimde, öncelikle Hegel’e odaklanarak bilincin yabancılaşmayı kendisinin

ontolojik bir koşulu olarak aşarak Mutlak Bilme ve özgürlüğe nasıl kavuştuğunu anlatmaya çalışacağım. Daha sonra, Marx'ın yabancılaşmayı nasıl kavramsallaştırdığını, Hegel'le olan mutlak yakınlığını ve aynı zamanda Hegel'e yönelttiği eleştirilerini ele alacağım.

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C. Introduction

Both Marx and Hegel consider man to be a construction of historical processes and social relations. Man is not an isolation that is out of the phenomenal realm; on the contrary he is completely embedded in it and in a constant entailment with it. Man is formed by social relations and historical processes.

And yet, there is a sharp difference between Hegel and Marx in how they conceive history and its processes. Hegel conceives history as a stage for Spirit to unfold itself. Spirit's main character is freedom that is attained by Reason which pervades the Universe. Spirit proceeds through history to reach absolute freedom. For Hegel, Spirit is *all-comprehensive; it includes everything that ever has interested or ever will interest man. Man is active in it; whatever he does, he is the creature within which the Spirit works.*¹ Since Spirit is the fundament of the world history and since its essence is freedom; Hegel concludes that the whole objective of the world history is to attain absolute freedom.

. . . the essence of Spirit—its substance—is Freedom. It is immediately plausible to everyone that, among other properties, Spirit also possesses Freedom. But philosophy teaches us that all the properties of Spirit exist only through Freedom. All are but means of attaining Freedom; all seek and produce this and this alone. It is an insight of speculative philosophy that Freedom is the sole truth of Spirit.²

For Hegel, freedom is being whole and one with oneself. This is the character of Spirit, which is not dependent on anything else to be itself, and is completely and

¹ G.W.F.Hegel; *Reason in History, A General Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 1953, 20

² *Ibid*

absolutely self-contained and therefore absolutely free. For Hegel, being self-contained and being independent from any sort of substance out of itself is consciousness of self. World history is the exhibition of Spirit attaining full knowledge of it.

Man, through experience, expresses the essence of Spirit and reconciles with Reason and takes an historical journey to reach freedom. For Hegel, Reason governs the World and man by reconciling with it and realizing it by theoretical and practical activity, overcomes his disruption from the Spirit.

Alienation for Hegel is the common characteristics of each and every stage that is prior to Absolute Knowledge. It is consciousness' constant and continuous failure to validate the knowledge of itself as well as the knowledge of the objective realm. By understanding and penetrating into the reality of the objective world, man overcomes the alienation and ceases to be a dead object . In that sense alienation is crucial to Hegel's phenomenological journey. As long as consciousness does not comprehend the truth of itself and also its world, it is in an alienated state.

For Hegel;

1. Alienation is prevalent through all stages that consciousness travels until it reaches Absolute Knowledge.
2. It is alienation that forces consciousness to modify its comprehension of its object and itself during this journey.

Although it is a very dominant element of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is significantly difficult to trace it throughout the book; one has to engage with Hegel's theory of consciousness as a whole to understand the very multi-lateral ve fragmented structure of it.

The Phenomenology of Spirit demonstrates the movement of consciousness to

understand itself. For Hegel, it is only Absolute Knowledge that allows consciousness to attain such level of understanding. To demonstrate this journey, Hegel starts with the most abstract level of consciousness being Sense-Certainty and sketches the whole process until it finally reaches Absolute Knowledge.

For Hegel, consciousness has two inherently bounded aspects—consciousness of the object and consciousness of itself. Consciousness is necessarily related with an object, it is an ontological condition for it. However it is important to emphasize that Hegel does not suggest that the object loses its substance in the subject. On the contrary he suggests that the subject depends on the object's independent existence. Alienation arises because subject fails to understand this very relationship, as it thinks of itself to be apart and distant from its object. This is why a dichotomy arises between "object as itself" and "object for the consciousness". The unity between these two is ensured as consciousness reaches the level of Absolute Knowing. Hegel suggests that at each level prior to Absolute Knowing, consciousness fails to fully understand this structure. And *the Phenomenology of Spirit* is by all means is a demonstration of all these stages where consciousness grasps some level of truth and yet simultaneously fails to grasp the whole of it. And due to this fact, the main character of each level prior to Absolute Knowing is its being in alienation. This very alienation teaches consciousness that it has not still accomplished what it has to. At every level prior to Absolute Knowing, consciousness experiences the essence of this particular state, absorbs its character, understands why it falls short to reflect the whole of truth, sublates this very negativity and moves forward by being changed by this particular moment. Consciousness is forced to alter its understanding throughout its journey from one shape of knowledge to the other.

As discussed, alienation is key to this very process of consciousness. And yet Hegel hardly provides us with a clear and concrete definition of it throughout *The*

Phenomenology of Spirit. This is why one has to engage with the whole of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* to characterize the concept of alienation. Hegel's concept of alienation is understood by all its aspects and layers only when it is overcome and the whole of truth is grasped by the consciousness. Only by being erred and alienated all along, consciousness gets to understand that its truth lies in the synthesis of its objective and subjective aspects.

Hegel suggests that the character of alienation is also very specific to the particular form that consciousness takes because the character of consciousness changes depending on how it overcomes its alienated nature.

In that sense, the role of alienation during the phenomenological journey of consciousness is multi-dimensional and very complex.

Alienation as Estrangement

To better understand the concept of alienation we need to focus on two different notions Hegel used: "*Entfremdung*" and "*Entausserung*". *Entfremdung*, estrangement, is a state where consciousness is distant from aspects that are necessary to fully understand itself whereas *Entausserung*, externalization, is consciousness' objectification of itself. Estrangement is what we have been discussing as "alienation". It is the main character of all the states of consciousness until it fully grasps the unity of its objective and subjective aspects.

Because consciousness goes through various states all along, the level of estrangement changes accordingly. At earlier stages consciousness is hierarchically more alienated than the later ones. Because as consciousness evolves it develops its capacities to better understand its truth and as consciousness approaches to Absolute Knowledge it gets less and less alienated. As such, Sense Certainty is the most estranged form of consciousness. The level of alienation decreases as consciousness moves towards further stages and the character of estrangement

keeps being specific to the particular state.

Although the sensation of estrangement is negative, Hegel asserts that its function is a positive one. It is by the courtesy of estrangement, consciousness feels the pressure to question its present capacity to assess the truth, understand the limitations that it has to fully grasp it and alter its understanding of the reality. This alteration is the very process that constitutes the life of the subject and the object due to their ontologically interrelated relationship. This alteration goes on until consciousness reaches a point where there is nothing left to be learnt from its phenomenological experiences. As a very unpleasant and difficult journey, alienation upholds a very constructive and constitutional role in the development process of consciousness.

Alienation as Externalization

As estrangement builds the pressure for consciousness to doubt and later alter and develop its self-understanding, “externalization” is the way for consciousness to build the very conditions that will make it feel at home with itself. The form in this particular sense which consciousness employs is “work”. For Hegel, estrangement and self-externalization collaboratively serve consciousness to develop itself.

Externalization is an effective way for consciousness to realize its ontological interdependency with its object as it expresses itself by producing its very own duplication in the outer realm. This expression is a medium through which consciousness explores its ontological dependence with its object. As it builds an objectivity of its own kind, consciousness better understands the constructive role of the object. This is very significant as it is the ultimate moment when the division between the subject and the object is foregone.

The value of consciousness’ objectifying itself is most apparent in Hegel’s master and bondsman distinction. Here, while bondsman is under a complete

situation of bondage, this very position forces him to work to provide a living for the master. Work involves activities which transform the bondsman, he realizes his subjectivity and finds a new world which is an expression of his subjectivity.

And yet, externalization itself can also cause a new form of estrangement as in the case in which consciousness fails to recognize itself in its own duplication.

If consciousness opens itself up to externalization and if it experiences the products of this externalization as its own expression and not as alien objects that are opposing it, consciousness manages to transform itself. But if it fails to conceive it as its own expression, his very own makings turn against him as an alien reality. Then it will be estranged from itself as it fails to form a unity between subjectivity and its object.

One can track various stages and forms of estrangement throughout *the Phenomenology*. For instance, the section on Stoicism demonstrates the extremity of withdrawal from the objective realm and losing the sense of objective conditions whereas Physiognomy and Phrenology showcases almost the opposite case, consciousness finding its reality within the confines of corporeality. In the section on Stoicism, Hegel demonstrates the general character of Stoicism; its separateness from and its being indifferent to the conditions of nature, society and culture. In Physiognomy and Phrenology; Hegel takes contemporary debates about the studies of human body and its external capacities and criticizes them as because they try to reduce complex structures into components. For Hegel both Stoicism and Physiognomy and Phrenology end in estrangement.

Hegel's understanding of objectivity and in what strict way it defines and determines the subject is, in that sense, quite complicated. Hegel's subject is strictly attached to its object. Phenomenological journey is consciousness' exploring its subjective and

objective aspects and uniting the two. Therefore it is crucial that we engage ourselves with the whole of *the Phenomenology of Spirit* to understand alienation, its functions and how it transforms consciousness and enables Spirit to manifest itself.

Alienation is one of the central concepts in the young Marx's philosophy as he discusses that it is an essential feature of the capitalist mode of production and as it has a deep penetration into the psyche of individuals and the society.

Karl Marx's theory of alienation is a clear continuance of Hegel's. Marx, just as Hegel does, takes "objectification" as a critical concept in his theory of alienation. In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, he signifies two functions of objectification. First, man, by working, mirrors and creates an image of himself in the material world; he realizes his vital capacities as real objects in the objective world. And later, he recognizes himself as true species-being through his work. Man creates a new world with the objects of his production and also he creates himself anew as a species-being through these very products.

For Marx, alienation is rooted in the material world as it is the loss of control over one's own labour. Man has to work on nature to appropriate it according to his needs. What is unique to human labour is its being a conscious activity. Through his successes and failures, man constructs and shapes the history. He either develops further on his successes or learns from his failures and invents new ways of meeting his needs. Contrary to the conditions of animal species which are confined in eternal repetition, man is in a constant transformation. Man by working on nature not only alters the nature but also himself. Therefore labour is a dynamic and "species-specific" activity.

Man, as a species is also "social". As Marx discussed in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, people have to engage with social relationships with each other and they have to work and produce together to provide and sustain a living for

themselves. For Marx, a society is a sum of connections and relationships in which people find themselves in. Man relates with the physical world through labour and through labour he connects with his fellow men. This is the reason why work has a direct influence on the whole of society. Our necessity to work and our capacity to learn and change through it, developed the productive forces and a class society that is organized around them.

For Marx, when the society reached a productivity level that enabled it to produce a surplus, a new class of people emerged which has become free of producing directly and eventually developed a form of control over the labour of others. This control of labour as it was necessary to organize and direct labour, caused another class of people to lose control over their own labour. For Marx, when man's labour is alienated, the production process and the product itself become independent of him and confront him as entities alien to him.

For Marx, there are four fundamental sorts of alienation. First form of alienation is **the worker's alienation from his own product**. In this case, as Marx highlights, worker relates to his own product as something alien. Although worker employs his creative forces, his time and effort, he cannot relate to his product in a meaningful context; on the contrary it becomes an independent entity unconnected to him. As Marx states, once the worker gives his life to the object, he loses his life force and it becomes lost forever in an object.

Second form of alienation is **the alienation of the work process itself**. As the worker is in a form of production process that he did not choose to be a part of freely, he is confined in a forced activity. For Marx, in the capitalist mode of production, work is "external to the worker". This alienated process denies the affirmation and recognition the individual seeks and it fails to be a vital and life-affirming activity.

In the Grundrisse, he argues that this character of labour being forced and compulsory is not specific to the capitalist mode of production but can be tracked down to almost all modes of production throughout history. But he strongly disagrees with Adam Smith who suggests that this is the immanent character of labour.

Adam Smith conceives of labour as such a curse. 'Rest' appears to him to be fitting state of things, and identical with "liberty" and "happiness".³

On the contrary, his main argument is that work is fundamental to human freedom. He makes this point very clear in *the Critique of Gotha Program*.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!⁴

The third form of alienation is man's getting **alienated from his species-specific character**. As we have discussed, for Marx, man is a social species. His relationship with fellow men is always implicit in his actions. And as we have also touched upon previously, man is also a conscious being. He has the capacity to reflect on his activities.

³ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Grundrisse*, 402

⁴ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, The Critique of Gotha Programme*, 615

Man is a species being, not only in that practically and in theoretically he makes both his own and other species into his objects, but also, and this is only another way of putting the same thing, he relates to himself as to the present, living species, in that he relates to himself as to a universal and therefore free being⁵

Work is the most definitive activity that resonates with man's species-specific characteristics. It has to express man's capacities as a free and conscious activity in relation with fellow men.

For firstly, work, vital activity, and productive life itself appear to man only as a means to the satisfaction of a need, the need to preserve his physical existence. But productive life is species-life. It is life producing life. The whole character of a species, its generic character, is contained in its manner of vital activity, and free conscious activity is the species-characteristic of man. Life itself appears merely as a means to life⁶

As Marx suggests the objective of the labour is "the objectification of man's species life" and as both the product and the production process fail to express species-specific character of man, he gets alienated from it.

Fourth kind of alienation is men **alienating from each other; his fellow men**. This is a continuation of man's alienating from his species-specific character. Man's existence in the society is reduced to "work"; therefore his identity is reduced to being a "worker". Men's relationships with each other mimic their relationship with work.

⁵ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Political Manuscripts*, 89

⁶ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Political Manuscripts*, 90

In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species-being means that one man is alienated from another as each of them is alienated from the human essence.

The alienation of man and in general of every relationship in which man stands to himself is first realized and expressed in the relationship with which man stands to other men.⁷

As one can see, Marx's concept of alienation manifests in four different ways but they are all connected with each other. The discussion concerning alienated labour aims to prove that work is the most definitive characteristic of man which is also the true expression of his species-specific life.

After his elaboration of the various forms of alienation Marx continues to discuss "private property" in order to establish to whom the lost and alienated object of man belongs to. Marx formulates "private property" as the aggregation of alienating processes in the capitalist mode of production. It belongs to someone other than the worker. The foreign being who adopts the labour and the product and who takes advantage of them is the *capitalist*.

As in the capitalist mode of production, one's relationship with oneself, to his own product, to labour process and to his fellow men become foreign, hostile and independent of him; work starts to become more and more of a coercion, being done as a service under the lordship of another human being. Man gives birth to alienated object, alienated labour and also this particular kind of man who claims mastery and ownership over his product and labour.

Private property is the sum and end of this particular relationship. For Marx,

⁷ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, 2000, *Economic and Political Manuscripts*, 91

wage is the other face of the same coin too. Worker working for the wage and not for the work itself is just another manifestation of the estranged labour. No rise or equality of wages would improve the conditions that are caused by estrangement, they would only affirm it and extend it to all humans and turn the whole society into an abstract capitalist.

Private property is a way of organizing labour in a context of production and human relationships. Marx insists that this organization starts with labour force although liberal economy suggests that the starting point is accumulation, buying and selling of private property. For Marx, private property is the capital and it is the store of the estranged labour. All the value that is created by the workers are added on top of each other and finally added on to the capital. Worker keeps on working to add up on the capital which dominates him.

Alienated labour and capital are intertwined with each other and they form the capitalist form of production. For Marx, private property is the mediator of labour's alienation and also an opposing force that is created by the worker himself. In other words, worker himself establishes private property as his other and alienated self. Therefore for Marx, the movement that will abolish this very entanglement must be led by the worker himself to redeem back what originally belongs to him.

It is only in the final culmination of the development of private property that these hidden characteristics come once more to the fore, in that firstly it is the product of externalized labour and secondly it is the means through which labour externalizes itself, the realization of this externalization.⁸

This whole cycle is dependent on worker's continuous self-alienation as the private property becomes labour's own other, not a cause but a consequence of

⁸ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Political Manuscripts, 91*

labour's alienation.

In my thesis, first, I will concentrate on Hegel's understanding of alienation and its centrality and functionality in Hegel's philosophy of consciousness by focusing on *the Phenomenology of Spirit*. I will try to demonstrate that alienation is a prevalent concept through his theory of consciousness with a very profound function which is to force consciousness to move to more advanced and sophisticated states of itself. Later, I will try to discuss how consciousness overcomes alienation as it finally reaches Absolute Knowing which is a state where universality and particularity; subject and object reconcile in a unity that still represent their distant identities.

In the second section of my thesis I will focus on Marx's understanding of alienation which is deeply penetrated in his economic and social theory. Marx's alienation is almost completely bounded with labour. It is a condition that emerges out of present capitalist mode of production which causes man to be separated from his product, the production process, his species-specific character and finally his fellow men. For Marx, this division leads society to organize around classes and private property which are also necessarily manifestations of alienation.

Finally, in Conclusion, first, I will present Marx's critique of Hegel's understanding of alienation and discuss in which aspects he introduces additions to it. I will also discuss in what angles I think that he did not analyze or reflect Hegel's ideas thoroughly and fully. In the second section of Conclusion, I will conclude my discussion about Hegel's and Marx's theories about alienation by emphasizing their common project; despite their differences, emancipation of vital forces of man from the infringement of alienating elements to build a free, productive, fulfilled communal human life.

D. Hegel on Alienation

The Phenomenology of Spirit reveals that the aim of consciousness is to reach the truth of both the objective and subjective aspects of reality. To achieve this objective it starts from the most abstract and flawed stage of itself and travels to the most holistic and mature stage, that is, "Absolute Knowledge". As we can suggest that alienation is the main character of each form of consciousness prior to Absolute Knowledge, we cannot easily put our finger on a single definition of alienation that Hegel provides throughout *the Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is why a full study of *the Phenomenology of Spirit* is essential to have an understanding of alienation.

Here, I propose a specific method and guideline to decode "alienation" in *the Phenomenology of Spirit*. I will make four main cases concerning Hegel's understanding of alienation and discuss them in detail:

1. I will first present and discuss the general project of *the Phenomenology of Spirit* and I will argue that "alienation" is a concept that is prevalent throughout the whole work. I will suggest that alienation is the defining character of all levels of consciousness that are prior to Absolute Knowing. I will specifically focus on Consciousness, Self-Consciousness and Reason stages to demonstrate the specific character of alienation they hold and what kind of reconciliation takes place.

2. Secondly, I will argue that "alienation as estrangement" and "alienation as objectification" are different in Hegel's thought. In this second section I will specifically discuss the specific content of "objectification" in *the Phenomenology of Spirit*.

3. In the third section, I will concentrate on the particular content of "alienation as estrangement" that emerges in Spirit section in

Phenomenology and how it is different from “objectification” as it specifically defines a condition of consciousness failing to identify with objectivity.

4. In the fourth and final section I will discuss how consciousness overcomes alienation by completely reconciling its subjective and objective aspects and becomes a living unity of both of these aspects. I will focus on Absolute Knowing to elaborate this point.

D.1 The Project of Phenomenology of Spirit

The whole purpose of *the Phenomenology of Spirit* is, first, to show that consciousness strives to know the truth of its object and of itself; second, to show that it is only philosophical consciousness that can attain such knowledge. For Hegel, alienation is key to this process as it is the element of doubt which causes consciousness to investigate the truth of itself and the truth of its object. Therefore, alienation is the main character of every stage prior to Absolute Knowledge.

As Hegel suggests that it is only philosophical consciousness that can attain true knowledge, *the Phenomenology of Spirit* is his project to showcase each and every stage it goes through until it reaches Absolute Knowledge. He starts with the most abstract and primitive form of consciousness— Sense Certainty—and sketches every form it takes until it reaches the truth of itself.

It is essential to engage with the whole process that Hegel sketches throughout *the Phenomenology of Spirit* to have an understanding of the very multi-faceted structure of alienation and we have to engage with Hegel’s theory of consciousness.

For Hegel, consciousness has two dimensions. First, it is the consciousness of the object and second, it is the consciousness of itself.

Consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, and on

the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what it is for the True, and consciousness of its knowledge of its truth.⁹

This view suggests that consciousness is necessarily bounded with an independent object and its existence is an ontological condition for consciousness. Consciousness' failure to comprehend the object's ontological bondage with itself causes it to get alienated from it. As the consciousness fails to understand both the character of itself and its object, it continuously checks whether its conception of the object and the truth of the object comply with each other.

But just because consciousness has, in general, knowledge of an object, there is already present the distinction that the inherent nature, what the object is in itself, is one thing to consciousness, while knowledge, or the being of the object for consciousness, is another moment. Upon this distinction, which is present as a fact, the examination turns.¹⁰

This process is signified as "experience" in Phenomenology of Spirit. Through experience, consciousness finds out that the truth of the object and how it perceives it to be, differ from one another and by reason it alters its perception to the truth of the object. This process continues until it reaches Absolute Knowledge, the stage where the representation of the consciousness and the truth of the object are identical with each other. As consciousness travels from one form to another, it does not lose the essence of the past forms; it keeps the essence of previous forms and it develops and changes by subsuming them.

When once, on the other hand, the result is apprehended, as it truly is, as determinate negation, a new form has thereby immediately arisen; and in

⁹ G.W.F.Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Dover Publications, 2003, 47

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 48

the negation the transition is made by which the progress through the complete succession of forms comes about of itself.¹¹

And as it grows it obtains a more balanced, sound and comprehensive understanding of its object and itself. This journey continues until consciousness abolishes the alien reality of its object.

Logical consciousness learns from the experience and does not go back to more primitive and abstract forms of itself which failed it to understand whole truth of itself and its object. At the end of its development consciousness comes to realize that the independent character of its object is not alien and hostile to it. It finds out that it was its own inadequacy that led it to fail to understand that the object was an ontological condition of its own existence. Yet, still, this does not mean that the object loses its essence and collapses into consciousness. Rather it means that consciousness realizes its living unity with its object. This stage for Hegel is Absolute Knowing. In Absolute Knowing both consciousness and object keep their independent character and yet they form a unity. This is the stage where alienation is overcome.

D.2 Alienation as Externalization

For Hegel, estrangement and externalization collectively work and raise the level of consciousness and self-understanding. Estrangement is an unpleasant state of being, serving consciousness to develop its self-understanding. On the other hand, externalization is rather a more immediate way of development.

Consciousness externalizes itself and translates itself into an object and as it

¹¹ *Ibid*, 48

takes an objective form it develops a more advanced and comprehensive understanding of itself. For Hegel, objectification of consciousness is its way to find out its ontological bondage with objectivity. Consciousness explores all its potentialities and becomes its own object by externalizing itself. This process is also very critical as this is how consciousness gets to understand that the world outside itself is not opposed and hostile to it and that objectivity constitutes its ontological structure.

We can trace the role of externalization in the Master and Bondsman argument in *the Phenomenology*. Hegel discusses the developmental role of work for consciousness in this particular section. As consciousness fails to reach the truth of itself through all the previous forms of itself, it finally reaches a moment to seek for the recognition of another self-consciousness. And yet, consciousness does not want to grant its own recognition to the other self-consciousness. This attitude raises a dilemma and struggle for both, which Hegel signifies as “life and death struggle”. This struggle causes one of the self-consciousness’s to become a “bondsman” as it chooses life over death and also “bondage” as a consequence. As it chooses bondage, bondsman consciousness gives away its freedom and agrees to work to satisfy master’s wills and needs.

This is the point where “work” rises as a transformative power for self-consciousness. The activities that it engages to please the master’s wills develop the bondsman’s self-consciousness. Bondsman’s consciousness becomes the one to change and alter the world as a manifestation of its subjectivity. He derives satisfaction from work; through labour and shaping objects, he rediscovers himself and he can claim his independence.

Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is. In the moment which corresponds to desire in the lord’s consciousness,

it did seem that the aspect of unessential relation to the thing fell to the lot of the bondsman, since in that relation to the thing retained its independence.¹²

As the bondsman shapes the world and expresses his subjectivity, he discovers himself in the object that once he assumed to be alien to him.

The shape does not become something other than himself through being made external to him; for it is precisely this shape that is his pure being-for-self, which in this externality is seen by him to be truth. Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realizes that is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own.¹³

As the “master and bondsman” discussion demonstrates how consciousness is forced to externalize itself within a strict bondage relation, another discussion in *the Phenomenology* demonstrates a rather more positive and voluntary sense of externalization.

In “Individuality Which Takes Itself to be Real In and For Itself” consciousness externalizes itself by its own will, not because it is forced to. By doing so, consciousness creates its own reality and simultaneously sees itself in an objective form.

It is there that the individual becomes consciously what he is implicitly, and in such wise that the consciousness which becomes aware of the individual in the work performed is not the particular consciousness but universal

¹² G.W.F.Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V.Miller, 1998, 118

¹³ *Ibid*, 118

consciousness.¹⁴

Through work consciousness gives itself an explicit content and this content reflects the universal consciousness. And as consciousness externalizes itself it also develops to understand that it is necessarily connected with a community. Individuality may disappoint others by solely concentrating on his particular achievement over others more than the fact of the matter itself. The only way to correct this disillusion is to turn this achievement for all and as opposed to an achievement of “I”.

Rather it is an essential reality whose existence means the action of the single individual and of all individuals, and whose action is immediately for others, or is a “fact”, and is only “fact” in the sense of an action of each and all—the essential reality which is the essence of all beings (**We-sen**), which is spiritual essence.¹⁵

As discussed Hegel signifies externalization as an essential activity for consciousness to develop itself regardless of the intentions of consciousness. In the early stages of it, consciousness engages with externalization without understanding its critical contribution to its self-development whereas it recognizes its essentiality in more advanced stages and therefore it purposefully externalizes oneself.

But Hegel claims that externalization only develops consciousness only if it relates to its object in a specific way. To start with, consciousness should be willing to externalize itself. It must not think of it as a loss of itself or its subjectivity.

¹⁴ G.W.F.Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Dover Publications, 2003, 231

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 239

Secondly, externalization will be a success if consciousness sees its object as an expression of itself. If consciousness externalizes and yet fails to see itself in his very own object it will be estranged. It will perceive its very own extension as a foreign and hostile object and therefore will fail to perceive itself as a living unity of subjectivity and objectivity. In this case consciousness will keep considering itself opposed to objectivity.

This takes us to the discussion of “estrangement” as a state in which consciousness fails to recognize itself as a unity of these two aspects.

D.3 Alienation as Estrangement

To fully understand its own structure, consciousness has to struggle until it makes its way to Absolute Knowing. In this particular and final shape, consciousness finally understands that its bondage with its intentional and yet independent object is an ontological condition of itself. This particularly means that consciousness fails in a way that is specific to each stage that it is at that is prior to Absolute Knowing. These specific failures teach consciousness what it is not and force it to move to more advanced states of itself. The feeling of alienation rises due to the fact that consciousness fails to identify the unity between objectivity and subjectivity.

As necessary as this journey is, it has serious difficulties. Experience along with the feeling of alienation force consciousness to alter its knowledge of truth. At each new stage, consciousness faces a new challenge to give up what it used to be and what it comprehended to be true. It has to be ready to alter its understanding of what it knows to be true as it faces new conditions.

As alienation is key to this phenomenological journey, Hegel’s handling of this concept is quite ambiguous. Alienation is a theme that describes the characteristic of

each stage that consciousness goes through. This is why its definition changes and develops as we move along to further stages of consciousness. At each specific stage, consciousness fails in one particular and specific way in grasping the truth of itself and its object. This failure forces it to work on it and to transform itself. This is the reason why we have to study each and every stage to have a coherent understanding of the concept of alienation for Hegel. As we finally reach to Absolute Knowing, we find out that this has all been consciousness' way of learning about itself, this is the reason it has started from the most abstract form of itself and figured out that it was constituted of both subjective and objective aspects and finally reached a unity of both. Therefore we can suggest that consciousness is alienated at each step that is prior to Absolute Knowledge.

I will present a brief discussion on the first three sections of the Phenomenology; Consciousness, Self-Consciousness and Reason to demonstrate the character of alienation that is particular and specific to these states of consciousness and how consciousness reacts and alters itself and moves along.

For Hegel the first and most abstract state is "consciousness". It develops through stages of 'sensation', 'perception' and finally 'understanding'. Sensation provides a kind of knowledge which is immediate, certain and particular. Although this specific kind of knowledge that is sensed seems to be sure and absolute, examination reveals its flaws and its fragmented nature. Therefore consciousness keeps marching further and moves up to the next level being, 'perception'.

By *Perception*, the knowledge which is gathered by sensation is turned into common features and characteristics. This is the stage where consciousness starts to systemize what sensation provides and it starts to 'name' various appearances as 'things'. (Das Ding)

Sensation provides a certain kind of evidence about the world we live in, Perception provides a set of categories to make sense of these and gives us a specific interpretation of what we sense. For Hegel, there rises a discrepancy between what we sense and what the categories we employ provide. This discrepancy forces consciousness to doubt and further investigate. This is the stage of 'Understanding'. Consciousness realizes the flaws and contradictions of the categories that we employ when we perceive the world. The less satisfactory character of these categories forces us to build and develop our own categories which is basically a certain kind of learning that Hegel names as 'understanding'.

All shapes of Consciousness claim a sort of knowledge that is related to outer phenomena. And yet the relation between the particular and the universal fails Consciousness throughout the whole process. Here, the general problem of particulars failing to sustain their existence and character within the universal emerges for the first time.

Consciousness is a stage where knowledge of things is created. But consciousness may also take itself as its own object, becoming Self-Consciousness. At the level of Self-Consciousness, consciousness reflects upon itself, becomes conscious of itself.

Since for self-consciousness nothing other than itself has the truth, now the objects of sensation, perception and understanding become negations.

Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however for self-consciousness has the character of a negative; and second, viz. itself, which is the true essence, and is present in the first

instance only as opposed to the first object.¹⁶

Hegel takes the idea of self-consciousness further and states that subjects are also objects to other subjects. He suggests that self-consciousness is not just being aware of oneself but also desiring the awareness of another's awareness. Self-consciousness emerges by seeing oneself through another's self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness is, in a sense, opposite to Consciousness as it takes itself, not the outer realm as the source of its knowledge. To make sure that it is the ultimate source of knowledge, self-consciousness claims to be independent from the outer phenomena. And yet through each and every one of its attempts, self-consciousness fails to prove that it is independent from its object. On the contrary each attempt proves that self-consciousness is dependent on its object and its interaction with it.

Hegel concludes that, self-consciousness has to be engaged with the outer phenomena and has to be present in it by its own activity. And this necessitates consciousness and self-consciousness to co-exist and yet discrepancies between them linger on.

As Hegel demonstrates in previous sections that neither Consciousness nor Self-consciousness prove to have a universal character, he moves to Reason. The whole discussion of Reason aims to prove that Reason is also inadequate to succeed to identify with the universal, because it is necessarily bounded with different forms of dualism and therefore it is ontologically an alienated state of consciousness. Reason, tries to build an identity with the universal through various stages it goes through.

¹⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V.Miller, 1998, 105

Hegel discusses the role and limitations of Reason in three main sections: Observing Reason, Actualization of Self Consciousness and Individuality Real in and for itself.

As we study Observing Reason which is basically concerned with Nature in general and self-consciousness' nature in specific—being body and psychology—we find out that it fails to live up to the objective of scientific thought to represent and sustain the universality and falls into its own forms of dualism.

Then we move to second section which is practical Reason, as Reason, having failed to derive its own reality from observation, now rises to the stage of actualizing itself through the external world. For Hegel, theoretical Reason was the observing Reason, as he now signifies the actualization of rational self-consciousness as practical Reason. And yet again it fails to fulfill its objective because in this case the dualism is between reason and social institutions.

The next section, "Individuality Real in and for Itself", introduces the individual who is acting as if his intentions actualize the universal good. The first sub-section, Spiritual Animal Kingdom and Deceit, shows us that each individual uses his own nature to form a universal good. As every single person tries to achieve one form of good, as the title "deceit" implies, fails to achieve his own private interest. In second sub-section, Reason as Lawgiver, Hegel, introduces the individual who now tries to act according to an objective law. Yet again, Hegel shows us that the laws that supposedly represent the prescriptive aspect of the real self turn out to be vain.

As Reason proceeds along the stages that we have walked through briefly, it continuously fails in its project to reconcile the self with the world as a whole. After the Reason fails to grasp the truth of itself and its world by the Observing Reason which is concerned with nature, human mind and body, Reason attempts to build a reasonable world by its own activities. However as it attempts to do so, it encounters

with opposition from other rational beings and therefore yet again fails to reconcile the particular with the universal.

As we have seen the form that alienation takes depends on the level of consciousness and how consciousness relates oneself to the conditions of this particular level. Different states of consciousness cause different degrees of estrangement. Because Hegel contemplates phenomenological journey as a hierarchical one, so is alienation. Earlier stages of consciousness are more alienated as consciousness is more distant from understanding its ontological structure as a unity. As it gets closer to Absolute Knowing, less alienated it gets. As Sense-Certainty is the most primitive and abstract form of consciousness, it is the most alienated one too.

Although the feeling of alienation is quite an unpleasant one, the experience of it teaches consciousness that its object is not what it assumed it to be and forces it to alter its understanding of the object. This alteration necessarily leads to an alteration of consciousness's self-understanding. This phenomenological journey continues until there is no room for further investigation. At this particular moment consciousness reaches the truth of its object and also the truth of itself and alienation is overcome. Its constitutive role to stimulate this phenomenological journey is over.

D.4 Absolute Knowing and Overcoming of Alienation

Hegel's thought takes its final form in the "Absolute Knowing" as it is the final stage of *the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Absolute Knowing is a stage where thought transcends the relativity of single human experiences and finally represents things-as-themselves. It is not by any sense an abstraction as it still does include the particularity of the singular experiences. Hegel's universality which finds its final form

in “Absolute Knowing” is not annihilation of differences and particularities, on the contrary a unity of them. Absolute knowledge is a living unity of subjectivity and objectivity. Spirit is a motion of Reason which basically consists of these two moments, that is, subjectivity and objectivity. Hegel makes this point clear right away in the Introduction section of *the Phenomenology*.

Consciousness ... distinguishes something from itself, and at the same time relates itself to it, or, as it is said, this something exists for consciousness; and the determinate aspect of this relating or of the being of something for a consciousness, is knowing. But we distinguish this being-for-another from being-in-itself; whatever is related to knowing is also distinguished from it, and posited as existing outside of this relationship; this being-in-itself is called truth.¹⁷

In Hegel’s thought object is never confined in the status of being consciousness’ content. It is ontologically related to it, but this never implies that object does not exist independently of human knowing. Object has an independent existence and yet still is an ontological aspect of consciousness.

So, too, in the philosophical proposition the identity of subject and predicate is not meant to destroy the difference between them, which the form of the proposition expresses; their unity, rather, is meant to emerge as a harmony.¹⁸

These two moments merge and form a unity in Absolute Knowing. Yet this unity does not imply annihilation of any of these moments. As we have discussed in the previous sections, consciousness has been through various forms of alienation

¹⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V.Miller, 1998, 52

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 38

because it has rejected one of these aspects of itself and as a result ended up in such a shape which lacks one of these two essential moments. The most primitive forms of consciousness focused solely on objectivity and regarded it as essential whereas the shapes of self-consciousness reduced objectivity to subject. As the journey that we have been throughout Phenomenology proved us that none of these attitudes are justified to represent the whole truth, the stage of Absolute Knowing has to succeed to sustain the existence of both of these two aspects.

The Ego must not, however, be afraid of the substantial world of objective Nature: this is its foil and therefore itself. The power of Spirit lies in remaining one with itself while it externalizes itself in Nature and that without paring down the elaborate distinction of natural being. It must understand Nature in all its variety as necessary to itself.

Spirit is all the phases of content in which it externalizes itself, and the process of leading these phases back to a full consciousness of self. It unfolds its existence and develops its processes in the pure ether of its life and is Systematic Science. In Systematic Science the distinction between subjective knowledge and objective truth is eliminated: each phase always has both aspects.¹⁹

Spirit, externalizes and expresses itself in nature and finite consciousness and it forms the “reality” that we know of. Absolute knowing is achieved by this finite consciousness’ activity of knowledge. Consciousness cannot exempt itself from the mediate character of the spirit. It gets alienated to oneself first and later it grasps the truth of itself. Truth will reveal itself only through mediation of all the previous self-alienating contradictions of consciousness.

¹⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V.Miller, 1998, 591

Finite and infinite overthrow their oppositions as they keep their distinct characters in absolute knowing. The opposition that has risen due to consciousness' initial and inadequate knowledge of the object gets washed away and a harmony is established. However this harmony is never an end, since various self-conscious beings will keep having brand new experiences, absolute knowing will have to be a continuous process of acknowledging the "difference in unity".

With Hegel's multi-lateral and complex analysis of Phenomenology we have explored the relations and differences between alienation, objectivity and objectification. We have discussed "objectivity" both with its alienating character and also as an enabler for consciousness to discover its true character; "self-objectification" as an extension and expression of consciousness but also as something alienating since and as long as consciousness fails to see itself in it; "objectification" as a purposeful activity for consciousness to search for itself, or as something that happens to it without its own intention. All these aspects of Phenomenology demonstrated the central and critical role of alienation in it as a force to push consciousness to explore its true character as the unity of subject and object until it finally reaches Absolute Knowing.

E. Marx on Alienation and Freedom

Marx's concept of alienation is a clear continuance of Hegel's. He basically conceptualizes alienation as a state at which man's own products and doings turn against him as something alien to him and posit themselves as they are completely independent of him.

This fact expresses merely that the object which labour produces—labour's product—confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labour. Labour's realization is its objectification. Under these economic conditions this realization of labour appears as loss of realization for the workers; objectification as loss of the object and bondage to it; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.²⁰

Although Marx generally uses the term alienation with a direct reference to labour, it also involves social and personal spheres. Alienation is, for Marx, man's essence being ripped off from him as a social and rational maker.

The object of labour is therefore, the objectification of man's species life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore, he sees himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his species-life, his real objectivity as a member of the species and transforms his advantage over animals into

²⁰ Karl Marx, *A Reader, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 1986, 37

disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.²¹

Like Hegel, Marx conceives man as an end of social and historical processes. This is the reason why he also sees alienation and its overcoming as a social and historical phenomenon. But he criticizes Hegel's suggestion that alienation is an ontological condition of self-consciousness and its overcoming is necessarily within the development of the Spirit. Instead, he argues that alienation is a materialistic end of existing production relations and it has to be overcome by interfering with these very processes. In Marx, as it is in Hegel, the case that modernity builds is not solely a negative one. Its positive character is that it inhabits the very conditions and possibilities to overcome the problems that it creates. This is why he builds a critique of history, to illuminate the hidden possibilities that it might offer. For him, alienation is the loss of man's control over his own labour and therefore the loss of his species-specific character. To better understand this aspect of alienation, first we should discuss what the human species character means.

E.1 What is Human Species Character for Marx?

In Marx, the concept of alienation originates from his elaborations concerning work. For Marx, work is a fulfilling and species-specific life activity which also has the potential to liberate man. Man 'duplicates' himself and creates a 'representation' of himself through work. Work is what differentiates man as a species-being. It changes the character of the relationship that man has with the nature that surrounds him. Through work, his immediate and direct relationship with nature breaks. Immediate consumption of nature is deferred. Nature gets transformed into a new character as it is worked upon and formed by man.

²¹ *Ibid*, 42

Marx defines this relationship as man's 'species activity'. He compares this relationship with the one that animals have with nature. Animals have a direct and immediate relationship with nature, they are one with nature and their life activity. On the other hand, man's relationship with nature as work is embodiment of his will and consciousness. It is his medium to create a duplication of himself and to witness his very existence in the material world.

Therefore, by working and appropriating the world, man distinguishes himself from the objective world as a willing and self-conscious subject. This chasm, for Marx is the negative character of work. But he also suggests that work is the way that man builds a genuine relationship with oneself and overcomes the breach with his authentic self. For him, this is the positive character of work. While he works on nature and changes it, man also transforms himself.

Thus it is in the working over the objective world that man first really affirms himself as a species-being. This production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of work is therefore the objectification of the species-life of man; for he duplicates himself not only intellectually, in his mind, but also actively in reality and thus can look at his image in a world he created. Therefore when alienated labour tears from man the object of his production, it also tears from him his species-life, the real objectivity of his species and turns the advantage he has over animals into a disadvantage in that his inorganic body, nature, is torn from him.²²

Man has a nature, an essence. In *Capital*, Marx openly declares his view on human nature.

²² Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 91

To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to the man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.²³

Although he underlines the fact that man definitely has a nature or essence, he never assumes this essence to be an unhistorical or abstract one. Marx's concept of man can be represented in a two- dimensional structure:

- I. Man as a socialized species- being.
- II. Man having potentialities awaiting to be realized, to be actualized and completed in nature through *human praxis*.

Marx's conception of man's nature is a conjunction of these two dimensions. When "nature" refers to rather embedded and static needs and inclinations of man, his being social in essence cancels out the abstraction of nature from historic and social conditions and necessarily conditions his nature to be constantly changing and being in a continuous growing relationship with other men through *human praxis*. Man finds himself in human action; with his community.

The animal is immediately one with its life activity; it is that activity. Man takes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life activity directly distinguishes man from animal life

²³ *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol.1.Part 1, 2007, 668*

activity. Only because of that is he a species-being.²⁴

Man's ability to work, to change and develop has ended up with a very specific historical condition: accumulation of productive forces. This historical phenomenon led to another critical one: class society. The surplus that the society has managed to produce, ended up favoring one class over the others. One class has become free of the pressure of daily work as it has won the control over others' labour and products. This specific development meant that the producers would not control their own products, their labour and the very process of production. This is the specific domain where Marx positions his alienation theory.

E.2 Types of Alienation for Marx

In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx defines four specific types of alienation that are specific to the capitalist mode of production.

E.2.1 One's alienation from his own product

The worker is alienated from his own product as he has to supply it to somebody else to own and to consume, namely to the capitalist. Throughout history, man has produced and created objects either to consume or to exchange. However under the mode of capitalism, worker has lost direct access and influence on his very own product.

Product alienation gets more intense as the worker gets paid less than he

²⁴ Karl Marx, *A Reader, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 1986, 41

produces. The value that he creates is robbed off from him and transferred to the capitalist. Worker earns wage or salary as he transfers all his creative power to the capitalist. The creative power with its products is lost forever.

. . . the alienation of the worker means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently of him and alien to him, and begins to confront him as an autonomous power; that the life which he has bestowed on the object confronts him as hostile and alien'.²⁵

For Marx this is a mode that is specific to capitalism. The more worker produces, poorer he gets. As the totality of the goods that are produced gets bigger, value of the worker diminishes.

E.2.2 One's alienation from labour process

The second type of alienation signifies the lack of control over production process itself. Workers have no discretion on the conditions and principles of their working regimen. The lack of control over production ends up tainting man's capacity to work as an active, creative and potent agent. His life-generating activity is stolen from him.

Factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost; it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity... The special skill of each individual insignificant factory operative vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity before the science, the gigantic physical forces, and mass of labour that are

²⁵ Karl Marx, *A Reader, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 1986, 38*

embodied in the factory mechanism and, together, with that mechanism, constitute the power of the master.²⁶

Capitalism disciplines whole of resources, space, duration, performance standards around the production cycle in entirety and transforms the subjective element of work into commodity.

E.2.3 One's alienation from his fellow men

For Marx, this type of alienation rises due to the class structure that is formed by capitalism. Worker inevitably estranges from the class which lays hand on his labour.

So if he relates to the product of his labour, his objectified labour, as to an object that is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent master of this object. If he to his own activity as to something unfree, it is a relationship to an activity that is under domination, oppression, and yoke of another man.²⁷

Class structure and the specific form that we produce and exchange value enforce a specific form of living which does not promote equality, on the contrary causes a hierarchical society structure. In everyday relations, men do not see and perceive each other as fellow men, but as a representative of the class one belongs and the specific work that one does. Men are confined in a sphere which is defined by profit; every other man is either superior or subordinate to one another.

E.2.4 One's alienation from his species-specific character

²⁶ *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol.1.Part 1, 2007, 462*

²⁷ *Karl Marx, Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, p.93*

The fourth type of alienation is man's alienation from his species-specific character. The character that is specific to man is his capacity to work on and change his world. However under capitalism, work loses its relevance with man's immediate needs, wants and inclinations.

It is true that labour produces marvels for the rich, but it produces privation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It procures beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labour by machines, but it casts some of the workers back into barbarous forms of labour and turns others into machines. It produces intelligence, but it produces idiocy and cretinism for the worker.²⁸

Human beings being social in essence, have the inclination to work for the collective good. However under capitalism, this inclination is erased by private ownership. Man is no longer provided with sufficient means to plan for the common good of his community. Profit is the only means and measure to foresee and plan what to produce.

E.3 Commodity Fetishism

Marx discusses the concept of alienation in terms of labour in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. In *Capital*, he discusses alienation in terms of its economic dimensions.

He introduces this concept in Section Four, the Fetishism of Commodities. Marx describes commodity as an external object that is product of human labour which answers the needs of man in one way or another. Fetishism of Commodities occurs when these objects relate with one another and human race in general as if

²⁸ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, 1975, 325

they are independent. This definition strongly resonates with *Manuscripts* and the discussion around alienation of labour. Both man's alienation from his own product and fetishism of commodities occur when man's own products of labour are perceived and experienced as independent beings.

Marx suggests that commodities have a "mystical character" which consists of two processes working together. One, the organic and social character of the human labour transforming into an objective character and losing its essence; second, the relations that have to be established between fellow men increasingly turning into relations between objects.

Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, so soon as it assumes the form of a commodity? Clearly from this form itself. The equality of the kinds of human labour takes on a physical form in the equal objectivity of the products of labour as values; the measure of the expenditure of human labour-power by its duration takes on the form of the magnitude of the value of the products of labour; and finally the relationships between the producers, within which the social characteristics of their labours are manifested, take on the form of a social relation between the products of labour.²⁹

Marx argues that when the product itself earns a value for itself, the process of labour loses its essence as an end itself and turns into a mere means to an end. This argument immediately resonates with the discussion about man's alienation from his species-specific character. Man's species-character is his organic symbiosis with work process; he actualizes himself by working. Once this process loses its character as an end itself, it ends up alienating man from his species-specific character.

²⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital, Selected Writings*, 473

The second aspect of enigmatic character of commodities resonates with the concept of man alienating from his fellow men.

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour.³⁰

As Marx clearly suggests, as the product is perceived to have a value apart from the worker, the work itself; and as the labour is reduced to a commodity, the relation between men leaves its place to relation between commodities.

As the core of the argument about the commodity is “value”, Marx continues to define “value” in detail. Value, also, is composed of two aspects. One is use-value and the second one is exchange-value. Use value means that the product should satisfy a particular need and want of men, while exchange value means that all the products of labour are represented on a common ground by their exchangeabilities.

On the one hand, it must, as a definite useful kind of labour, satisfy a definite social want, and thus hold its place as part and parcel of the collective labour of all, as a branch of a social division of labour that has sprung up spontaneously. On the other hand, it can satisfy the manifold wants of the individual producer himself, only in so far as the mutual exchangeability of all kinds of useful private labour is an established social fact, and therefore the private useful labour of each producer ranks on an

³⁰ *Ibid*

equality with that of all others.³¹

Exchange value characterizes the type of alienation that estranges man from the process of work. When man as worker gives consent to the exchange of different kinds of labour via an exchange value, he also loses the differentiating essence of particular labour process. For Marx, exchange value implies that various kinds of labour, product and work are all same with one another. As the product is reduced to exchange value it is robbed off from the worker.

E.4 Private Property

So far we have analyzed Marx's view of alienated labour and displayed the conditions that rip labour off from its real owner. Following that, Marx continues and questions to whom this ripped off labour belongs. Since the activity does not belong to worker himself and is alien to him, to whom does it belong then?

The alien being to whom the labour and the product of the labour belongs, whom the labour serves and who enjoys its product, can only be man himself. If the product of labour does not belong to the worker but stands over against him as an alien power, this is only possible in that it belongs to another man apart from the worker.³²

Worker, by creating a value that does not belong to himself, also creates another sort of man who adopts his very own production. In the modern organization of the economy, this man is the capitalist. And private property is the externalized

³¹ *Ibid*, 474

³² Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 92

and alienated labour that gets transferred to the capitalist. And thus, private property is the concrete manifestation of alienated labour and its product, alienated life and alienated man.

Thus through alienated, externalized labour the worker creates the relationship to this labour of a man who is alien to it and remains exterior to it. The relationship of the worker to his labour creates the relationship to it of the capitalist, or whatever else one wishes to call the master of the labour. Private property is thus the product, result, and the necessary consequence of externalized labour, of the exterior relationship of the worker to nature and to himself.³³

Yet, in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx does not suggest a direct abolition of property to overcome alienation but the abolition of private, in other words, bourgeois property. He compares the true sense of communism with 'crude' communism. Crude communism is a transitory stage before true and complete communism is established. Thus in it, the capitalist and the property still exist but in a universal form. Everyone works for wage so the form of working has not vanished but has been extended to all men.

Marx criticizes this crude version of communism as it fails to understand the nature of history and man. First, loyal to Hegelian conception of history, Marx does not suggest erasing or negating a particular state of history and its conditions. As Hegel does, he suggests that the coming state of communism has to sublimate its prior state and grow out of it by still containing and transforming its conditions. And second, this version of communism neglects the nature of man. Modern man is now the beneficiary of the culture and civilization that has been built and formed throughout the history. Man has reached a level of refined choices and needs and

³³ *Ibid*, 93

suggesting a new form of life which denies this loses its touch with the modern man.

By systematically denying the personality of man this communism is merely the consistent expression of private property which is this negation. [...] How little this abolition of private property constitutes a real appropriation is proved by the abstract negation of the whole world of culture and civilization, a regression to the unnatural simplicity of the poor man without any needs who has not even arrived at the stage of private property, let alone got beyond it.³⁴

Marx, after criticizing mechanisms that capitalism infuses on human lives, introduces the possibility of abolishing these mechanisms. He signifies the potentiality of “proletariat” to liberate itself from mechanisms and pathologies of capitalism as the leap through the continuation of the process of man becoming his perfection. Therefore proletariat is the receptacle of the growth of both itself and the whole humanity. Proletariat grows in class consciousness to abolish classes and to introduce a possibility of a community without classes and which is evolving through its own perfect state. Class consciousness is the re-union of human praxis and human essence and also a re-union of fellow men as a community.

The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour. This is not possible without the community. Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal

³⁴ *Ibid*, 96

freedom possible.³⁵

E.5 Overcoming Alienation

Marx suggests that the essence of true communism does not simply deny conditions that are prior to it. On the contrary, it sublates them in a dialectical manner and reappropriates them. Authentic communism is necessarily a state that is a development of prior states.

Thirdly, there is communism as the positive abolition of private property and thus of human self-alienation and therefore the real reappropriation of the human essence by and for man. This is communism as the complete and conscious return of man conserving all the riches of previous development for man himself as a social, i.e. human being.³⁶

Although, Marx, intentionally writes so little about how life would be under true sense of communism, in some of his early writings, a kindle of inspiration can be caught. He comments on how the emancipation of labour would restore human vitality.

Each of us would have... affirmed himself and his neighbor in his production... Our productions would be as many mirrors from which our nature would shine forth. This relationship would be mutual: what applies to me would also apply to you: My labour would be the free expression and hence the enjoyment of life... Moreover, in my labour the specific character of my individuality would be affirmed because it would be my individual life.

³⁵ Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, 1970, 83

³⁶ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, 2000, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 97

Labour would be authentic, active, property.³⁷

Hereon, we can discuss how freedom is shaped in Marx's thought and how work has a central role in it.

For Marx, work is not condemned to be a forced and compulsory and alienated activity. On the contrary, in the future society, it will be a liberating and emancipating activity. This is a clear point he makes in *Capital*.

The realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane consideration ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. [...] Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with the realm of necessity as its basis.³⁸

There are two concepts that rise out this paragraph; realms of 'necessity' and 'freedom' that we need to discuss further to better understand how work is centralized in Marx's discussion of freedom.

Realm of necessity calls for the type of labour that is necessary to sustain and

³⁷ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, 1975, p.277-8

³⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 1971, Progress Publishers, 820

reproduce life. And Marx clearly states that realm of freedom is a space where this kind of labour ceases to exist so that essential time and space for activities that are not that practical in nature, find an opportunity to thrive.

According to Marx, work is a fundamental manifestation of human nature as a species-being as we have already discussed before. Through work, we come to recognize ourselves as species-being as we realize our capacities through human-activities. Through work a dialectical process runs, which simultaneously aparts us from Nature as it is, but also builds a new world in which we feel at home. Work is more than a means to satisfy immediate needs but is an activity enabling self-realization and development.

For this kind of work to thrive, alienation must be overthrown from the process of production. Production process must be regulated and be under control of the people. It must be intelligently organized so that it would require the minimum level of energy and time. What Marx suggests here is that, production process must be engineered by intelligence and science. This will create the essential time for men to employ in free activities and step in the realm of freedom.

The surplus labour of the mass has ceased to be the condition for the development of general wealth, just as the non-labour of the few, for the development of the general powers of the human head. With that, production based on exchange value breaks down, and the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis. The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather 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.³⁹

We have touched upon two critical concepts that constitute essentials of Marx's critique of capitalist mode of production, namely; 'division of labour' and 'private property'. Marx suggests that these two are identical expressions of one and same thing, one referring to the activity itself and the other referring to the product of the activity.

In Grundrisse he analyses how these two critical concepts boil up and lead to revolution and how revolution liberates living from its ruined and disabling mechanisms. Communism is envisaged by Marx as a re-organization of economic and social institutions which will restore man's relationship with his very own labour as life activity and with his fellow men. Therefore in communism, division of labour and private property are thrown away to liberate man from fixed stations and duties that he is condemned to. In communism man is entitled to have and perform various life activities and to develop universal capacities. Although all the previous revolutions were basically trying to reorganize division of property and labour, communist revolution is directed to abolish them and raise a classless society.

In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognized as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of

³⁹ Karl Marx, 1973, *Grundrisse*, 705-6)

all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society.⁴⁰

For Marx, communist revolution rises due to two factors reaching their maturity. One, an 'intolerable' power raises leaving masses of people propertyless while it also creates massive amount of wealth and culture and continuously strengthens this opposition and contradiction. And two, this power creates a world-historic stage and inevitably unites all the propertyless masses together and creates a universal class.

Communism sublates conditions that are prior to it and washes away the present state of things. The new rising union of men and the new formation of world-historical stage reconcile man with powers that were once hostile and alien to him.

This appropriation is further determined by the manner in which it must be effected. It can only be effected through a union, which by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a universal one, and through a revolution, in which, on the one hand, the power of the earlier mode of production and intercourse and social organization is overthrown, and, on the other hand, there develops the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, without which the revolution cannot be accomplished; and in which, further, the proletariat rids itself of everything that still clings to it from its previous position in society.⁴¹

In communist society man is no longer alien to his own labour and his own products. He is no longer oppressed by alien powers. Once the division of labour is overcome, man becomes one with his life activity and realizes his universal capacities in full. Universal man transcends alienation and division of labour and realizes himself in his work. He is no longer separated from the world and his

⁴⁰ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Grundrisse*, 195

⁴¹ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Grundrisse*, 196

essence as species being.

Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting-off of all natural limitations. The transformation of labour into self-activity corresponds to the transformation of the earlier limited intercourse into the intercourse of individuals as such. With the appropriation of the total productive forces through united individuals, private property comes to an end.⁴²

Marx's philosophy is one that is in pursuit of "rational freedom"; of a fully developed human life that is in harmony with man's capacities; his relations with nature and with his fellow men. To develop a context to enable conditions of a free communal life he offers a thorough analysis of capitalist form of production as he signifies capitalism as the biggest vitiating factor against man's self-realization within society due to the pathologies it causes in both planes of individual and collective consciousness. For Marx, human agency is blocked and perverted by a series of processes of capitalist mode of production and it can only redeem itself as these processes are annihilated.

Capital, therefore, is organized to offer a thorough critique of capitalism. It is structured to deal everyday categories of capitalism such as commodity, wage, production processes to reveal their connection to perversion and exploitation of human capacities. He evaluates capitalism to offer a context to emancipate man from its distorting mechanisms so that man will grasp his species-specific character which is leading a rational, free life by realizing his full vital potential with the company of

⁴² Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Grundrisse*, 195

his fellow men.

F. Conclusion

F.1 Marx's Critique of Hegel's Understanding of Alienation

Marx, while he utilizes the very nature of Hegel's processual and social understanding of history of man, presents an immense critique of Hegel in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. There are three major critiques that Marx directs to Hegel:

- a) Reducing man to self-consciousness and activity to Spirit's labour
- b) Failing to utilize whole positive potential of alienation
- c) Confusing objectification with alienation

Marx, praises Hegel for introducing the concept of "self-creation of man" as an historical process and also for considering "labour" as a central force in this process. In that sense Hegel's and Marx's dialectical approach and their insistence that man's conscious activity is central to it are the most significant similarities they have.

Although Marx grants the profoundness of Hegel's analysis of picturing man as an end of historical and material processes, he criticizes his position as he suggests that Hegel treats all this process to be a work of Spirit. For Marx, man as a natural being is equipped with material powers and he employs his capacities to work on material processes of the world. This position also defines his understanding of alienation. For him, alienation is not self-consciousness' alienating from his object as Hegel suggests. He condemns this idea because this principle suggests that object loses its independent character and collapses into the subject.

The main point is that the object of consciousness is nothing else but self-consciousness, or that the object is only objectified self-consciousness—

self-consciousness as object. (Positing of man = self-consciousness).

It is necessary therefore to overcome the objects of consciousness. Objectivity as such is considered to be an alien not fitting man's nature and self-consciousness. Thus the reappropriation of the objective essence of man, which was produced as something alien and determined by alienation, not only implies the transcendence of alienation, but also of objectivity. This means that man is regarded as a non-objective, spiritual being.⁴³

For him, this view suggests that alienation is an attitude of the consciousness and it has all its context within the consciousness and not within the conditions of the material world. For Marx, this view castrates all the possibilities of the real world which has and feeds the conditions of estrangement. It robs man off his powers and capacities to transform the very conditions that cause alienation.

In *the Phenomenology*, therefore, despite the thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the fact that its criticism is genuine and often well ahead of its time, the uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works, the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the empirical world, is already to be found in latent form.⁴⁴

For Marx, Hegel's position suggests that the material conditions that cause alienation can only be annihilated by and in consciousness. Such conditions and their negative character are first recognized and then sublated by consciousness.

This discussion by Marx suggests that Hegel deals with objectivity just as an abstraction and consciousness' reconciliation with it implies a change in the consciousness but not a transformation of the object. Marx suggests that Hegel's

⁴³ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, 2000, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 110

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 108

point necessitates alienation to be immanent to consciousness and for that matter overcoming it, is an uncritical and unproductive activity. For Marx, since alienation takes place in the material conditions of the concrete world, overcoming it is not a philosophical activity but must be a revolutionary activity with the objective of transforming the conditions that give way to it.

Here we can forward our gaze to Hegel's point to better understand whether what Marx suggests is doing justice to his stand. In Hegel's conception, does the object lose its independent character and collapse into subject? The case is almost the contrary. As we have done a detailed analysis of *the Phenomenology of Spirit*, we found out that the whole journey of the consciousness, all the stages it has gone through, showed us in what specific ways the consciousness privileged either the subjective or the objective aspects of itself and failed to grasp the whole of its truth. The whole point of phenomenological journey is for consciousness to establish reconciliation between objectivity and subjectivity. Marx does not seem to give justice to this very crucial point of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. For Hegel consciousness is not a pure subject which faces an alien world, it is a living synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity. For Hegel, alienation specifically occurs when consciousness fails to recognize this synthesis between the object and itself. As long as it comprehends itself to be prior to and free from the object, it is alienated. As we have examined in a very detailed fashion, *the Phenomenology of Spirit* is a demonstration of these various states of specific forms of alienation.

Most of this discussion has its roots in Marx suggesting that Hegel equates objectification with alienation. Marx claims that, for Hegel, man objectifying himself, is in distinction from absolute thought and in that sense, every form of objectifying ends up in alienation.

The whole history of externalization and the whole recovery of this

externalization is therefore nothing but the history of the production of abstract, i.e. absolute, thought-logical, speculative thought. Alienation, which thus forms the real interest of this externalization and its supersession is the opposition inside thought itself of the implicit and the explicit, of consciousness and self-consciousness, of object and subject, that is, it is the opposition inside thought itself of abstract thought and sensuous reality or real sensuous experience.⁴⁵

Marx begins with praising Hegel and *Phenomenology* as for him *Phenomenology* grasps the estrangement of man and all the critical elements of human life that causes estrangement. He rightly understands that for Hegel alienation has a positive significance and that Hegel is not opposed to objectification or the element of estrangement that it leads to. On the contrary he understands that Hegel sees objectification and the estrangement that it causes as essential for Spirit to realize itself. This is for him the positive moment of the Hegelian dialectic.

It is now time to formulate the positive aspects of the Hegelian dialectic within the realm of estrangement.

Supersession as an objective movement of retracting the alienation into self. This is the insight, expressed within the estrangement, concerning the appropriation of the objective essence through the supersession of its estrangement; it is the estranged insight into the real objectification of man, into the real appropriation of his objective essence through the annihilation of the estranged character of the objective world, through the supersession of the objective world in its estranged mode of being.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 108

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 116

Marx suggests that although in a mystified form what Hegel achieves here is to grasp man's self-estrangement as self-objectification and realization. However, Marx, roots his understanding of alienation in the sphere of production relations and suggests that Hegel sees it in the sphere of Spirit's diremption from the objective realm. He suggests that for Hegel, Spirit must express itself through an otherness. This other negates Spirit in return and until Spirit starts to know itself in this other and grasps the totality of the knowledge of itself in the otherness, the alienation endures. Marx, suggests and criticizes Hegel as this moment for him is an inverted cycle that preserves all the conditions that cause the estrangement in the first place. Marx is very critical of this point.

Thus reason is at home in unreason as unreason as such. The man, who has recognized that he has been leading an alienated life in law, politics, etc., is leading his true human life in this externalized life as such. Thus the true knowledge and the true life is the self-affirmation and self-contradiction in contradiction with itself and with the knowledge and the nature of the object.⁴⁷

For Marx, that is the point that causes Hegel's philosophy to be conservative and causes it to comply with all the critical aspects of human life as it is. Marx thinks that Hegel fails to utilize full positive potential of his own philosophy and does not explore true character of it.

In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of the true being through the negation of apparent being. It is the confirmation of apparent being or self-alienated being in its denial or the denial of this apparent being as a being dwelling outside man and independent of him, its transformation into a subject.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 115

Therefore supersession plays a very particular role in which negation and conservation are united.⁴⁸

Marx, by integrating acclaimed problem of estrangement to the equation concludes that Hegel's philosophy does not promise an actual abolition of the conditions that cause alienation. Spirit explores itself through negation and realizes itself in the negation of the negation. And therefore, for Marx, this negation of negation does not give way to a positive development in the physical realm; it is a vicious cycle of negation that is trapped in estrangement.

Supersession as an objective movement of retracting the alienation into self. This is the insight, expressed within the estrangement, concerning the appropriation of the objective essence through the supersession of its estrangement; it is the estranged insight into the real objectification of man, into the real appropriation of his objective essence through the annihilation of the estranged character of the objective world, through the supersession of the objective world in its estranged mode of being. (...)

Only through the supersession of this mediation—which is itself, however, a necessary premise—does positively self-deriving humanism, positive humanism, come into being.⁴⁹

Marx says that Hegel's method does not go far enough. It is abstract, it is conservative and it is stuck. It does not represent or realize the true developmental character of man's history.

Marx, takes the case with atheism to demonstrate the limitations of Hegel's method. He claims that the issue with atheism is its still being defined by theism. He

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 115

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 116-117

discusses that atheism, to assert the existence of man, denies the existence of God and this attitude necessarily bounds it with God, as if man is opposed to God. The same relation goes with communism and private property. Communism is the negation of private property. Marx suggests that these two, atheism and communism are forms of humanism that are mediated by superseding their opposites. Therefore true and positive character of humanism will be revealed only when this mediation itself is superseded.

He suggests that Hegel does not even come this far and he does not even explore the possibilities of negation itself. He does not confirm the true being in the negation as atheism or communism does. What he does is confirming the character of estrangement in negation.

These allegations seem to overlook Spirit's historic and developmental character. Marx, claims that Hegel's negation of negation is trapped in a continuous condition of estrangement and end up with Spirit coming to terms with its estranging opposite. However this happens to be not true. Spirit does not come to terms with what is actual and alienating; it comes to terms with what it has grasped knowledge of, what has changed itself and what it has acted on. This necessarily implies that Spirit feels at home with itself, or with the external expressions of itself as these expressions become more and more accurate and satisfactory representations of itself. The process is developmental. Phenomenology is by all means is a very detailed and profound analysis of these phases and developments. To overlook Spirit's historic and developmental character suggests that it comprehends and understands the alien character of its external manifestations and reconciles with the fact of their being alienated. However, on the contrary, Spirit acts on this understanding. Its manifestations become less and less alienating through progress.

For Hegel, alienation is the mechanism that leads consciousness to march to

more mature and profound stages of itself, therefore it is the mechanism through which Spirit reaches the truth of itself. Alienation is prevalent through all forms of consciousness, as their main character is consciousness' failure to understand the unity between finity and infinity; universality and particularity.

Marx accuses Hegel of treating objectification and alienation as one. He suggests that as Hegel becomes uncritical of this element of estrangement, he becomes uncritical of the conditions that cause it and loses the essence of the very precious achievements of objectification. For him this is the core of Hegel's false positivism.

For Marx, Hegel denies to distinguish self-objectification and self-estrangement as he is loyal to his bourgeois standpoint and thus this standpoint necessitates alienation and objectification to be one and the same thing. He claims that to distinguish these two will immediately call for an action beyond bourgeois status quo. To sustain this passivity Hegel depends on the potential of "sublation".

Now, I will again focus on Hegel to figure out whether Marx is justified with his claims against him.

Hegel suggests that the process of self-externalization develops self-understanding of the consciousness. But this process necessitates consciousness to adopt an appropriate attitude towards externalization. It must think of this process to be a positive one, meaning that it must be willing to lose some of its essence as it has to allow the object to influence and alter it and what it knew to be true. It has to change its attitude of taking the object to be apart and distant from itself and it has to identify itself with the object that it has produced. If it achieves that, it comes to realize that the object is not an alien entity that is opposed to it but is an expression of itself. But if consciousness externalizes itself and fails to recognize itself in its own creation, it will perceive it as opposed to itself and it will fail to recognize its true

character as being a living unity of objectivity and subjectivity.

Hegel uses the term estrangement (Entfremdung) specifically to explain the split that consciousness experiences as it becomes aware of itself and yet simultaneously becomes unable to recognize itself in the objective realm that it has built itself. Estrangement is due to the fact that consciousness fails to recognize itself in the other, not that the other is external to it. Externalization, in that respect, occurs through earlier stages of Spirit's journey, way before estrangement does and it has positive connotations as it enables Spirit to express itself. Hegel thinks that through the interaction between consciousness and the material world and not through dissolution of objectivity, consciousness realizes itself. Therefore for Hegel overcoming alienation is not collapsing the object into the subject but consciousness' realizing its integrity with it.

In this specific discussion we can assert that there is some sort of discrepancy in Marx's point of view. By assuming that objectivity calls for man's practical appropriation, Marx seems to overlook the interpenetration of consciousness and action. As for Hegel, Spirit never is confined in a passive contemplation; on the contrary it acts in the context of its knowledge. For him, it is a continuous knowledge-action cycle that develops the Spirit, not an action-less contemplation.

I tried to demonstrate the three most significant critiques that Marx offers to discuss Hegel's methodology and understanding of alienation.

To sum up; the points that I think that he overlooked and that I discussed in detail are:

- a) For Hegel consciousness is not a pure subject which faces an alien world, it is a living synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity. For Hegel, alienation

specifically occurs when consciousness fails to recognize this synthesis between the object and itself. As long as it comprehends itself to be prior to and free from the object, it is alienated. As we have examined in a very detailed fashion, whole work of Phenomenology of Spirit is a demonstration of these various states of specific forms of alienation.

- b) Spirit does not come to terms with what is actual and alienating; it comes to terms with what it has grasped knowledge of, what has changed itself and what it has acted on. This necessarily implies that Spirit feels at home with itself, or with the external expressions of itself as these expressions become more and more accurate and satisfactory representations of itself. The process is developmental.
- c) Hegel uses the term estrangement (*Entfremdung*) specifically to explain the split that consciousness experiences as it becomes aware of itself and yet simultaneously becomes unable to recognize itself in the objective realm that it has built itself. Estrangement is due to the fact that consciousness fails to recognize itself in the other, not that the other is external to it. Externalization, in that respect, occurs through earlier stages of Spirit's journey, way before estrangement does and it has positive connotations as it enables Spirit to express itself.

F.2 Common Goal of Hegel and Marx in Their Conception of Alienation

Both Hegel and Marx conceive man as a social and historical entity, necessarily determined by conditions of his time. They both oppose to Enlightenment philosophers' conception of man, as an atom who is dissociated from society.

For Hegel, each individual is an expression of Spirit as Spirit is the logic behind

the whole of Nature and history. Spirit as it is historical and social and man as an articulation of it; are in a mutual determination. Marx, also conceptualizes man as a social being, necessarily determined by his society's conditions.

Their handling of man, society, history as well as their accounts of alienation as a process which has to be overcome to achieve a free and communal life have substantial commonalities.

They both have a processual understanding of man and his society. Their social theories can be articulated as "self-realization within human sociality". This articulation implies two critical principles simultaneously. Man is social by essence; he needs to actualize himself by his activities still within his community. This realization is not a static reality that can be attained, on the contrary, it is a dynamic and continuous actuality of man's existence. This understanding refers to "processual", "progressive" and "dialectical" understanding of history of man. In that sense, man is not just a social being in essence but also a "product" of social-historic processes, relations and institutions. Man is free, only if he acts, creates and contemplates; surrounded by his fellow men and by social structures that enable and support free, active and communal life. Both their accounts of alienation and its elimination are to ensure freedom as such; an emancipated and free communal life.

Marx, as Hegel does, thinks that alienation is a moment in history and that the conditions to overcome it also rests in the possibilities of history. They both think that man overcomes his diremption from the world he inhabits by working on and by appropriating it. Work, for both of them, is one very significant feature that distinguishes man from other animals. They present the idea that the relationship between animals and the nature is immediate, they instantly consume the object of their wants and needs whereas man builds the material and intellectual conditions that he feels at home. Contemplative and material productive activity eliminates

alienation as it enables man to comprehend, understand and appropriate the conditions of the World he lives and gives way to an un-alienated, true, free life.

Marx, openly praises Hegel for his exploration of “work” as a central and fundamental feature of free and productive life.

Therefore the greatness of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and its final product, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle, is on the one hand that Hegel conceives of the self- creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as externalization and the transcendence of this externalization. This means, therefore, that he grasps the nature of labour and understands objective man, true, because real, man as the result of his own labour.⁵⁰

Hegel, indeed takes work to be utmost importance as a descriptive quality of human life. Man’s species-specific character for him is his consciousness which manifests itself by work. Man, realizes his true character by duplicating himself.

Man is a thinking consciousness. . . . Things in nature are only immediate and single, while man . . . duplicates [verdoppelt] himself, in that (i) he is as things in nature are, but (ii) he is just as much for himself; he sees himself, represents himself to himself, thinks.⁵¹

As man works on the world to change and appropriate it, he also becomes more alienated from it, he separates himself from the world that he inherited by continuously forming it anew. This chasm grows as he becomes more and more in

⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 109

⁵¹ G.W.F.Hegel 1975, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 76

the know of himself as opposed to an objective world. But work continues to be his means to further discover and restore his relationship with the world by overcoming this very division that was caused by work. In Hegel, work functions in two simultaneous ways; transforming the world while also transforming man himself.

..impregnates the external world with his will. Thereby he humanizes his environment, by showing how it is capable of satisfying him and how it cannot preserve any power of independence against him. Only by means of this effectual activity is he no longer merely in general, but also in particular and in detail, actually aware of himself and at home in his environment.⁵²

Marx, almost exactly inherits this notion of work and its dual functionality.

..Thus it is in the working over the objective world that man first really affirms himself as a species-being. This production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of work is therefore the objectification of the species-life of man; for he duplicates himself not only intellectually, in his mind, but also actively in reality and thus can look at his image in a world he has created.⁵³

For both Hegel and Marx, as one can see, work is the cause for man to separate and alienate himself from his world as it is also the means to overcome this diremption. For Marx, as we have discussed in very much detail, under the conditions of alienation, work loses its life-producing capacity as it loses its vital bond to the producer himself. As opposed to confirming oneself in one's work, he loses

⁵² G.W.F.Hegel 1975, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*,256

⁵³ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*,109

himself in it. For Hegel, work is also a process of objectification; alienation and finally of elimination of alienation, a process of historical human development.

For both Hegel and Marx, freedom means the restoration of man and his world; his work, his relationships with his fellow men as he realizes and organizes his vital, productive capacities.

Both their understanding takes man to be not only social in nature but also a product of social and institutional structures. For both, consciousness is also a product of this developmental process.

Marx, in his social and economic theories takes this notion of man shaped and structured by social and economic relations to be central. Man is an aggregation of various processes some of which are latent and some of which are visible; education, organization of production, laws, customs and so on.

For Hegel, too, man is deeply connected to the conditions of his world as well as he has the capacity to form and change it. Hegel thinks that freedom is man's reaching a level of consciousness which will enable him to feel at home with himself. This, for Hegel, is only possible with a double process which will transform man himself and his world simultaneously. Man has to develop his inner rational capacities and has to mirror and duplicate his rationality in the outer realm so that the world that he inhabits by all the social, economic and juridical structures will make sense to him and will nest the conditions for a fully rational life. Freedom for Hegel is not freely found in the world; it has to be achieved by theoretical and practical activities complied with Reason. This also is central to his notion of alienation. Man will only overcome his split from the objective realm when his inner capacities and the world that he forms will comply with Reason. In that sense freedom is always Reason in activity. Freedom is man's self-realization. But we cannot stress enough that this realization is never an individual endeavor for man and this is the most

significant heritage that Marx owes to Hegel: Freedom (as opposed to conception of Enlightenment philosophers) cannot be achieved alone or under social conditions that run counter to it. For Hegel, rational man, has to develop his own consciousness, to reflect and realize it through the social and cultural institutions.

For Hegel, as Reason is binding the whole existence, to overcome alienating and foreign elements of the objective realm, man has to discover what is rational about it. As we have discussed in detail this is the essence of the *Phenomenology*. Spirit manifests itself as it develops and evolves to more advanced planes only to turn foreign elements into perceived, then understood and finally into known concepts. Alienation is overcome only when man with Reason lives in a world which is also constituted with Reason and as he realizes his embeddedness in it. In that sense Hegel's concept of consciousness is not individualistic but a plane at which knowledge of oneself and knowledge of outer realm collide and co-exist. This is the moment that real freedom manifests itself; the moment that the knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of the objective realm are confirmed by the World. Absolute knowledge is an active and continuous interdetermination of the concepts that we use to understand the world and their being validated by the actual truth of the objects. Hegel's Absolute Knowledge is not a collection of facts but a realization and actualization of knowledge. This is a very profound development and invention as it suggests that Reason is not to be found but to be developed and actualized.

This will also be a corner stone to Marx's understanding of man and history. Marx, just as Hegel does, pursues a full and complete human life which has overcome alienation that infringes man's theoretical and practical capacities.

Their common objective is free and unalienated form of life in which interpenetrated capacities to know and to act are emancipated. For Marx, material conditions of existing society puts limitations on and causes perversion of vital

capacities of man. For him, the reason that human life is alienated is the material conditions of social organization and the way to overcome it is to throw these very conditions themselves. The collectivity of economic, social, juridical and social realities aggregate and form a certain kind of man. As this man who is a product of these very conditions gives his consent and validates these conditions, they endure and further develop their power over man. As man is determined and limited by material mechanisms, he lacks the conditions to grow critical capacities to understand his entrapment within them. This is the reason Marx offers a critique of this material organization of society and advocates to overthrow it to offer a new context of conditions for man to continue developing himself.

As he agrees with Hegel on the concept of man being developed and determined by the conditions of society, Marx distinguishes his position as he suggests that the very conditions that define the limits of consciousness must be overthrown to emancipate man. As we discussed earlier, Marx thinks that Hegel limits the potentialities of his own method and philosophy as he suggests that Hegel prioritizes consciousness over material labour. As for him, Hegel sees history with all its material conditions as a process of Spirit and for that matter undermines the shaping, developing and restructuring capacities of man and his labour. As he praises Hegel for revealing labour as a developmental and progressive power, he criticizes him for not acknowledging its revolutionary capacity to overthrow the limitations which shape, determine and alienate consciousness itself.

What Marx criticized most in Hegel, particularly concerning "alienation" is, Hegel's seeing alienation as an ontological character of Spirit. For him, Spirit is alienated until it reaches full knowledge of itself and becomes free. This handling of alienation takes it to be essential as unpleasant and disturbing. Spirit, first, will objectify and externalize itself and will get alienated from itself and later will find its reconciliation with its object to overcome alienation and to be free.

Marx criticizes this handling of the matter suggesting that as it is only an act of thought and as all forms of alienation are various forms of consciousness. He argues that Spirit or any sort of transcendent form is also an invention and creation of man. Therefore what he suggests is to reverse the relationship between the subject and the predicate to redeem true potential of Hegel's dialectic. For him, alienation is not an abstract mechanism that happens in the realm of mind, on the contrary, it is a condition that is created and must be overcome by the very hands of real men. It must be understood by avoiding the mystification that is caused by Spirit and must be analyzed by grasping the very materialistic conditions of human life, conditions and relations that emerge out of production relations. In this context, alienation that occurs in relation to and as a consequence of production relations has a negative character to it, not a positive essence as Hegel discussed. Marx accuses Hegel being uncritical and loyal to his bourgeois heritage. He claims that since for Hegel, human essence is self-consciousness, the alienation is caused by it and must be appropriated through an inverted movement of consciousness. For him Hegel becomes uncritical of this process as he accepts alienating objectification as a necessity for Spirit to actualize itself.

As we have discussed in the previous section, this is rather a limited interpretation of Hegel's understanding of Spirit and its final stage, Absolute Knowledge. Hegel does not prioritize consciousness over activity; subjectivity over objectivity or universal over particular. His understanding of Absolute Knowledge, the stage where alienation is overcome is not a stage where subjectivity swallows objectivity or where particular collapses into universal or where there is an actionless consciousness which makes peace with the alienating conditions of the outer realm. Quite the contrary, Absolute Knowledge is a stage where the subject and the object

collide to be one by keeping their distinctiveness; where consciousness actualizes and realizes itself in the outer realm, where consciousness' concepts of truth are actually and continuously validated by the objective. It is a stage where alienation is overcome not because consciousness makes peace with it but because consciousness realizes and actualizes Reason and builds all the social, economic, juridical conditions and institutions that will mirror the Reason that it has developed. Alienation is overcome when the consciousness has unveiled the Reason in itself and also has built an outer realm that is in accord with Reason as well.

Despite their differences especially concerning the methodology; both Hegel and Marx envisaged an unalienated, emancipated form of life in which man has become true to his species-specific character with his everyday life, his work, his consciousness, his relationships with other men and at which he has collected and resurrected his capacities to form and organize political, social, juridical institutions which will support his full and free form of life.

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