

# Intelligent Materialism

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# Intelligent Materialism

*Essays on Hegel and Dialectics*

*By*

Evald Ilyenkov

*Edited and translated by*

Evgeni V. Pavlov



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*For RPH*





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## Editor's Note

Evald Ilyenkov is a unique figure among the many interesting Soviet thinkers that have recently been introduced to English-speaking readers. Although a thoroughly academic philosopher (both in the choice of his subject matter and in his institutional locations), Ilyenkov's ideas are presented in a manner that one does not often find among academics. It is not uncommon to find academic texts, especially academic texts on Hegel, to be pretentiously hermetic. Philosophical books written in a semi-comprehensible insider language abound, while any attempt at clarity or accessibility is relegated to secondary efforts of 'popular' presentations. Turgid idiom rules to the point that clear and lucid philosophical works stand out as peculiar. Suspicion that clarity equals vulgarity persists.

To those accustomed to the heavy prose of Hegelian literature, Ilyenkov's style will inevitably appear as a simplified and popularised presentation of the master's mysterious and impenetrable prose. However, Ilyenkov does not aim to simplify or water down any of the ideas under consideration. His philosophical style is born not of dry academic sterility but of passionate engagement with both the ideas and the public that must be made to understand them. The ultimate audience of even Ilyenkov's most complex and academic works is still the general educated public that can and therefore will understand even the most complex ideas if they are presented in an intelligible manner (which, after all, is the ultimate public duty of the philosophical class).

Texts selected for this collection are not the only texts dedicated to Hegel and dialectics but they are representative of Ilyenkov's main themes and interests. It is hoped that this collection will continue to draw interest to the Soviet engagement with Hegel and dialectics. We leave this collection without a detailed introduction since there are already a number of excellent works on Ilyenkov and Soviet philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

The opening short text – 'Hegel Today' ['Gegel' i sovremennost'] – was published in *Pravda* on 23 August 1970. It is the least academic essay of this collection as it was intended for general consumption by millions of Soviet citizens who read *Pravda* on a daily basis. The text was dedicated to the anniversary of Hegel's birth and once again demonstrated the role of the philosopher in Soviet philosophy.

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1 Cf. Levant and Oittinen 2014; Maidansky and Oittinen 2015.

The second essay deals with Ilyenkov's analysis of the subject matter of logic via his discussion of the same in Hegel. 'Hegel and the Problem of the Subject Matter of Logic' ['Gegel' i problema predmeta logiki] was published in a collection called *Filosofia Gegelia i sovremennost* [Hegel's Philosophy Today], edited by L.N. Suvorov.<sup>2</sup> This theme proved to be an important one in Ilyenkov's engagement with Hegel's logic and overall philosophical contribution. Ilyenkov moves away from the usual Soviet approach that paid lip service to Hegel's role as a 'predecessor' of Marx (and Lenin), and offers a theoretical analysis of Hegel's overall philosophical approach to reality.

The third essay, like many other works by Ilyenkov, was not published during his lifetime. It first appeared in Russian in a collection of his works in 1991. 'The Peak, the End and the New Life of Dialectics (Hegel and the End of Old Philosophy)' [Vershina, konez i novaya zhizn' dialektiki (Gegel' i konez staroi filosofii)] was published in *Filosofia i kultura* [Philosophy and Culture].<sup>3</sup> The original occasion for this piece was the 1974 Hegel Congress that took place in Moscow, but Ilyenkov was unable to take part in it. This essay was his contribution to the discussion of Hegel that was taking place at the Congress.

The fourth essay – 'Hegel's *Science of Logic*' [Nauka logiki] – first appeared in 2000 in a collection called *Evald Ilyenkov's Philosophy Revisited*, edited by Vesa Oittinen.<sup>4</sup> Like the previous piece, it was never published during Ilyenkov's lifetime. According to the curator of Ilyenkov's archive, Alexei Novokhatko, this text was originally intended as an introduction to the new translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. However, the translation came out with an introduction by another Soviet philosopher (Mark Rozental).<sup>5</sup>

The fifth essay – 'Hegel and Hermeneutics' [Gegel i germenevtika] – appeared in the leading Soviet philosophical journal, *Problems of Philosophy* [*Voprosy filosofii*].<sup>6</sup> The original essay contains an explanatory subtitle: On the problem of the relationship between language and thought in Hegel's conception.

The sixth essay – 'The Problem of the Ideal in Philosophy' [Problema idealov filosofii] – was published in two parts in *Voprosy filosofii*.<sup>7</sup> This essay should not be confused with a later text – 'The Problem of the Ideal' [Problema ideal'nogo] – also published in *Voprosy filosofii* in two parts, but in 1979. This

2 Ilyenkov 1973, pp. 120–44.

3 Ilyenkov 1991.

4 Oittinen 2000, pp. 329–72.

5 Oittinen 2000, p. 329.

6 Ilyenkov 1974a.

7 Ilyenkov 1962/63.

latter essay is an edited version of a larger text by late Ilyenkov – ‘Dialectics of the Ideal’ – originally written for a collection but rejected during editorial process. ‘Dialectics of the Ideal’ has now been translated into English by Alex Levant.<sup>8</sup>

The seventh essay – ‘Understanding of the Abstract and the Concrete in Dialectics and Formal Logic’ [Ponimanie abstraktnogo i konkretnogo v dialekticheskoj i formalnoj logike] – was published in an edited volume *Dialektika i logika: formy myshleniia* [Dialectics and Logic: Forms of Thinking].<sup>9</sup>

The eighth essay – ‘The Logical and the Historical’ [Logicheskoe i istoricheskoe] – was published in a collection *Voprosy dialekticheskogo materializma: elementy dialektiki* [The problems of dialectical materialism. The elements of dialectics].<sup>10</sup>

The ninth essay – ‘Lenin’s Idea of the Coincidence of Logic, Theory of Cognition and Dialectics’ [Leninskaya ideya sovpanediya logiki, teorii poznaniya i dialektiki] – appeared in a collection called *Filosofia i estestvoznaniie* [Philosophy and Natural Science].<sup>11</sup>

The final essay of the collection – ‘Materialism Is Militant and Therefore Dialectical’ [Materializm voinstvuyushchii – znachit dialekticheskii] – was published in a popular Party magazine *Kommunist*.<sup>12</sup> This essay was dedicated to the anniversary of the publication of Lenin’s 1909 book that became, in the Soviet period, one of the most read and cited books of philosophy – *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*.

Essays selected for this short collection represent only a small fraction of Ilyenkov’s engagement with Hegel and dialectics. We hope that these pieces will allow English-speaking readers to sample the sort of philosophical conversations that Ilyenkov and many of his friends and students were attempting to have while under the close supervision of the official *diamat* (‘dialectical materialism’) orthodoxy.

*Evgeni V. Pavlov*

8 Cf. Levant and Oittinen 2014.

9 Ilyenkov 1962.

10 Ilyenkov 1960.

11 Ilyenkov 1974b.

12 Ilyenkov 1979.



## Hegel Today

The 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is celebrated by the scientific communities of all the civilised countries. And it is understandable – it is as impossible to imagine the history of thinking, the history of logic, without Hegel as it is to imagine the development of music without Beethoven or of world literature without Leo Tolstoy or Dostoevsky.

A lot separates us from the epoch captured in Hegel's thought and expressed in the concepts of his system, but the heated debates about his scientific heritage are still going on. Dialectics, the history of which is forever connected with the name of Hegel, is too valuable a weapon in the battle of ideas to remain without a true master in this conflict, and each of the parties in philosophy fighting today for influence over the minds of people wants to make Hegel its ally, and use his status and authority for its own purposes.

Neo-Hegelians and neopositivists, Catholic Thomists and existentialists, phenomenologists and irrationalists – all present their own interpretations of Hegel's thought, all draw their own image of the thinker, all add their own light and shadows to his jubilee portrait. Among the many voices in this choir we find some that belong to the latest confused revisionists who by some misunderstanding nonetheless consider themselves Marxists.

Just for this reason the issue of the genuine relationship between Marxist philosophy and Hegel deserves today to be part of the most serious and principled conversation. Not the least important reason for such a conversation is the circumstance that the correct relationship to Hegel, established by Marx, Engels and Lenin, organically belongs to the content of Marxism itself, and the critical-materialist assimilation of Hegel's dialectics remains one of the necessary conditions for a genuinely deep and serious Marxist education. 'It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*' – categorically stated Lenin.<sup>1</sup>

Marx, Engels, and Lenin clearly demonstrated Hegel's historical merits as well as the historically conditioned limitations of his scientific discoveries. They clearly indicated limitations that Hegel's dialectics was unable to over-

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1 Lenin 1976, p. 180.

come, identified those illusions the power of which, despite the mental powers of their creator, it was unable to defeat. The greatness of Hegel, as well as his limitations, is found in the fact that he fully exhausted the possibility of developing dialectics on the basis of idealism, or within the axioms that idealism imposes on scientific thinking. Hegel, regardless of his intentions, clearly demonstrated that idealism leads thought into the fatal dead ends and dooms even the dialectically enlightened and the best dialectically trained thought to aimless gyrations around itself, to the infinite procedure of 'self-expression', 'self-consciousness' and peculiar – logical – narcissism. For Hegel (and that is why he is the most consistent and non-hypocritical idealist who, by being one, solved the mystery of any other prematurely born and unfinished idealism) 'being' – external and existing independently from thinking of the real world of nature and history – inevitably turns into an occasion for demonstrating the art of logic, into a bottomless reservoir of 'examples' that again and again confirm the same elementary schemes and categories of logic. As young Marx sarcastically pointed out, the 'matter of logic' blocks for Hegel the 'logic of matter', and therefore both the Prussian monarch and the louse in his head could for an idealist-dialectician serve equally well as 'examples' of 'in-and-for-itself existing unity'.<sup>2</sup>

Both a boiling teapot and the French Revolution are transformed in such an approach into simple 'examples' that illustrate the relationship between the categories of quality and quantity. But this way any empirical reality that catches our eye – no matter how bad and accidental it is – is transformed here into an 'external embodiment of absolute reason', into one of the necessary dialectical steps of its self-discernment ...

This defect of Hegel's dialectics is directly connected with idealism thanks to which dialectics is easily transformed into a method of subtle and logically sophisticated apologetics of everything existing.

After Hegel's achievement, we can only go forward in one direction – toward materialism, toward a clear understanding of the fact that all dialectical schemes and categories, discerned in thinking by Hegel, are not at all some original principles of activity and work of the 'pure spirit'. They are but reflected in the collective consciousness of humanity in the process of its centuries-long development and tested by practice universal forms and laws of the devel-

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2 [Translator's Note] Ilyenkov does not provide a citation but Marx's sarcastic remark appears in his 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law': 'In a certain sense every inevitable existent is purely self-originating; in this respect the monarch's louse as well as the monarch'. (Marx and Engels 1975, p. 27).

opment of the external, existing outside and independently of thinking, real world. It is this materialist rethinking of Hegel's dialectics that Marx and Engels initiated in the 1840s; and this materialistically rethought Hegelian dialectics played for them the role of the logic of development of the materialist world-view.

The transformation of Hegel's dialectics into a genuine scientific method of thinking could only be achieved one way – in the process of its application to the study of *material* conditions of the life of society. This approach, used by Marx and Engels, remains even today the only possible escape from the darkness of 'vulgar Hegelianism' into the light of the scientific understanding of both the external world and of thinking itself. Any other approach condemns even dialectically literate thinking to the fruitless spinning around in the enchanted circle of canonical categories. The orthodox Hegelianism therefore plays no independent role in the consequent struggle of ideas, but always aligns itself with this or that party and, in the end, it always 'legitimises' the social forces that appear to be winning. In the beginning of the 1930s, German neo-Hegelians were logically justifying the doctrine of Fascism, presenting it as the latest embodiment of the 'absolute spirit'. With the same success, neo-Hegelians direct their philosophy into the channel of ultra-Left sentiments. Here we can mention the work of Herbert Marcuse who with brilliant logical art justifies the anarchist hooligans like Cohn-Bendit and his gang ... Dialectical categories are transformed by this misuse into the terms of the language of demagogy and apologetics. The analogous use of dialectical categories can be easily identified in the writings of the official 'dialecticians' of the contemporary 'Chinese school'.

The rational kernel of Hegel's philosophy – dialectics as logic and contemporary materialism's theory of scientific cognition – lives these days only in one form, in its Marxist-Leninist interpretation and application to the study of the external world, to the scientific reflection on the objective laws of the material world and the perspectives of its development that takes place independently of human wishes and desires. It is precisely in his development of dialectics – with all of its distortions and omissions, with all of its abstractness and 'husk' in which the process of its maturation took place – that Hegel guaranteed his own immortality in the grateful memory of humanity, in the pantheon of its heroes of the spirit. Dialectics is what connects Hegel with our times, with the eternal living spirit of progress and the teaching of Marx-Engels-Lenin that reflects the fundamental tendencies of progress.

'Dialectics *is* the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "aspect" of the matter (it is not "an aspect" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention' – em-

phased Lenin.<sup>3</sup> Hegel's dialectics, in Lenin's evaluation, is first and foremost the deepest and the most comprehensive 'generalisation of the history of thought' – although only exclusively of thought – and herein lies its limited idealist nature.<sup>4</sup>

Lenin insistently recommended that contemporary natural scientists 'arrange for the systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from a materialist point of view' and expressed his conviction that they will 'find (if they know how to seek, and if we learn how to help them) in Hegelian dialectics, materialistically interpreted, a series of answers to the philosophical problems that are being raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashion "stumble" into reaction'.<sup>5</sup> And this advice still holds: even today the materialistically understood Hegel is the best remedy against fashionable ailments of the neopositivist and existentialist types.

Hegel could not answer the question that is fatal to every kind of idealism: where does thinking come from and what determines its dialectical development? When he announced that thinking was 'divine', Hegel simply avoided the question, presented the lack of answer to this question as the only philosophical 'answer'. The very same move, even if without the vain use of God's name, is made by contemporary opponents of the theory of reflection in the Yugoslav journal *Praxis*. When they announce that 'dialectics' is exclusively the form of 'self-consciousness of human subjectivity', they present dialectics as an externally unconditioned ('absolute') scheme of all cognition and practice. Hegel 'deified' after all not just something, but precisely *dialectics* of human thinking. But, having mystified this dialectics, Hegel still explored it in the real history of thinking, describing and systematising its forms and laws with depth and thoroughness that would not be matched by any professional logicians before or after him. It is here that we find the colossal advantage of Hegel's *Science of Logic* over the pretentious 'logic of science' constructed by neopositivists. While complaining about Hegel, neopositivists absolutise (deify) known forms of thinking in the most shameless manner. Only what they deify here are the weak postulates and axioms of formal logic. And they want the whole of contemporary scientific thought to pray to this anaemic 'god'.

Bourgeois philosophy borrowed from Hegel everything mortal and passing – his mysticism of divine thinking, his propensity to compromise with the powers that be, with 'god' and religion; and, conversely, for more than a hundred years it has been trying to discredit anything in his philosophy that had

3 Lenin 1976, p. 360.

4 Lenin 1976, p. 316.

5 Lenin 2012, p. 238.



led or is leading toward Marxism, declaring it 'old-fashioned' and 'harmful'. Schopenhauer and Kantians started this with their slogan 'Back to Kant!' with the help of liberals like Rudolph Haym and early positivists like Eugen Dühring and Eduard Bernstein. They all saw in Hegel, first and foremost, 'Marx's spiritual father' and therefore they tried to 'exterminate that evil in the embryo'. This general motif is still determining the entire attitude of bourgeois philosophy toward Hegel. In essence bourgeois philosophy long ago rejected one of its greatest sons and everything valuable and progressive that he had to offer. Today it values only his weaknesses, the very same weaknesses that he shares with the rest of idealism. But there is nothing specifically Hegelian in these weaknesses and therefore Hegel as a concrete thinker disappears completely.

The genuine, concrete and living Hegel with all of his contradictions belongs today only to Marxism that managed to draw all the conclusions from his dialectics.

Today, the only living Hegel is the one who is materialistically rethought and critically assimilated. This Hegel belongs to the future. His immortality is found in the fact that his philosophy was one of the most important theoretical sources of Marxism-Leninism.

## Hegel and the Problem of the Subject Matter of Logic

In the history of logic as science, i.e. in the work of scientific understanding of human thinking, Hegel played the most edifying role, in many ways reminiscent of the fate of Napoleon. Having gathered in his person all the might of the revolutionary energy that was suffering under the heavy burden of the inveterate forms of thinking, Hegel destroyed the armies of the advocates of the former, purely formal, conception of thinking, created the new logical empire, but in the end (although after his untimely death) was forced to give up all of the conquered territory, having suffered defeat in the battle against the forces of those same prejudices from the power of which he was unable to free the world, because he did not first free himself from them. Revolution and dialectics do not forgive the betrayal of their principles even to their greatest champions. Like Napoleon, Hegel deserved his fate. And, in some sense, history chose analogous institutions in order to exact its revenge.

The Vienna Congress deposed the usurper who, with the use of revolutionary armies, dared to dream of forcing his entry into the old family of legitimate rulers, and these dwarf-kings could not forgive him his attempt. The 'Vienna Circle' treated Hegel the same way when it declared in a series of verdicts all of Hegel's conquests in the realm of logic as science illegitimate, and Hegel himself a person not worthy of mention in the history of logic, except as an example of illegitimate, anti-scientific and nonsensical interpretation of its subject matter.

The neopositivist attitude toward Hegel's revolution in conceptualising the very essence of the logical science is understandable. Hegel so thoroughly undermined the authority and the prestige of the obvious axiomatic prejudices of the formal understanding of thinking and its tasks that the latter could only secure its position under the condition of completely ignoring Hegel's logic and his understanding of thinking.

The defenders of the purely formal approach to logic unanimously reproach Hegel for unacceptably widening the scope of the subject matter of logical science so as to include within it things that are located outside of thinking and that exist before and completely independently of thinking, understood here in its strictest sense as one of the mental capacities of a human individual.

At first glance, this accusation is absolutely justified and Hegel himself gives a serious reason for it when he defines the subject matter of logic as 'divine

thinking' and logic as '*the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*'.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, with such an extended and mystical conceptualisation of *thinking*, the realm of this concept includes the whole of God's world of things and events, understood as a grandiose *external embodiment* of the creative force of the mightily supernatural and superhuman 'thought', as its external visually given manifestation or 'explication' ...

Hegel's expressions, analogous to the one cited above, have always proved an easy target for formal, that is superficial, 'critique' of his conception, critique that was mostly reduced to complaints and abuse directed at passages taken out of context. This so-called 'critique' has only one goal – to discredit the thinker and his ideas, and it does not contain any real intention of discerning the subject matter addressed and described by these clearly inadequate passages. As far as genuine constructive critique is concerned, it is this intention and its exposition that is the only important thing.

Hegel's phrases about 'God' should under no circumstances be understood literally. According to the philosopher's own explanation, they mostly played an allegorical role with which he was hoping to be more 'accessible' to his contemporaries. The 'God' that Hegel had in mind shared very little with his traditional religious namesake (even though there were similarities, and perhaps more than just similarities, between the two). We must not forget that even the Orthodox Christian Lord is not a simple fiction, not a representation of some 'non-existent thing', but an inadequate representation of something very real, that is to say, it is an image (reflection) of that real power that misunderstood and misperceived forces of the social development have over people. It is the people's collective forces that are conceived as standing against them as something alien and even hostile, and not only in their fantasy ... If we do not forget this, then Hegel's theological allegories become clear to us who understand that there is no God, but also that there is a real – indeed devilishly real – power of collective human forces over an individual with his individual consciousness. This power (under certain circumstances bound to become tyrannical) is *understood*, one way or another, adequately or inadequately, by that individual, and having been understood, it becomes the most important component of his subjective thinking, it becomes the regulative scheme of his reflections, his judgements.

Under the pseudonym 'God' we find in Hegel's logic the exact description of this real power of the collective (social) forces (or active capacities) of an individual taken not as an isolated individual, but as an individual in the web of social connections with other individuals, as a 'totality of all social relations'.

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel 2010, p. 29.

And if ‘thinking’ is understood as thinking of *this*, and not some mythically isolated Individual, then in Hegel’s propositions concerning the subject matter of logic there is discerned a truth deeper than that superficial ‘truth’ according to which Hegel’s logic represents a new rendition of an old religious tune or a theology dressed up in logical terminology.

If we take all of this into consideration, then Hegel’s concept of ‘thinking’ that at first appears (from the point of view of ‘common sense’) inexcusably too general turns out to be a much deeper and more serious understanding of real human thinking, much closer to truth than the ideas of ‘commonsensical’ positivists and their ilk.

If we take a closer look at Hegel’s understanding of thinking, it turns out that all of the (neo)positivist ideas about thinking are also found in it but only as moments, as shades and aspects of it, and in the exact same form as they are discussed in the neopositivist ‘logic’. It turns out that in his analysis of the concept of ‘thinking’, Hegel perfectly understands and takes into consideration the neopositivist conceptual apparatus and, more than that, he restores to its rightful place that most fundamental prejudice that for centuries formed the basis for all the formal, i.e. formalistic, fantasies about thinking and about the nature of the laws that human thought obeys. This is in fact a very characteristic move for Hegel – while undermining the authority and the prestige of crusty old prejudices, including religious (Christian) and monarchical ones, he then, with the help of the rotations of the cycles of his dialectic, inconspicuously ‘justifies’ all of these prejudices, interpreting them as necessary ‘moments’ of the absolute truth. He burns down the ancient aberration in the fire of his dialectic in order to once again bring it back to life from the ashes in its original state, if only as a ‘moment’ of truth and not as the whole truth.

Let us leave for now Hegel’s statements about God, absolute spirit and divine concept and consider his understanding of thinking in those moments that directly touch on the human, and only human, thinking. If we do so, we will see in this thinking those points, or more precisely gaps or seams where Hegel was forced to appeal to God, to seek salvation in the ‘absolute spirit’ and other mystical attributes of his philosophy, all because he could not find any other explanation for some principally important peculiarities of the real human thinking. In general, no one appeals to God unless they have to.

‘That *thinking* is the subject matter of logic, we are all agreed’, writes Hegel in *The Encyclopaedia Logic*.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore and quite logically, logic as a science is defined as ‘thinking about thinking’, ‘thought thinking itself’.

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<sup>2</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 47.

There is nothing specifically Hegelian or specifically idealist in this definition. It is quite simply the most traditional understanding of the subject matter of logic as a science, taken to its clearest expression. This is the same way every logician has understood the essence of his science – the subject matter of scientific thinking is, unlike in any other science, this very thinking.

But this particular understanding only more sharply demonstrates the necessity to answer the main question: *but what is thinking?*

We are not, of course, talking about a definition since the only satisfactory answer to the above question would be an extensive explication of the 'essence of the matter', i.e. a concretely elaborated theory of thinking, the science of thinking – logic.<sup>3</sup>

However, in every science, including logic, a preliminary definition is necessary in order to delimit the boundaries of the forthcoming study and to indicate the criterion according to which the facts for investigation are to be selected. And Hegel provides such a preliminary exposition without hiding it from his readers as was done and is done by many authors of books on logic who prefer to dismiss this most important point with vague generalities.

And he does it in the form of the critical analysis of the existing views regarding the science of logic – not only a legitimate but also perhaps the only possible way it can be done as a science. Such analysis does not throw these views out as 'false', but explains them as reasonable but insufficient. Such is Hegel's attitude toward the widespread (and not only among the expert logicians) current understanding of thinking as *one of many mental capacities of a human individual*, as a capacity that is not unlike other capacities such as memory, will, vision, touch or smell, as a capacity to give attention or form a representation, and so on and so forth.

Such understanding, justified and legitimate in psychology, immediately becomes unacceptably narrow and therefore false as soon as it is transferred, without any correction, into logic.

In reality, when thinking is understood this way, willingly or unwillingly a rather doubtful premise is accepted, a kind of premise that were it articulated and clearly formulated would not have been as easily accepted by most people.

Namely, it is a premise that thinking is understood as *something like internal speech*, like a silent monologue, and therefore thinking is studied only inas-

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3 Compare this with the words of Engels: 'From a scientific standpoint all definitions are of little value. In order to gain an exhaustive knowledge of what life is, we should have to go through all the forms in which it appears, from the lowest to the highest'. (Engels 1939, p. 96). 'The only real definition is the development of the thing itself, and that is already not a definition' (Engels 1975, p. 578).

much as it is expressed or is expressible in the form of external speech – either as oral or as written ‘explication’. It is this ancient and, at first glance, most ‘natural’ understanding of thinking, widespread precisely due to this seeming naturalness, that underlies a large number of logical theories. Historically it first appeared among the Sophists, and it found its finished form among the Stoics who quite distinctly expressed it as the fundamental axiom of ‘logical’ investigations. The neopositivists did not invent anything new here.<sup>4</sup> They only equipped this ancient prejudice with a pedantic and quasi-scientific form of expression. In essence this is the same prejudice according to which our thinking may be and must be investigated *only in the verbal form of its ‘external manifestation’*. It is not very far from this view to the view that a ‘concept’ is a ‘term’ or a ‘signifying sign’ and the ‘judgement’ is an ‘utterance’ or a ‘sentence’; ‘thinking’ obviously begins to be understood as a process or, more precisely, a procedure of ‘constructing utterances’ and ‘systems of utterances’, while ‘reflection’ is presented as a ‘calculation of utterances’. Everything is very simple and very neat, but in the same degree it is also very impoverished.

*Thinking*, as such, therefore disappears entirely from our field of vision and instead we are investigating ‘language’ – ‘language of science’, ‘language of art’, and so on and so forth. And the rest, all that does not fit the concept of ‘lan-

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4 When we speak about formal logical tradition, we have in mind, here and below, philosophical theoretical interpretation of thinking, and not at all the rules and the schemes that for a long time constituted the content and the apparatus of ‘formal logic’, and that without a doubt have an important, if limited, significance and application. The same goes for the contemporary ‘mathematical logic’. Taken in and of itself the apparatus of this logic does not have any direct relation to the topic of our investigation. This apparatus is especially created and adopted for the solution of a well defined and very strictly determined class of problems – problems connected with the ‘calculation of propositions’, with the purely formal procedure for the transformation of propositions, i.e. for changing one set of signs into another set of signs. Mathematical logic as a special branch of contemporary mathematics entirely consciously limits the sphere of its attention by the relation of signs to signs as part of some strictly determined sign systems. Philosophy does not and cannot have any issues with this logic.

Another matter is when special schemes and rules of activity related to signs-symbols are interpreted as universal, absolute and indisputable ‘laws of thinking in general’, as laws of logic of any kind of thinking, regardless of the ‘subject matter’ thinking takes upon. This is already philosophy, and bad philosophy at that, and as such it can be judged from the point of view of philosophical criteria and must be regarded as completely illegitimate and false.

For it is very clear that this attempt to present the rules for treating immutable (and within the limits of strict formalism they must be immutable) signs as the universal ‘rules of treatment’ applicable to the mutable phenomena of reality, to the ‘things’ that change in reality and in experiments cannot lead to anything except to falsehood. These ‘rules’ cannot be used in these realms. Therefore the honour and the glory of mathematical logic as such are in no danger here.

guage', is delegated to other departments – this to psychology, that to 'epistemology' or 'semantics' and so forth. Logic is thus successfully transformed into a section of the science of *language*, or word<sup>5</sup> – luckily the word 'logos' to which the term 'logic' traces its lineage in its original etymology means 'word' and thus the interpretation of thinking under consideration assumes the appearance of an entirely legitimate and historically informed view.

It is this prejudice that constitutes the main axiom and the cornerstone of the neopositivist understanding of logic and thinking that Hegel destabilises with his analysis of thinking by simply taking it to its clearest presentation. In this form the prejudice obviously does not agree with the fact of real human thinking the course of which is determined in great measure by factors more powerful than 'linguistic structures'. Here we find 'things' about which one thinks and speaks, 'practical motives' of one's thinking, width of the thinking person's horizon, and many other things – all that which, according to the formal approach to thinking, 'has nothing to do with logic'. If that is the case, then such 'logic' has nothing to do with real human thinking. The latter turns out to be entirely 'illogical'. Logic here cannot be a science of real *laws* of real human thinking but at best turns out to be a system of *rules* that 'must be' or 'may be' followed but are, unfortunately, broken at every step. More than that, 'rules' can be established and cancelled arbitrarily and according to some legitimate but equally arbitrary agreement, that is 'conventionally'; thus logic loses all right to the objectivity of its recommendations, to their independence from will and consciousness of a concrete individual, and to the universality and necessity of its 'laws'.

All of these gravely serious consequences for logic as science are necessarily arrived at, as Hegel shows with his analysis, in that initial idea that 'thinking' is one of the mental capacities of an individual, the so-called conscious thinking that always exhibits itself in the form of 'internal speech', in the form of a number of calculations done in the sphere of language and cognised in words.

Against this impoverished and superficial idea of thinking Hegel proposes a simple – and compelling in its simplicity – consideration. But who said that thinking can express itself *only* in speech? Is it true that speech (language) is that *singular* form of expression of the ability to think in which thinking may be fixed and studied in logic?

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5 This fact, it must be said, was clearly understood not only by Hegel but also by some of his principal opponents. Thus Adolf Trendelenburg already noted as something quite obvious that circumstance that the traditional formal logic came to understand itself 'in a language that, in many ways, could be called the deepened into itself grammar [in sich selbst vertiefte Grammatik]'. Trendelenburg 1862, p. 28.

Does one not appear as a thinking being in one's actions, one's real deeds? Does one appear as a thinking being, as a 'subject of thought', only in the act of speaking?

This question is, of course, purely rhetorical.

The thinking that Hegel is talking about reveals itself in human *actions* no less than in *words*, in connections of terms and utterances that are seemingly the only thing the logician-positivist cares about. More than that, in his real actions, in the formation of things of the external world, a human being finds his ability to think in a much more adequate way than in all the narratives about those actions, in verbal self-reporting about his own thinking.<sup>6</sup>

Who does not know that in order to judge a person, his genuine form and manner of thinking, it is better to judge what and how he *does* rather than what he thinks or has to say about it?

Is it not clear that the chains of human deeds display the genuine logic of thinking in a fuller and truer manner than the chains of words or terms, the lace of phrases? Do we not have famous sayings that 'spoken thought is a lie' or 'a tongue is given to a man to hide his thoughts' or 'only a fool takes things on a word'? We are here talking of course not about acts of deliberate lying to other people, not about deliberate concealment of truth or the 'true state of affairs', but about perfectly sincere and honest self-deception, about the inadequacy of a verbal self-report about one's own thinking.

But if this is so, then actions and deeds, and therefore the consequences of these actions-deeds (*things* that are created by them), not only may but must be considered as 'external forms of manifestation' of *thinking*, as acts of manifestation of a capacity to think, as acts of its 'objectification', as acts of its realisation and 'explication'. In logic as science it is no less important than it is in real life to take into consideration the difference between words and deeds, to compare real deeds with the verbal self-report about them, for we find in this difference also the inadequacy of the verbal self-report of 'thinking' about oneself in relation to real *thinking*, real *laws* of its operation.

It is this simple and yet devastating for pure formal logic consideration that Hegel puts forward against the entire former logic that in the spirit of scholastically interpreted Aristotle functionally restricted the realm of its study to the forms of verbal 'explication' of thinking alone.

Hegel does not go beyond the boundaries of the 'concept of thinking' but simply demands that the science of thinking take into consideration not only

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6 Cf. Hegel 1986, p. 197: 'The person can be known in a much lesser degree by his external appearance than by his *actions*. The *language* itself is destined both to hide and to reveal human thoughts'.



this form of its 'external manifestation' of a capacity to think ('thinking'), but also consider in its generalisations other, no less important (or perhaps even more important) forms of its expression, its 'determinate being'.

Thinking manifests itself – its force, its active energy and its nature in its universal patterns and schemes – not only in speaking or in the composition of treatises, but also in the creation of the entire grandiose world of culture, the entire 'non-organic human body' that stands objectively over and against an individual human being, the body of civilisation, including tools and temples, statues and offices, factories and political organisations, ships and toys – all that with which we are involved from the moment we are born and enter the human family.

Thus Hegel introduces practice – the sensuous-objective human activity that realises human intentions, plans and ideas – into logic and into the sphere of facts under investigation in it. And in that he takes a step of colossal importance in understanding the actual subject matter of logic as science, a step highly regarded by Lenin.

'Undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to the objective ("absolute", according to Hegel) truth. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice in the theory of knowledge: see *Theses on Feuerbach*'.<sup>7</sup>

This is why Hegel acquires the full right to consider as a part of logic – as a part of the science of *thinking* – the objective determinations of things that exist outside consciousness, outside an individual mind.

And there is yet nothing idealist or mystical here since what we have here are forms ('determinations') of things created by the purposeful activity of a social human being, i.e. the forms of his *thinking*, 'embodied' in some natural material, 'objectified' in it. Thus a house is an embodiment in stone of the architect's intention, machine – an objective realisation in metal of the engineer's thought, and so on, and the entire colossal body of civilisation (standing as something objective over against an individual and his consciousness) – as 'thinking in its other-being' (Anderssein). Therefore the entire history of humanity is considered here as the process of 'external manifestation' of the creative force of thought, the energy of thinking, as the process of realisation of ideas, concepts, plans, representations, goals and aspirations of a human being, as a process of 'objectification' of those logical schemes that guide purposeful human activity.

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<sup>7</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 211.

Understanding and careful analysis of this aspect of human relationship with the external world (its 'active side', as Marx put it) is also not yet idealism; this real aspect may be and must be understood in logic and on the ground of materialistic understanding of thinking and human activity. More than that, by introducing practice (understood, however, *only* as a process of the external embodiment of the previously elaborated concepts and goals, *only* as a 'criterion' of their truthfulness) into logic Hegel takes a first serious step in the direction of materialism, in the direction of understanding logical forms as a reflected in human consciousness and tested by a thousand year old history of human practice of the universal forms of development of objective reality, of the real world outside of thought. Considering thinking not only in its verbal form, but also in acts of its expression in stone and bronze, in wood and iron, and further – in the structures of social organisation, and so on, Hegel does not go 'beyond the framework' of the study of thinking, beyond the limits of the legitimate subject matter of logic, nor does he cease to be a logician in the strictest sense of that term.

From materialism's point of view, Hegel deserves the opposite reproach – he continues to be a pure logician where the point of view of logic is generally insufficient. His problem is that in his analysis of the history of humanity the 'activity of logic' absorbs his attention so much that he ceases to see behind it the 'logic of activity', i.e. that determination of human activity that is entirely objective and independent of all thinking.

That is why Marx reproaches Hegel for the fact that *practice as such* is not considered in his philosophy at all; 'idealism, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such', notes Marx in *Theses on Feuerbach*.<sup>8</sup>

Practice – this 'real, sensuous activity' – is considered by Hegel *not as such*, but only as an external form of manifestation of thinking, only as *thinking in its 'external' manifestation*, as an act of objectification of thinking. Practice then is presented exclusively as a phase of the theoretical process, *only* as a criterion of truth, *only* as a testing ground for thinking that already took place outside, before and entirely independently of 'practice'.

This means that practice is considered by Hegel extremely *abstractly*, that is to say, one-sidedly and only in those of its characteristics that connect it to thinking.

So, for example, Hegel interprets the events of the French Revolution as the process of realisation of the ideas of Enlightenment, thoughts of Rousseau

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<sup>8</sup> Marx and Engels 1976, p. 3.

and Voltaire, and the results of the Revolution – as practical consequences of the spiritual-theoretical activity of these authors. Robespierre appears here as a ‘practical Rousseau’ and the guillotine as an instrument of realisation of the idea of ‘absolute equality’ (since all the distinctions between persons, according to Hegel, are found in their ‘heads’), and so on and so forth. In total agreement with such interpretation, the failure of Robespierre’s policies is explained as a ‘practical’ manifestation of *abstraction* (that is, one-sidedness, non-dialecticity) of the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity in that form in which they were proclaimed by the ideologues of the Revolution. In other words, in his interpretation of the events of 1789–93 Hegel shares with its participants all their ideological illusions since, like them, he thinks that ideas and ‘concepts’, having ripened in the heads of the theoreticians of the Enlightenment, were the true causes of the events.

That is why Hegel never gets to the real *practical* ‘causes’ of the Revolution as he simply accepts them to be what they were in their ideologically perverse form, found in the heads of Rousseau and Voltaire, and then in the phraseology of Robespierre.

This is a principally important point for understanding the entirety of Hegel’s philosophy, not only his ‘philosophy of history’ but also his logic. While interpreting ‘practice’ exclusively *as thinking in its external manifestation*, i.e. as an idea (concept) embodied in space and time, Hegel cannot construct the true dialectics of human activity that expresses in its concepts the true logic of events, logic of actions, logic of the historical process.

It is precisely for this reason that the interpretation of Hegel that, for example, was proposed by Gentile and after him by existentialists, according to which Hegel’s ‘logic’ is a scholastically expressed logic of the ‘subjective human activity’, logic of ‘acts’, passions and interests, that is to say, it is an abstract schema of the ‘subjective activity’ of human kind, and nothing more, is entirely inadequate. This interpretation – and many ‘Marxists’ were seduced by it – turns real Hegel inside out and cancels in him all that constitutes the true ‘rational kernel’ of Hegel’s logic, that is, its *objectivity*. Hegel is thus interpreted as a thinker who gave a pseudo-rational form to the schemes of entirely irrational ‘activity’ that obeys the play of passions, illusions, myths, purely subjective preferences, unexplained sympathies and antipathies, ‘intentions’ and the like motives. And Hegel does give a reason for such an interpretation, so the similarities in interpretation of his philosophy in Ivan Ilyin and Richard Kroner are not accidental. Nonetheless such interpretations are false. Real Hegel has it in the exact opposite way – it is not that Hegel’s logic is the scheme of human activity, understood and expressed in concepts, but human ‘activity’ in his system is the external manifestation of logic.

For genuine 'uninterpreted' Hegel all activity, all passions and interests, all intentions and even all whims of subjective will from the very beginning and until the very end are authoritatively ruled by the schemes of 'Logos', i.e. deified Concept, even if human beings themselves, in the middle of their activity, are not conscious of this (or are conscious only vaguely, inadequately, allegorically, and indirectly).

That is why the 'chains of words' and the 'chains of acts', according to Hegel, only manifest or 'explicate' the schemes of the concept already found in the spirit, i.e. before and independently of any 'activity', regardless of the material in which it is realised – in the material of 'language' or in the material of sensuous-objective activity, i.e. in wood or bronze, stone or uranium ore ...

It is here that we find the falsehood of Hegel's idealism – idealism of thinking, idealism of the concept – its secret is found in a peculiar professional blindness of the 'logician ex professo', in the selective blindness of the professional who does not see and does not want to see anything in the world but the subject matter of his narrow and specialised science.

This view, once turned on history, on practice as such, immediately turns out to be an absolute falsehood – the falsehood of absolute idealism that sees everywhere only the 'external forms of manifestation of the force of thinking'.

However, in regard to logic as the science of thinking (under the condition, of course, that we do not forget that we are talking about thinking and thinking only, not history) this point of view is not only acceptable, but is the only reasonable one.

It is indeed ridiculous to reproach the logician for carefully abstracting everything that does not have anything to do with his special subject matter, i.e. thinking, and only paying attention to any fact as long as that fact serves as a consequence, as a form of manifestation of his – logician's – subject matter, subject matter of his specialised concerns, subject matter of his strictly defined science!

To reproach a professional logician that the 'subject matter of logic' concerns him more than any other subject matter is as ridiculous as to reproach a chemist that his extreme attention to chemistry makes everything else appear insignificant. The trouble with the narrow professionalism is not found in this issue, and it is not in this sense that it is famously criticised by Marx. The trouble is in the resulting inability (connected with the abstract one-sidedness of this view on things) to clearly see the limitations in competence of one's own specialised concepts.

As long as the chemist concerns himself with the 'subject matter of chemistry', i.e. as long as he considers all of the riches of the universe exclusively from the abstract-chemical point of view, thinks about every thing only in the cat-

egories of his science (whether the subject matter is oil or gold, biological flesh of a living creature or the 'Sistine Madonna'), there is no reason for reproach.

But as soon as he forgets his specialty and begins to think that the specialised concepts of his science express the 'genuine essence' of 'Sistine Madonna' or the living cell or the golden coin, his professionalism immediately shows its negative side. He begins to look at all other sciences as 'pre-scientific' and purely phenomenological 'descriptions' of the external and more or less arbitrary expressions of his own, and only his own, subject matter, i.e. chemistry. Here his claims become ridiculous, he is caught in the web of the Kantian idea of 'regressive synthesis', according to which the 'genuine essence' of biology is found in chemistry, the 'genuine essence' of chemistry – in physics, in atomic and subatomic structures, and further – physics is 'reduced' to mathematics, mathematics – to 'logic' (in the narrow sense that was given to it by the purely formal tradition that eventually became neopositivism of today), and so on ...

It is this sin of narrow professionalism that does not want to know the limitations in competence of its narrow specialised concepts that Hegel commits in relation to logic. Although Hegel's advantage over positivists is found in the fact that he understands thinking and its categories in a deeper and more genuine way than all positivists taken together.

The 'genuine' and the 'most concrete' mystery of any event in the universe seems to him to be found in the 'pure', 'absolute', *dialectical schemes of the inner workings of human thinking*. But this way human thinking itself is mystified, turned (in fantasy, of course) into a cosmic force opposed not only to an individual (here Hegel is correct), but to the whole of humanity, i.e. to the historically developing collective of individuals who participate in the process of thinking together and who mutually correct each other's 'conscious thinking', thus realising the schemas of the dialectical and not the formal logic.

That is why Hegel seems to think that to *understand* any concrete event in its essence means to reduce it to the purely logical expression, to describe it in logical terms. This is the very same 'uncritical positivism' that Hegel's logic carries in its womb as a not yet overcome – ancient and tenacious – prejudice of the old purely formal logic.

As a logician, Hegel is quite correct in interpreting the development of science, technology and morality (in Hegel's understanding of this term that includes all of the relationships between people: from morality to politics to economics) as a process that *manifests* various logical forms and laws as part of itself, i.e. as a history of *manifestation* of forms and laws of thinking.

But forgetting that he is a logician, and only a logician, Hegel immediately takes these discovered logical forms, manifested in the development of phys-

ics, politics, technology, theology, morality, and art as the forms (schemes and laws) of the process that *creates* all of these 'particular' images of its own 'alienation'.

The entire mysticism of this Hegelian conception of thinking is concentrated in this dangerous for idealism point. Considering all forms of human culture – both spiritual and material – as forms of *manifestation* of human capacity for thinking, Hegel deprives himself of any opportunity to answer the question – but where does this wonderful human capacity come from?

From nowhere, answers Hegel. It does not 'come from', does not originate, but only *manifests itself, expresses itself*, since it is not conditioned by anything external – it is absolute ('divine') capacity, creative power and energy present in human beings from birth.

Having raised human thinking (not the thinking of an individual, but of humanity, let us not forget that even for a second) to the level of 'divine' power, Hegel simply pretends that the absence of the answer to the question that is dangerous to idealism ('where did this human power come from?') is the only possible 'philosophical' answer ...

By 'thinking in general' or by 'pure thinking' Hegel everywhere understands and studies human thinking in that form in which it is seen by a professional logician, by a person whose point of view is characterised by all the pluses and all the minuses of the narrowly professional approach to this problem.

It is he, the logician, who day after day does the job of 'thinking about thinking'; it is he, the professional logician, who must inform the others about the schemes, laws and rules within the limits of which their thinking is taking place even if they are not aware of them and only follow them under the pressure of circumstances in which they often find themselves. It is he, the logician, who investigates and studies not his own 'thinking' as his own individual capacity but only those faceless schemes that reveal themselves in some collective human thinking, schemes that 'stand over against' each individual thinking being. It is he who realises the 'self-consciousness' of that very thinking that is not realised by a single individual, taken in isolation (and that is the case if by thinking we understand 'conscious thinking', reasoning that is consciously oriented by the 'rules of logic'), but by a more or less developed collective, 'ensemble' of individuals connected into one unified whole by the ties of language, customs, living conditions and social life and 'things' it produces and consumes. In his person there takes place the 'self-consciousness' of the very thinking that manifests itself not so much in the mute monologue as in dramatically tense *dialogues* and in the confrontations between separate consciously thinking individuals, i.e. in the historical events, in the process of changing of the external world.

The forms and laws of thinking understood in this manner (as a 'natural-historical' process achieved in concert by millions of individuals connected by a web of communications into one 'head', one 'thinking being' that is in constant dialogue with itself) constitute the subject matter of logic in Hegel's sense of this word. This entirely real subject matter is the real prototype for Hegel's portrait of 'God' or the 'absolute spirit'.

It is obvious that in Hegel thinking is understood in a much deeper, more sober and more realistic manner in comparison with its subjective-psychological treatment that is characteristic for purely formal logic, including its 'contemporary' neopositivist version.

And if we compare Hegel's description of the 'absolute spirit', the 'divine thinking' with the subject matter that is reflected in it (i.e. with the thinking of social human being, realised in science, technology and morality), and not with a psycho-physiological process that is taking place under the frontal lobe of an individual, not with a 'conscious judgement' of a separate person, then in the obtuse turns of Hegel's phrases we can suddenly see the meaning that is much more down to earth and real than in the allegedly commonsensical 'logic of science'.

At the same time we can clearly see all the 'blank spots' and all the gaps in his understanding of real thinking that Hegel was forced to cover over with purely linguistic patches, i.e. by simply avoiding dealing with them with the help of sometimes witty, but sometimes simply incomprehensible turns of phrase.

Not being able to explain where 'thinking' comes from and therefore in advance assuming that it is an impersonal and originary 'power', Hegel from the very beginning poses the question only about the forms of *manifestation* of this power-capacity. It is not about the forms of birth or emergence of the capacity to think, but only about the forms of its expression, its 'external realisation', about the forms of its 'awakening', about the forms of its 'self-consciousness'.

It is here, at this point that is dangerous for any idealism, that Hegel indirectly restores that very same ancient and tenacious prejudice from which sprang and still springs the entirety of formal logic from the Stoics to neopositivists, from Zeno to Carnap. This way he, like Napoleon in the relation to the monarchical principle, shares the same ground with the 'legitimate' carriers of the principle, descends to their pathetic level and on that level ultimately suffers his defeat, deserves his Waterloo and his St. Helene ...

The problem is that, having started with a perfectly correct thesis, according to which logical schemes (forms and laws) manifest themselves *not only* in chains of words and propositions, *not only* in the word, but also in the chains of actions and historical events, and in the form of the system of 'things' cre-

ated by human activity, Hegel comes back to the idea according to which 'in the beginning was the word', to the axiom of St. John and Rudolf Carnap.

Hegel is great and revolutionary (in logic, of course) where he establishes that the logical category (form, scheme, law) is an abstraction that expresses the 'essence' of *all* manners of manifestations of the capacity to think – verbal as well as immediate objective 'embodiment' of this capacity in events and actions. He is great where he defines 'logos' as an expression of the 'essence of both words and things', as a schema that determines equally both *Sage und Sache* – 'word and thing', or more precisely 'myth' ('spoken tradition') and 'history' (real *state of affairs*, 'deed' in its essence). In this form, logos (logical) is understood as a form of *thinking* that manifests itself both in words and in actions of an individual, and not only in that individual's words, not only in the words about the actions, as neopositivists still hold.

But Hegel is helpless before the neopositivists where he makes a complete reversal and claims that the word (*Sage*) is the first – in essence and in time – form of '*manifestation of thinking*', the first and original form of *awakening* of the spirit to self-consciousness, that first and original 'thing' in the form of which the 'thinking spirit' opposes itself to itself in order to see itself, as if in the mirror, in that image which it creates out of itself with its original creative power.

The word – logos *in its verbal* appearance – appears in Hegel's conception of thinking not as the only but still as the first in essence and in time form of the 'determinate being of spirit (thinking) for itself'. The spirit awakens to the independent life at the moment when it creates a mirror out of itself in which it can see its image and its schemes of activity (logic) as if from the outside, and this mirror is word, language, speech.

The first form of the 'determinate being' of thinking is in Hegel's conception the product of the 'naming power' (Namengebende Kraft) – *the verbal self-report* about what is taking place 'inside the spirit', inside 'pure thinking' and independently of any 'external determination'.

And only then, having become conscious of itself in the word and through the word, 'thinking' externalises this – already discovered in the word – capacity in the acts of creation of tools and things made with the use of these tools: first in the form of a stone axe, a plough, a piece of bread, but then also in the form of temples, nation-states, and so on and so forth.

All of that is presented as *secondary*, as a derivative and dependent form of the 'manifestation of the creative power of thought and concept'.

Thus thinking is understood as activity within the medium of the word, as activity directed toward the word as its own peculiar 'subject matter' and also as having become conscious of itself in the word; thinking then turns out to



be a kind of activity in Hegel's system that 'outside of itself' has no prerequisites, no *subject matter* that would determine its activity *externally*; it does not need any *conditions* that this activity needs as something externally given and existing independently of it.

In the word there begins and ends the earthly history of the 'divine' (i.e. unconditional and presuppositionless) thinking. Practice, on the other hand, is given a secondary role, it is a derivative and fleeting metamorphosis of thinking that first emerges in the medium of the word.

'The forms of thought are first set out and stored in human *language*,'<sup>9</sup> and the creation and transformation of the 'external' world by a thinking being only comes after it clearly and sufficiently understood its 'thinking nature', when it gives itself a clear self-report about what is going on 'inside' it.

Here we come across a line that separates Hegel from materialism – in the latter the sequence of steps in accordance with which a human being is transformed into a 'thinking being', into a 'subject of thinking', turns out to be the exact opposite.

It seems obvious that before a person learns to speak and to give himself a special report about what he is doing, he must act in the world of real things that are not created by him. Therefore this skill (capacity) of treating the things of the 'external' world in accordance with their form and measure, this skill of coordinating one's actions in relation to this external measure and form of things is formed (in anthropogenesis as well as in individual development) earlier than the capacity to use language, word, and much earlier than the capacity to treat the word *as a special subject matter*.

Therefore all 'logical forms' without exception that Hegel considers to be the immanent domain of the 'spirit' in fact 'express themselves and show themselves primarily' not in human language, as Hegel postulates, but only as constantly repeated schemes of the external – objective and objectively conditioned – human activity. These schemes are *brought to consciousness* in language only much later. The picture is exactly the opposite of what Hegel gives us.

Lenin turns special attention to this point when he comments on Hegel's discussion of the 'syllogism of action':

For Hegel *action*, practice, is a *logical 'syllogism'*, a figure of logic. And this is true! Not, of course, in the sense that the figure of logic has its other-being in the practice of man (= absolute idealism), but vice versa: man's

9 Hegel 2010, p. 12.

practice, repeating itself a thousand million times, becomes consolidated in man's consciousness by figures of logic. Precisely (and only) on account of this thousand-million-fold repetition, these figures have the stability of a prejudice, an axiomatic character.<sup>10</sup>

It is here that we find the mystery of these 'logical figures' that seem for every idealist to be a priori schemes of the activity of the 'spirit'. Before they become such axiomatic and accepted 'logical schemes' and in that form are fixed by formal logic, they are already and for a long time realised in the human objective activity (as schemes of *that* activity that is directed not at 'words' or 'terms' but at very real 'things') ...

And only much later do these schemes, having been brought to consciousness, become also the schemes of speech, language, the schemes for using words, 'rules' of action in the realm of language.

Having turned Hegel's scheme 'right side up', materialism rescued philosophy from the necessity of positing the 'pure', 'divine' thinking that mysteriously existed before and independently of all the forms of its own 'determinate being' (i.e. before language and things created by the objective activity of human beings).

'Thinking' that Hegel assumes as necessary, of course, never existed and will never exist. Thinking, understood as a specifically human capacity to relate to any thing in accordance with its own measure and form, does not 'wake up to self-consciousness', but *originally emerges* in the process of the immediate and objective human activity. Therefore, the specific *subject matter* of 'thinking' from the very beginning and until the very end are 'external things' and not 'signs', not things 'born of spirit' as it turns out to be in Hegel's interpretation.

It is for the same reason that all without exception 'logical' schemes, figures and 'rules' are interpreted from the position of materialism as correctly understood general relations between things of the external world, not as specific relations between 'signs'. This is related both to the elementary schemes of traditional formal logic that have been fixed long ago and to the complex dialectical relationships that were first systematically developed in Hegel's logic. Thinking as an active capacity of any human being *is born, comes into existence*, and not 'expressed' as having been already present, in the immediate objective human activity that transforms the external world and that creates the objective human world (tools, products of labour, forms of relationships between

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<sup>10</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 216.

individuals in acts of labour, and so on) and only after that it creates the 'world of words' and a specific capacity to treat words as its 'subject matter'.

That is why *forms of thought*, i.e. *logical forms* were, remain and forever will be, regardless of whatever fantasies about them were built by the representatives of philosophical idealism in logic, only correctly understood as forms of *external world* in the transformation of which is found the essence of human life's activity.

That is why dialectics, as the science of universal forms and laws that govern both 'being' (i.e. nature plus society) and 'thinking' (i.e. conscious human activity), *is the logic* of contemporary materialism that, according to Lenin, 'has taken everything valuable from Hegel and developed it further'.<sup>11</sup>

A logic that solves the problem of the relationship between being and thinking materialistically cannot be any other kind. Its subject matter coincides with the subject matter of dialectics fully and without remainder. The 'remainders' are special realms of study related to psychology, anthropology, linguistics and other disciplines that study the 'specific features' of human activity as their special 'subject matter' and from which logic can abstract.

The 'word' (language) from this point of view turns out to be but *one* of the forms of the 'determinate being of thinking' and in no case the *only form*, as is postulated by philosophy of neopositivism; *it is not the first* either in time or in essence, as Hegel thought, and this is where he made the most serious concession to the verbal-scholastic tradition of purely formal interpretation of *thinking* and therefore of the subject matter of logic as science. This concession, this 'debt to old formal logic', is one of the gravest consequences of Hegel's idealist position, a position that considered thinking's ultimate 'subject matter' and 'object' to be not the 'external world' but only itself, i.e. only the world of its own 'external manifestations'.

It is here that we find in a concentrated form all the weaknesses of the Hegel's conception of thinking, of Hegel's logic, that prevented his logic from becoming the logic of real scientific acquisition of knowledge of nature and history. Because thinking manifests its own 'genuine nature' precisely in the process of creating and transforming *its own* 'determinate being', the real objective reality of natural and historical-societal events in acts of 'self-consciousness' shows itself only due to its *verbalisation*, i.e. its transformation into verbal 'determinate being'.

Returning to the medium of the word, thinking thus returns to 'itself', becomes conscious of itself in its truest and most adequate form of its determin-

11 Lenin 1976, p. 317.

ate being. Therefore in Hegel, the history of thought (the history of thinking) is identified with the history of language even if this identification is not done so rudely and directly as it is done in neopositivism; and, having noticed this tendency in Hegel, Lenin put two large question marks here ('history of thought = history of language??').<sup>12</sup>

This identification is connected to many of the peculiarities of the entire Hegelian philosophy. It is not accidental that *Phenomenology of Spirit* opens with the analysis of the contradiction between the richness of 'sense certainty' and the expression of that richness in words like 'this', 'now' and 'here'. The same is true for aesthetics where the evolution of art is represented as a gradual ascent of the poetical spirit from its embodiment in stone, bronze and colours to its 'adequate embodiment' in the more malleable matter (in sound, in vibrations of air) to poetry as such. Here the progress is from the stone to the word.

Undoubtedly it is this very opportunism in relation to the ancient prejudice described above that gives Hegel's logic that peculiar aspect that has been noted by many – while making his way from one category to another, Hegel fills the gaps in these transitional sections by means of purely verbal tricks, with the help of linguistic agility. It is this peculiarity that Lenin described in perhaps sharp but appropriate words: '... these parts of the work should be called: a best means of getting a headache!'!<sup>13</sup> It is these 'transitions' that always cause the most trouble to the translators of Hegel's works into foreign languages. And these transitions are 'persuasive' only to a German-speaking reader since, except for the peculiarities of German language, they have no other justification ... In all other languages these are but plays on words and nothing more. Lenin therefore continues:

Or is this *after all* a tribute to old formal logic? Yes!<sup>14</sup>

Yes, Hegel often confuses the definition of concepts and the definition of words, and these substitutions are found in his general understanding of the relationship between concepts and words, thinking and language. Taking the word and the language to be if not the only form of the 'determinate being of thought', then still as the best, the most worthy and adequate form of its 'external realisation', Hegel slides off on the tracks of the old purely formal interpretation of thinking and logic that, after all, ultimately led bourgeois thought in the area of

<sup>12</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 89.

<sup>13</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 177.

logic to the dead-end of neopositivism. As the saying goes, in for a penny, in for a pound. Here we find one of the lessons of Hegel's opportunism in the realm of logic for which he was punished by history.

Thinking as a specifically human capacity consists in the social human being's ability to carry out his activity in agreement with the objective forms and laws of existence and development of that objective reality, and carry out any activity regardless of the material in which it is realised, including activity in the sphere of language, in the material of signs, terms, and words.

## The Peak, the End and the New Life of Dialectics (Hegel and the End of Old Philosophy)

‘Contradiction is the criterion of truth, the lack of contradiction – the criterion of error’.<sup>1</sup> With this bold statement announced its birth a philosophical system that were to become the highest, and at the same time the last system, in the history of our science, an attempt to unify in one encyclopaedic synthesis all the achievements of the dialectical thought of humankind, an attempt to critically (and retrospectively) summarise the main lessons of its 2,000-year history, the history of the self-cognition of dialectics. The ‘paradox’ mentioned above was the first thesis – both in order and in significance – proposed by the young dissertation writer, defending his work ‘On the orbits of the planets’ on 27 August 1801. The defender’s name was Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, the future author of the last system of the ‘world philosophy’.

But it was a paradox, i.e. a self-contradictory nonsense, only to those who were not well versed in history. Hegel intentionally opened with the thesis with which, as we know, ancient Greek dialectics concluded its cycles.

It is a familiar thesis of scepticism, but with a minus sign, with a directly opposite emphasis. If there is anything absolutely indubitable, discovered by philosophy in the world and in thinking (or more precisely, in the world as it is thought of by humans, in the cognised world), it is the notion of contradiction.

No matter how things are with the ‘external world’, with the world ‘as it is in itself’, one thing is clear – in *thinking* this world presents itself with absolute inevitability as a system of contradictions, as an infinite series of ‘antinomies’. This is something that is indubitable even for the most consistent sceptic – this truth must be affirmed by the scepticism, both ancient and modern, that doubts everything else. This is the conclusion at which arrived, led by relentless logic, the greatest sceptic of modernity – the creator of ‘critical philosophy’, Immanuel Kant. The very same Kant whose critical philosophy was described as devoid of ideas and as an imperfect form of scepticism, i.e. scepticism that indecisively stops halfway, unable to take the final step, to make the final inevitable conclusion. Scepticism that goes all the way, on the other hand, exhausts

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1 [Translator’s Note] ‘Contradictio est regula veri, non contradictio falsi’. (Hegel 1844, p. 156).

itself and is transformed into a rather categorical statement that the world, the lives and thoughts of human beings are authoritatively ruled by *contradiction* as that absolute form in which all disagreements, doubts, and positions are resolved.

Thus we arrive at an inexorable alternative: if contradiction is an indicator (criterion) of the falsehood of all our representations, concepts and systems of concepts, then the real world in which we live is absolutely unfathomable, unknowable; if the world and life are fathomable and knowable, if thinking (cognition) is able to represent them as they are in themselves, then contradiction is their most general and fundamental characteristic, and its presence in knowledge is a sign of the truthfulness of that knowledge.

Take a look around with open eyes and you will see that there is nothing on earth or in heaven that would not contain within itself a contradiction, i.e. an *immediate* unity of the opposites, their 'coincidence' *in one and the same* thing, and precisely at the point of their transition into one another, of their mutual 'overflow', of their *transformation*.

In its immediately obvious, *visible* form this contradiction is given to us in the fact of the movement of *a body in space*, in a change of place in space in general – both Zeno and Kant understood this perfectly well, having honestly analysed the concept of *motion, change* in general.

For Kant every *change* 'presupposes one and the same subject as existing with two opposed determinations ...'.<sup>2</sup> For the 'emergence and disappearance are not changes of that which emerges or disappears. Change is a manner of existing that follows some other manner of existence of the very same thing. Therefore what changes, remains the same, and only its states are changing'. Thus we have an 'expression that seems somewhat paradoxical, that only what persists (the substance) is altered, while that which is changeable does not suffer any alteration but rather a chance, since some determinations cease and others begin'.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore the 'alteration is the combination of contradictorily opposed determinations in the existence of one and the same thing',<sup>4</sup> and the movement of a body in space, already analysed by Zeno, is only a particular, visibly available accident ('example') of *change in general*.

So if we find *contradiction* in a theoretical articulation of motion (and change in general), i.e. we are forced to 'assign' two opposite 'predicates' to *one*

2 Kant 1998, p. 304 [A189/B233].

3 Kant 1998, p. 303 [A187/B231].

4 Kant 1998, p. 336 [B291].

and the same 'subject', then we should not despair. Zeno and Kant indisputably proved that 'contradiction' is a *natural* form of articulation of *motion* in theoretical thinking, i.e. in the connection of clearly articulated determinations ('predicates'), and to be concerned about it is as silly as to be concerned about the fact that two plus two makes four, or that day is followed by night and does not last forever ...

No matter how we understand 'reality' located outside our consciousness and will, and fully independent of their whims, one thing is plain and indubitable: in the 'logic of concepts', i.e. in the connection of clearly articulated determinations, this reality is necessarily and inevitably expressed as a connection (combination) of two opposite-contradictory determinations of one and the same 'thing', one and the same 'subject', one and the same 'substance'.

It is equally ridiculous to conclude that 'in reality' outside our consciousness, outside our formulated theoretical definition, there is no *motion*, no *change*, as if the observed richness of the surrounding world is after all just a dream, a product of our inflamed fantasy, our imagination, an illusion that appears in our consciousness as is stated by 'spurious' idealism – the idealism of Hume and Berkeley.

Things outside our consciousness *exist*, and not only do they exist, they *change*, *move*, transform from one thing into another – wheat becomes flour, flour becomes dough, dough becomes bread; a child becomes an adult, an adult becomes an old person, an old person dies 'in reality', not in the consciousness of others. Rivers flow, trees grow, cities and states are built and destroyed, planets go around the sun, and 'spurious' idealism that doubts all of this by negating the external reality of 'things' and changes that are taking place in them, *in its real content* is no different from naive 'materialism' that takes everything that appears to human beings (everything that they hear, touch and smell) for the 'truth' of the external world, for the exact representation of that which is 'in reality'. In both cases we are dealing with meaningless empiricism.

Neither one has anything to do with *thinking*, i.e. with the capacity to distinguish that which only appears from that which is 'in reality', and thus no philosophy, no science can be founded on the empiricist point of view (whether that empiricism is materialist or idealist). To be more precise, they can be *founded* but they cannot move forward, because scientific thinking consists in exposing the illusions of meaningless empiricism, in showing that *in reality* 'reality' is not as it appears to us and, from time to time, it turns out to be the exact opposite in comparison with 'phenomena', with 'appearance', with its immediate 'presentation'.



Although the Sun seems moving on clear days,  
Yet it was stubborn Galileo who was right.<sup>5</sup>

A thinking person cannot be and never is a 'pure empiricist' – only a *non-thinking animal* can be a pure empiricist. And even it is not that dumb as it shows its intelligence in that it only searches for, finds and eats real (and not imagined) external things, things that constitute its real objects of desire ...

The 'objective reality' of the external world – the world of things and changes that they undergo – is not only not doubted or rejected in Hegel's dialectics, it is directly affirmed, postulated and even argued for.

That does not save Hegel's dialectics from *idealism*, and therefore from those fateful distortions that idealism introduces into dialectics, i.e. the position that attributes to nature certain characteristics of humanity, those very characteristics that nature in itself – without humanity and before humanity – did not have, does not have and cannot have.

Idealism of the Hegelian kind is in essence the same *anthropomorphisation* of the external world that we find in religious mythology exposed in the criticism of pre-Socratic materialists, but it is subtler, more veiled and therefore not as obvious, and as a result more insidious in terms of its consequences.

Let us take a closer look at this Hegelian – idealist – dialectics.

It proceeds from the assumption that there exists, outside human consciousness and completely independently of it, the 'external world' – the world of 'things' and 'changes' taking place in them (namely, motion in space and in time). It also accepts that *bodily* a human being belongs to the very same 'external world' as the things that are outside of him, his skin and his skull. Further, the axiom of Hegel's dialectics is the position that a human being more or less correctly *cognises* the forms and the locations of things outside his own body and therefore is able to act in accordance with the forms and the locations of these things, and not in accordance with his false fantasies and

5 [Translator's Note] Ilyenkov references the two final lines of a poem by Alexander Pushkin called 'Motion':

'There is no motion' – quoth the bearded sage.  
His interlocutor in answer started walking;  
An apt reply – more eloquent than talking  
Or mincing words upon the printed page.  
However, gentlemen, that most amusing case  
Reminds me of another, somewhat trite;  
Although the Sun seems moving on clear days,  
Yet it was stubborn Galileo who was right.

(Translation by Yakov Perelman)

illusions about them. Therefore Hegel does not hold consciousness, enchanted with its own fantasies, in high regard. Speaking of 'bad principles' (axioms and postulates of some science), he expresses this quite definitively: 'They are the cognition of the thing, and the thing is often better than the cognition.'<sup>6</sup>

To put it concisely, all the theses of naïve, not yet dialectical, materialism (as a spontaneously upheld position of most clearly thinking people), without exception, Hegel not only accepts, but also includes in his system of understanding and from within this system shows their limited nature, their helplessness in the face of *dialectical* difficulties, *dialectical* 'tricks' of cognition.

The general nature of these 'tricks' consists in that the process of cognition constantly and systematically shows the things 'in reality' to be not the way we immediately perceive them in the acts of sense perception – they are transformed right before our eyes not only into something 'different', but into something directly opposite.

'Only having understood a thing (in the process of learning) is it possible to rise *above it*,<sup>7</sup> at the same time as the unwise sensually perceiving consciousness finds out that the thing is not the way that it appeared, seemed, showed itself to it. The thing changed and consciousness is *forced* to change, *forced* to become different, opposite to what it was before, it is forced to find in itself the opposite of its own states – *representations of one and the same thing*, preceding and present.

Yes, but how is it possible to put together and compare (having discovered their opposite natures) the present representation with the preceding one? This is only possible if the preceding representation is somehow preserved in consciousness, *in memory*, if it is somehow *fixed* in them.

And that happens, according to Hegel, in the *word*, through the word, through the verbally fixed 'determination'. Only in the form of the verbally fixed image there is preserved in memory the preceding immediate-sensuous representation of a thing – or a thing as it is given in intuition.

Therefore *dialectics* as putting together of two opposite contradictory determinations in the representation of *one and the same* thing is present for consciousness (becomes present, becomes a *fact*) only thanks to the *word*, thanks to the *name*. The 'thing' finds itself in contradiction with itself only in its *verbal being*, in narration, in terminologically fixed existence.

6 Hegel 1844, p. 545. 'Sie sind das Bewusstsein über die Sache und die Sache ist oft besser als das Bewusstsein'.

7 Hegel 1844, p. 545 (Ilyenkov's emphasis). 'Erst wenn man die Sache versteht, was nach dem Lernen kommt, steht man über ihr'.

In sense perception the 'thing' does not experience any such encounter with itself; opposites here do not coexist, but *replace* each other, they cannot be observed *simultaneously* – it is either one side or the other. Either night or day. Either a tree, or a house, or a pig, or a sausage. Either a living person, or a dead person.

But this is true for consciousness that does not notice the act of transition, the act of transformation of one into the other, into the opposite. A – into B (i.e. into Not-A). It was A, and it became B (Not-A), where is the 'contradiction'?

Night is not day, it is a not-day. A living person is not a dead person. But in addition to 'day' and 'night' there are also evening, morning, dawn, and dusk – that moment, that point where the distinctly fixed opposites immediately 'flow' into one another, transition into one another, and, having 'coincided' with one another, disappear into one another. The moment when non-living turns into living and, in the opposite direction, living becomes dead. The moment when something *disappears*, but simultaneously something (its opposite) *appears*, and this appearance and disappearance is *one and the same* process, not two 'different' processes.

It is this very moment when two distinctly fixed (and opposed to one another) images are merged into one and the same point in space – into one image, into one 'subject matter of consciousness'. It is this very moment that is impossible to grasp for both the well-trained animal (let us remember Ivan Pavlov's experiments) and human beings who are in this aspect equal to animals as both are accustomed to the absolutely unambiguous reactions to 'one and the same' object or – and here the difference is perfectly irrelevant – one and the same sign, symbol, word, term, or determination.

The empirical – non-dialectical – cognition gives us, as its final conclusion, two 'descriptions' that are, in relation to one another, 'non-contradictory' – the state of the thing in the beginning and the state of the thing in the end, the state of *one and the same* 'thing'. But in the act of transition (and in its 'description') these two otherwise 'non-contradictory descriptions' necessarily encounter one another and each one is as 'correct' as its opposite. Evening is as much a 'day' as it is a 'night'.

That is why any *transition* turns out to be a stumbling block for any dialectically untrained mind. In this transition there is a collision, a contradiction between two opposite 'descriptions', two 'reasonable' (i.e. strictly and unambiguously fixed) abstractions.

There is no such collision as long as the two things are fixed and cognised simply as two 'different' objects that indifferently stand or lay next to each other, two 'things', as two 'set side by side' objects, two 'subject matters of determinations'. Therefore thinking that is accustomed to strictly unambigu-

ous 'determinate' things (this is grain and that is bread, this is day and that is night) fixes these determinate images with corresponding *different* 'determinate' words, terms that express no connection of *transition*, connection of *transformation*, *genetic* connection between such things. Things that are determined by *different* words are then perceived to be *different* things – that's all there is to it.

The 'contradiction' is thus expelled from any verbal description, but together with it disappears from such 'description' any hint at the *link of transition* from one thing to another. For the highest principle of the 'correct description' (correct determination of a term) here becomes the principle that can be formulated in the following way: every thing must be described in such a way that this 'description' would remain correct even if all the other things in the world did not exist at all (this principle was formulated by the father of 'logical positivism' Ludwig Wittgenstein who preferred to speak of 'facts' and not 'things', but that does not change the matter). Here, in the problem of the 'correct determination' of a thing or a 'fact', dialectics immediately finds itself in an irreconcilable disagreement with the non-dialectical (pre-dialectical, anti-dialectical) thinking.

Hegel's thought regarding this issue is extremely simple (even though its expression in Hegel's own writings is not as transparent): we can *correctly* understand and 'describe' a thing only when we determine, in this very thing (and its verbal determinations) not only its 'determinate being', but also those characteristics of the thing due to which it will sooner or later 'perish', that is, be transformed into 'another' thing, into 'its own other', into its own opposite (as living turns into dead and dead – into living).

M.M. Rosenthal provides us with an excellent commentary on this idea from Hegel's *Logic*:

The real meaning of his dialectics of the finite was that each finite thing contains not only its own determinateness, i.e. that quality which makes it a *given* thing, *but that it also contains within itself its negativity* that 'chases' it toward its own end, its own transition into something else. Already the fact that the thing has determinations means that there are *boundaries* that separate it from other thing; in other words, it means that it is negated by other things. But negativity as the quality of things has a deeper meaning: the *other*, the opposite of the given thing, is not an external other, but *its own other*, its own *other*.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Rosenthal 1974, pp. 49–50 (Ilyenkov's emphasis).

In other words, a day turns into a night, and not into a candle or rain ...

If we take a more serious 'example', *commodity*, as a form of economic reality, 'turns' into money, and not into a machine, or planet Earth, or Sputnik.

And if in the theoretical determination of the 'thing' you did not find and express *this concrete opposite* into which the *given* concrete thing will sooner or later necessarily transform, i.e. that opposite that was already 'contained' in the thing, then you did not fully express (did not understand) its 'determinate being'. For you did not discern and did not describe what was *important* in it – its internal necessity to transition into *its own* 'other'.

So if you did not discern those characteristics of the 'commodity' form of the product due to which this form 'gives birth' to the *monetary* form, then you did not discern and did not fully understand *either one or the other* – either commodity, or money – either one of these obviously 'different' things.

This Hegelian 'logical disposition' contains neither idealism nor mysticism; on the contrary, it is so simple that it might appear to be self-evident to anyone familiar with contemporary science. Thus biology understands too well that it is impossible to understand 'life', 'living organism' without identifying those characteristics due to which this *living* organism sooner or later *dies*, turns into a *non-living* thing. And, conversely, we cannot understand 'life' without seeing and understanding those characteristics of the 'non-living' matter (physical and chemical conditions and requirements for the emergence of life) that by the 'force of natural necessity', and not by some miracle or chance, create this 'opposite' state – living state – as its own product and result.

Rosenthal summarises this Hegelian point in an extremely accurate fashion: 'Hegel's notion, scholastic only from the superficial point of view, that the true *dialectical* contradiction is the "difference not from something other, *but from itself*", is crucial for understanding the objective pattern of the transformation of things, their transition into something other'.<sup>9</sup>

It means that without understanding the 'internal' difference, i.e. the difference of the commodity from 'itself', the presence of formally incompatible (since they are 'contradicting one another') determinations of the commodity form of the product, one understands nothing about the essence of the matter, about the 'essence' of this form, and therefore, further, one understands nothing about the fact that '*commodity is transformed into money*' – into *its own* other, into *its own opposite*, incompatible with it without an obvious contradiction. 'Money' is already 'hiding' in the *commodity*, not in some ready-made manner, but in the form of unsolved and insoluble within the limits of com-

9 Ibid (Ilyenkov's emphasis).

modity form *contradiction*, in the form of existence (in the form of ‘determinate being’) of two opposite determinations of one and the same form – namely, commodity form – of the product of labour: in the form of ‘exchange value’ and ‘use value’.

It is the same situation with ‘life’ that can be understood only as a result of internal qualities of the chemical environment’s collisions (chemical processes directed in polar opposites) that give birth to this life, as a result of chemical processes that collide in conflict, in contradiction. And we must not forget that *these very same* chemical ‘conflicts’ that, having given ‘birth’ to life, then (sooner or later) destroy it.

Therefore Hegel defines dialectics beautifully by pointing out that it is ‘not the *external* activity of subjective thought, but the *very soul* of the content, which puts forth its braches and fruit organically’.<sup>10</sup>

In light of what was said it is becoming clear how groundless is the view that dialectics is inextricably connected with *idealism* and does not allow for rationalist-materialist interpretation, i.e. that it cannot be ‘combined’ with materialism ‘without contradiction’. This is an old tune that has been repeated ever since Marx and Engels not only interpreted Hegel’s dialectics materialistically but also demonstrated how much its ‘heuristic power’ increases as a result of such interpretation.

This old tune has a main theme that is as old as philosophy itself: ‘contradiction’ allegedly can occur ‘only in thinking’ and under no circumstances in the ‘object of thinking’ – that is, it cannot be found in the world that surrounds the thinking person.

This is allegedly the typical ‘anthropomorphism’, typical ‘hypostatisation’ of the form of the subjective thinking, i.e. an unacceptable and illogical projection of the form of subjective activity onto the screen of the ‘world of things’.

And then the argument from etymology is made – the word ‘contradiction’ literally means ‘*speech* against *speech*’ (in German it is the same – ‘Wider – Spruch’ – counter-saying or counter-speech).

But do ‘things’ *speak*; do they possess *speech*?

Thus the simple ‘linguistic’ argument and fact is directed against dialectics that is portrayed as obvious anthropomorphism and ‘hypostatisation’.

This is the approach to ‘contradiction’ (and to ‘negation’) found in Sartre, in Heidegger’s ‘hermeneutics’, and even in some ‘Marxists’ who think about dialectics only in its Hegelian variety and therefore interpret it as a natural ‘enemy of materialism’.

<sup>10</sup> Hegel 1991b, p. 60.

Dialectics, they say, can be rationally thought only as dialectics of concepts, since the contradiction is possible *only between concepts* (between strictly determined terms, for by 'concept' here is understood a 'strictly unambiguous' – that is, non-contradictory – *term*).

Therefore, they say, the 'terms that contradict each other' *may* not only collide (this takes place during any dispute), but may even be *combined*, peacefully coexisting with one another in one and the same head, in one and the same thinking (or to be more precise – 'talking' or 'expressing') being, but under no circumstances in one and the same *subject matter* of his thinking – one and the same 'thing'. There it is not possible under any circumstances for the thing does not talk, does not express itself. Humans talk and express in place of things, and while doing so they fall into 'dialectics', into '*contradiction*'.

Therefore a number of bourgeois schools of thought are gladly willing to accept dialectics with its fundamental principle (category) of contradiction, but only as dialectics (as contradiction) in the *system of terms*, in language and in *expressive speech* (the Frankfurt school, 'hermeneutics', 'philosophy of language', and so on).

But not in the *object* that *speech is about*, that the whole story is about.

For 'dialectics', by revealing the 'contradiction', thus destroys the object, the thing, and therefore it is the enemy that 'negates' 'everything that is finite', the entire world of 'things' (that is, of 'finite' formations).

It is on this foundation that the Italian Marxist philosopher Lucio Colletti arrives at the impossibility of materialist dialectics, at the absurdity of the very project of a materialist interpretation of Hegelian dialectics and proves that dialectics cannot be but of the objective-idealist, i.e. Hegelian type – see his book *Il marxismo e Hegel*.

Colletti's argument is quite simple: Hegel directs all of his efforts at showing the *contradictory nature* of everything 'finite' – things, phenomena, states – and while at it he demonstrates the 'temporary nature and value of *material world* in general', in order to replace this feeble and ghostly world with the 'infinite' – the Absolute as God in its enlightened-philosophical version.

Of course formally one can interpret Hegel this way – and it is easy to do so because Hegel himself was not averse to this interpretation.

But to insist on this interpretation means to take Hegel's *words*, Hegel's *phrases*, for the absolutely precise expression of the essence of dialectics in general (or, which is the same thing, to reject in advance any other interpretation of dialectics except for the orthodox Hegelian kind).

In reality dialectics in general (freed from its Hegelian limitations) does not prove the 'febleness and ghostliness' of the *material world* as such (as it

appears to Colletti who shares with Hegel his main illusion), but only shows the *temporality* (frailty, finitude) of *every given* material thing, *every given* – finite – state or formation within the *infinite material world ...*

To suggest that it is directed against the '*material world in general*' is to make an illogical jump.

Still, regarding the orthodox Hegelian (idealist) dialectics and its central category – contradiction – Colletti is not completely wrong because he identifies the central problem, the problem of the distinction between idealist and materialist versions of dialectics.

Colletti's concern is understandable – idealist dialectics is indeed fraught with the unpleasant result of creating in those minds that are infatuated with it the arrogant dismissive attitude toward the world of real things, the world of empirically given facts, events, phenomena. The idealist version of dialectics indeed contains within itself this tendency since the 'external world' is turned by it into a kind of colossal reservoir of 'examples' that are there only to 'confirm' the correctness of the dialectical positions.

This internal feature or tendency of idealist dialectics that nullifies and discredits the otherwise deeply correct formulations was identified by young Marx as the 'non-critical positivism', i.e. such position for which the 'logic of matter' (concrete content of the phenomena under consideration) begins to appear as non-essential (and even completely irrelevant) for solving the main task of theoretical thinking that concerns itself first and foremost entirely with the 'matter of logic'.

This is the same perversion of thinking that Lenin called the 'transformation of dialectics into a sum of examples', perversion undoubtedly connected with an idealist understanding and 'application' of dialectics. This perversion is found several times not only in Hegel himself, but also in the works of some Marxists (even such famous ones like Plekhanov, Stalin and Mao Zedong).

It also appears there and then where and when the general dialectical truths (in themselves perfectly undisputed) attain self-sufficient role, the role of terminal (final) *conclusions* of all cognition, the role of absolute formulas. In this case the role of the empirical world – the external world – is reduced to the unenviable role of 'confirming' the undisputed status of such formulas.

Thus water boiling in a kettle, disease from a drug overdose, explosion of an atomic bomb as a result of the function of 'critical charge' and other similar facts become 'examples' that confirm the formula for the 'transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative'. *In and of themselves* these facts-examples no longer interest any person who thinks that way; their role is reduced exclusively to that of being a 'confirmation' of the general dialectical formula; they



are thought exclusively from the perspective that in them (as everywhere else) there is found the general dialectical regularity, transformation of categories ...

This – in essence purely formal – *imposition* of the general (confirmable) formula on the particular (confirming) fact does not contain at first glance anything objectionable or harmful. More than that, it could be considered ‘useful’ as a didactical tool that explains and illustrates the ‘general law’ through a particular occasion – method that, as Lenin pointed out, is used for ‘popular appeal’.

Yes, as a school method of ‘popularisation’ of dialectical truths it might be perhaps useful, but no more than that. If this ‘method’ is accepted as the explanation of the essence of dialectics, as the method of *teaching dialectics*, it immediately turns into a method of crippling thinking and leads to formation not only of a non-dialectical mind, but directly to the formation of an anti-dialectical mind.

There is hidden in it (assumed by it and therefore actively cultivated by it) an extremely *anti-dialectical understanding* of the relationship between the universal (law) and the *individual*, ‘*particular*’, and *singular*. In other words, it is the anti-dialectical understanding of this ‘*universal*’ in which one begins to see only the *abstract-general scheme* that expresses what is the ‘same’ in the boiling kettle and in the French Revolution, or in the fact of ‘mental fatigue’ and the ‘end of one’s patience’. Both here and there, one sees *one and the same* ‘transformation of quantity into quality’, *one and the same* scheme that stays the same regardless of the specific fact in which it is ‘expressed’ or ‘embodied’. And in such an understanding there is no longer even a hint of *dialectical* understanding of the ‘universal’ and its *transformation* into (its connection with) the individual, the singular.

‘But what does idealism have to do with this?’ – the reader may ask. Do we not find the same perversion in the thinking of a materialist? Is it not the case that the popular textbooks of *materialist* dialectics are also constructed using the same method? First, they formulate the ‘dialectical’ – universal – law, and then they give explanatory ‘examples’ of this law from natural science, history of humanity and history of science (scientific thinking, cognition)? What is wrong with that? Why does this method produce and instil a dialectics *without materialism*, i.e. more or less a caricatured resemblance of Hegel’s dialectics? Colletti is afraid of this very issue – the general formulas and principles of dialectics (including the ‘contradiction’) may be easily turned into prioric schemes in the closed spheres of which the theoretical thinking would dwell without any access to the study of the outside world. That is a reasonable fear.

The twentieth century knows of many cases of such 'abuses' of the formulas of dialectics.

One of the most typical of such cases that might allow us to take a closer look at the mechanism of this perversion is the case of the 'theoretical' innovations of Mao Zedong and his disciples. Here we encounter exactly such *formal application* of the contradiction thesis to the perfectly concrete political circumstances, and as a result of this application these situations (themselves created by Maoist politics) begin to look like another 'confirmation' of the universal law, like another of its – universal law's – realisations and 'embodiments'.

And it is done using a fairly simple method. We have the general formula of the law, formula that is in and of itself perfectly correct (and, let us add parenthetically, already formulated by Hegel). According to this formula every development in nature, society and thinking is achieved by the way of emergence of *internal differences*, sharpened thereafter to the level of internal *contradiction* that is resolved in the struggle. This formula is then made into the 'major premise of the proposition', according to which from the very beginning the *united* international Communist movement, acting in accordance with the universal scheme, must sharpen the disagreements and 'contradictions' in its midst, must '*split*' into oppositions that then enter into conflict with one another, into struggle for survival ...

Thus the formula of 'splitting of one into two' – in and of itself perfectly correct – turns into a *phrase* in the name of which the 'philosophical-dialectical' schismatic politics of Maoists is justified.

According to such logic, one might say that since Einstein's formula  $e = mc^2$  is correct and the annihilation of Hiroshima in 1945 occurred in accordance with the laws of nature and the universal laws of contemporary physics, therefore it was the 'correct' thing to do.

The logic there is the same – the nuclear explosion in Hiroshima certainly 'confirmed' the truth of Einstein's formula on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it doubtlessly demonstrated that this 'particular case' took place in a complete agreement with the requirements of the universal formula.

But can the formula  $e = mc^2$  be taken as a theoretical support and 'justification' of the tragedy in Hiroshima? Obviously not. The bomb did not have to be dropped – no laws of relativity would have been 'violated' if that were the case.

It would also be equally ridiculous to conclude – from the Hiroshima explosion – that the formula  $e = mc^2$  is not correct, i.e. it does not have the universal character and significance, and that it theoretically supports the destruction of civilisation and all life on Earth. The theory of relativity cannot, of course, be held responsible for American militarism whose actions are not dictated by the laws of physics, even if such actions nowhere violate these laws ...

The same happens to the laws of dialectics when they are understood as abstract-universal formulas in accordance with which every process in *nature*, *society* and *thinking* takes place. The water boiling in a kettle, the growth of seeds, the liberation of African countries from the burden of colonialism, and even the sale of watermelons in the cities – all of these processes, of course, have, whether we like it or not, a *dialectical* character and can be formally ‘subsumed’ under the universal formulas of ‘dialectics in general’, and thus be ‘justified’ by these formulas.

There is nothing surprising in this, for ‘dialectics is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought’.<sup>11</sup>

Engels, when formulating the definition of *dialectics in general* cited just now, specifically clarifies that it is related to any historical form of dialectics, either its ancient, or its Hegelian or its scientific-materialist form.

There is no indication in this *general definition* of the special characteristics of the *materialist* theory of dialectics, because it is the definition of dialectics in general.

And those who take this definition to be the fundamental definition of the *materialist* dialectics of Marx, Engels, and Lenin demonstrate that they do not see the actual difference (the actual opposition) between Hegelian and Marxist-Leninist versions of this science.

Hegel also clearly understood that dialectical laws equally rule *all* change – in the subjective human thinking and in sensuously perceived – external – world; these laws express universal forms within the framework of which exist and change not only the *world in human consciousness*, but also the world of things *outside consciousness*, outside ‘subjective thinking’.

It is essentially the difference between Hegel’s dialectics and the dialectics of Kant and Fichte, its subjective-idealistic version.

That is why, according to Hegel, the laws of dialectics do not *specifically* (i.e. in their particular features) characterise either the world of sensuously perceived things, or the process of its cognition by humans.

The ‘specific’ dialectics of *cognition* is therefore described in his system not in the *Logic*, but in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; the special dialectics of the events of nature is added then in the form of the philosophy of nature.

Logic (or dialectics in general, in its general form) is understood and explored in his teaching as the science of *the thinking of God in His ‘pre-worldly*

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11 Engels 1939, p. 160.

*existence*', as the science of the forms of activity that create *both the external world and human thinking* and therefore abstractly characterise both one and the other – the 'thinkable world' and the human 'thinking that thinks it'.

Thus logic describes only those forms and laws within the framework of which move (and change) both the *world of things* and the *world of human ideas* about the world of things. The laws and the logical forms do not express the 'specific nature' of either the spirit or nature – that is why *Logic* that presents dialectics in its general form, is defined by Hegel as the 'exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit'.<sup>12</sup>

The *specific dialectics of the spirit* as it expresses itself in a human being, in human history, gives us not *Logic*, but *Philosophy of Spirit* (the third part of the system) in the same way as the special *dialectics of nature* constitutes the second part of the system – *Philosophy of Nature*, or *Naturphilosophie*.

The laws and forms of dialectical development in *their general form*, 'as such', purified of the specifics of their expression in human history and in nature, are presented in *Science of Logic* and only there.

And if Hegel himself calls dialectics (logic) the representation of 'God' in His pre-worldly existence, then it means that the *real content of dialectics* (since there is no God) is in reality precisely the *universal forms and laws* that rule both the *external world* and *human thinking*. And these are not the specific laws and forms of human ('finite') thinking that are considered in the *Phenomenology* and *Philosophy of Spirit*.

This point is principally important for grasping both the peculiarities of Hegel's dialectics and its difference from the materialist dialectics of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

This difference consists not in that materialist dialectics has as its subject matter the *universal forms and laws* of the change of both the external world ('being') and human thinking, and Hegelian dialectics – only 'thinking'.

In this aspect there is *no* difference between the two kinds. And to see the difference where there is none means to be blind to the point where this difference (and opposition) is really found. It often happens to commentators of Hegel – they mistake Hegel's *phrases* about dialectics for the real essence of his dialectics and thus they share with him all the illusions concerning it.

The idealism of Hegelian dialectics is not found in the fact that Hegel allegedly only concerned himself with 'thinking' and therefore understood philosophy in general as a pure 'thinking about thinking'.

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<sup>12</sup> Hegel 2010, p. 29.

Respectively, materialism in the understanding of dialectics consists not in the fact that here we are not talking about the ‘dialectics of thinking’, but about the dialectics of *natural-scientific* and *socio-historical* processes.

In that aspect, Hegel’s dialectics is *absolutely* no different from materialist dialectics – in both the subject matter is the *universal* laws that govern in the same measure *human* thinking and the world of *natural-scientific* and *social* processes (both thinking and ‘being’, i.e. nature plus society).

Hegel’s logic is the presentation of these *general* laws of change (of both nature and society). Both realms constitute its *real* content (regardless of his pronouncements about ‘God’).

Hegel’s ‘God’ – and his contemporaries already understood that perfectly well – is nothing but the *deified human* thinking or, which is the same, the universal schema of the development of ‘self-consciousness’ of human (‘finite’) *spirit* (i.e. the development of science, art, law and technology).

So in reality Hegel deduces this scheme from the most scrupulous analysis of the collisions of the development of spiritual and practical (i.e. ‘moral’) culture of *humanity* by retrospective consideration by the human spirit of *its own history* – history of philosophy, sciences, history of individual development of thinking beings, history of state and law formations (and even economic systems of relationships between humans – between ‘finite spirits’, as Hegel puts it).

Thus in reality his *Logic* is the presentation of the universal scheme within the framework of which occurred and occurs the *development of science, technology and morality* (and ‘morality’ for Hegel includes not only abstract *morality*, but the entire collection of real relationships between humans, starting from everyday matters and ending with the state, law and economic forms of such relationships).

These laws that guide the development of science, technology and morality Hegel designates as ‘divine’, and his *Logic* (their presentation) – as the ‘presentation of God in His pre-worldly existence’, or presentation of super-human, ‘pure’, absolute thinking, thinking as such, ‘in-itself-and-for-itself-existing thinking’.

As a result, the laws and the forms of the development of real human thinking are presented in his system twice: first in the *Phenomenology* (and in *Philosophy of Spirit*), and a second time in *Science of Logic*.

What is the difference then between these two presentations of *one and the same* (really!) subject matter – forms and laws of the historical development of human thinking?

Hegel himself gives the following answer: *Phenomenology of Spirit* presents the historical experience of consciousness (thinking), the articulation of those

forms and laws that guide the development of both individual and collective human consciousness of the external world and itself, specific forms and laws of human thinking that create the world of culture (science, art, religion, morality). In *Science of Logic*, however, the theme is exclusively those forms and laws that rule both the development of the human consciousness and the 'external world', the world of 'things in themselves', i.e. the forms and laws of the absolute, 'divine' thinking. In other words, in *Science of Logic* we have the forms and laws of *human* thinking that grasps its 'absolute', 'divine' nature, forms and laws of activity that creates and reproduces the external world, and therefore these forms and laws are *imprinted* in the external world as *forms of things*, are observed as forms of world reason, or 'God', 'fossilised' in the things.

So the entire mystery of Hegel's idealist dialectics is concentrated in the understanding of *human thinking* and its relationship with the external world, with the natural-scientific and socio-historical phenomena.

The idealism of Hegel's dialectics is found, as is well known, in its *deification* of real human thinking, in that in it this real *human* thinking is presented *falsely* as a cosmic force that is only 'expressed' in human being, and not as an active capacity of that very human being.

Hegel's strength is that he 'deifies' *real human thinking*, real logical forms and laws, discovered by this thinking in the study of the history of science, technology and morality, forms and laws within which human thinking is taking place.

Hegel's weakness (idealism) is that he *deifies* this real human thinking, i.e. he presents it as a force and capacity of some other, nonhuman, being – 'absolute subject' or 'God'.

The whole issue is then reduced to the question of what exactly forces Hegel to 'deify' human thinking, to present this thinking (its forms and laws) as the process that occurs (or occurred) *externally and independently* of human beings (or even *before* human beings)? Undoubtedly, at the root of this illusion lies once again the perfectly real but rationally misunderstood (by Hegel) peculiar feature of *human* thinking, forms and laws of its emergence and development.

Let us therefore take a more careful look at this Hegelian conception in order to discern in it those *real features* of human thinking that served as a foundation for its idealist distortion in *Logic*.

Let us proceed from the assumption that people do not appeal to 'God' – to 'divine origin' – when life is good, i.e. they do so when they cannot explain the real facts and the difficulties found in these facts 'naturally', or based on these facts and without an appeal to supernatural forces.

(In parentheses let us note that Hegel himself understood perfectly well that the concept of 'God' in the history of cognition always played a role of the 'gut-

ter down which go all the unresolved contradictions', the role of the 'saviour' from the indestructible human difficulties ...)

And if Hegel designates the dialectical forms and laws of human thinking, found by him in the history of science, technology and morality, as 'divine', then we may see in this designation only a diplomatically (using the language of the age) expressed admission of his inability to clearly answer the direct question: where do these – logical – forms and laws of human cognition (subjective thinking) come from and how and why do they emerge and form in it? And why these and not some other logical forms?

This is the central problem of logic as science today as well. It is precisely this cardinal question that objective idealism leaves without an answer. To be more precise, the lack of the answer to this question, presented as the answer itself, constitutes the essence of objective idealism. Hegel's answer is the following: logical forms and laws, discovered in the historical development of *human* thinking, are *divine* forms and laws, i.e. they do not depend on a human being or humanity as such, they are not ruled by human activity, they are 'absolute', 'unconditional' schemes (i.e. they do not depend on anything 'other' than themselves, they are not conditioned by anything). The essence of this turn of argument does not consist in the fact that Hegel ascribes 'thinking' to the traditional 'God' that is created in the image and likeness of the human being, but simply in that he takes a real *thinking human being* and proclaims him to be a God by putting him on the throne of the Christian God. Hegel's philosophy is the deification of *science*, an intellectual activity pursued by people in common as a certain collective act and process.

At first glance, there is nothing shameful or harmful in a deification of such a truly precious human capacity as scientific thinking; it is certainly better than deification of the monarchical power or deification of the mystical wisdom of the clergy.

Nonetheless it is precisely this deification of the Intellect, Reason, and Science (that constitute the essence of Hegel's idealism) that reveals the cunning nature of any 'deification' as such, i.e. of any presentation of real human capacities as capacities of some other-than-human hypothetical being.

The problem is that any 'deification' of real human powers and capacities in reality always leads to the corresponding deification of their *determinate existence*, to the transformation of this condition into the object of worship, the object of *uncritical* affirmation. The determinate – historically established and therefore historically contingent – powers and capacities of human beings inevitably begin to be presented only from their 'positive' side, only from the perspective of their 'pluses', 'achievements' and 'successes', while all the related 'minuses' begin to appear as more or less accidental and nonessential details,

only as unfortunate 'imperfections', 'individual defects' that do not deserve any special attention and place in the presentation of the deified subject matter.

Deification always consists in such an abstraction (generalisation) from everything that constitutes the '*negative*' side of the phenomena under consideration, and therefore from those *internal contradictions* that sooner or later destroy the deified object (i.e. the given determinate level of its development, its historical maturity).

Any deification therefore always and inevitably turns out to be a betrayal of dialectics, blind to those real contradictions that constitute the 'spring' of its consequent development, the 'motor' of the movement that takes the present state of things beyond its limits (and thus developing the illusion of its 'divinity').

Here we must not lose sight of one important characteristic of such use (application) of dialectics in its orthodox Hegelian form. Namely, it is capable of 'deifying' not only that which is firmly established and has acquired the durability of the prejudice. To put it differently, a Hegelian does not necessarily have to be a conservative or a reactionary. On the contrary, he can be an *arch-revolutionary* – and such *deification* of the ultra-leftist rebelliousness can coexist with all the formal canons of *idealist* dialectics and the apologetics of the Prussian state. It is sufficient to recall the theoretical works of Herbert Marcuse or some of the advocates of 'negative dialectics' that stand unconditionally on the positions of the 'New Left'.

Thus the logical principles of Hegelian (idealist) dialectics do not determine the necessity of its *conservative-defensive* use. The falsehood of Hegelian principle lies deeper, namely in the general lack of the *necessary* link between logic and certain (or any) of its 'applications'; the falsehood lies in the principle's extreme *formal* nature.

This is exactly why, shortly after the death of its creator, Hegel's dialectics was already used as a weapon by the parties in all respects opposed in their political and legal positions – right and 'left' Hegelians. More than that, and here we have the persuasive lesson of Moses Hess, Hegel's dialectics was capable of being turned against the holy of holies of the bourgeois consciousness – against the concept of *private property* in general, and in favour of the *negation* of private property, i.e. in favour of communism (the same move that was attempted in a less elegant and skilful manner by Proudhon in his *Philosophy of Poverty*).

Historically it happened so that the principal deep deficiencies of Hegel's dialectics (logic) were exposed when this dialectics was 'applied' to the solution of the problem that did not have any philosophical-logical character – the problem of private property and its *negation*, i.e. *communism*. Here it was revealed



that theoretical thinking that uses Hegel's logic as its weapon finds itself in the position of Buridan's ass as soon as it encounters, in the midst of life, a true dialectical problem, a contradiction in all of its antinomian acuity. It turned out that in the face of such a problem Hegel's logic was unable to orient thinking toward any unambiguous decision. To be more precise, its principles allowed for equally good ('logical') justifications for both the thesis about the 'absolute rationality' of private property and the thesis about the necessity of its liquidation, its 'negation'. The communist doctrine was 'deduced' by Moses Hess as a 'dialectical negation of private property' in accordance with the rules of Hegel's logic, following the rules of logical etiquette and using all the terminological and phraseological arsenal of the language of *Science of Logic*.

And it turned out that Hegel's dialectics (logic) fully allowed for such a use, that Hegel's categories of 'absolute reason' could be applied equally well to both processes that were irreconcilable in reality, and therefore it could equally well 'justify' one and the other.

On whose side in this conflict is 'absolute reason', genuine dialectical thinking, science?

Hegel's 'Reason' is silent on this matter, demonstrating that within itself, 'in-and-for-itself', it does not contain a criterion that would allow one to solve, *even theoretically*, any real acute contradiction.

All that is left for this 'Reason' to do in this situation is to passively wait until the contradiction (private property and its negation, communism) 'resolves itself'.

Then – retrospectively – this 'Reason' would solve the problem brilliantly and dialectically thus confirming the truth of Hegel's example of the owl of Minerva that only flies at dusk, when the real process is already finished and the task is only to supply it, retrospectively, with a philosophical-logical sanction.

Still, during the most intense moment of the struggle, can Hegel's 'Reason' (i.e. *deified* theoretical thinking) not determine which side it is on? Which side has 'Reason', and which side has Unreason, illogicality, anti-dialecticity? This means that in itself it is unable to distinguish – without referencing the factors and considerations external to logic – between itself (rational) and its own opposite, the inertia of ignorance ... This also means that 'Reason' only retrospectively decides in which of the two sides engaged in mortal combat it will be 'incarnated', 'embodied', and 'objectified'.

To put it differently, Hegel's 'Reason' can solve the problem only when its help is no longer needed, when the problem was already solved without its help ...

Or, to put it yet in another way, thinking that imagined itself to be a God, a Demiurgos of the real events, 'Natura naturans' ('creative nature'), turned out

to be nothing but the passive registrar of the already accomplished events; it became akin to the small bureaucrat in the divine chancellery rather than the Creator himself ...

If 'Reason' in history is indeed doomed to play this, and only this, role, then it is impossible, 'irrational', to rely on its help during the most decisive moments of the historical process.

And it means that 'Reason' (theoretical thinking), actually participating in history and even slightly influencing its course, has 'within itself' some criterion that allows it to make a choice between alternative solutions, between opposites that are engaged in irreconcilable conflict.

And it is this criterion that in Hegel's presentation of reason was left unidentified, unrecognised. But it meant that Hegel's logic that supplied the scientific thought with a method of discovering and fixing contradictions in the developing reality, turned out to be a bad helper when the issue of the ways and methods of *resolving* the existing and clearly defined by thinking contradictions arose.

At this point Hegel's recommendations became confused and ambiguous; worse than that, in certain points these recommendations began to orient thinking not toward the search for radical solution, but in the opposite direction – to the purely formal 'reconciliation' between the existing contradictions in the bosom of some 'higher', not already found in them, 'truth'.

It is exactly here that we find the *idealism* of Hegel's dialectics and logic.

'Despite the revolutionary nature of his discussion of contradictions, Hegel developed least of all those of its aspects that were related to the moment of the resolution of contradictions', – justly observes M.M. Rosenthal.<sup>13</sup>

This, of course, does not mean that Hegel's scheme that orients itself toward the search for 'mediation' of contradictions as a part of some higher step of development within which they are 'reconciled' contains in itself the main defect of Hegel's idealism and therefore must be replaced with the formula that requires that opposites are always taken to the extremely sharp 'contradiction', to the point where no 'reconciliation' is possible and the issue is resolved only through 'struggle' – and struggle to the annihilation, struggle 'to the final victory', that ends only with the 'death', downfall of one of the 'opponents', one of the 'sides of contradiction'.

Such correction would not help lead thinking out of the dead-end of idealist dialectics and into the wide open spaces of materialism – it would only mean the simple replacement of one 'absolute' scheme with another, formally opposite but still as 'absolute' and as 'divine'.

13 Rosenthal 1974, p. 52.

It would mean a simple 'turning' of Hegel right side up would in essence change very little – if only for the reason that in Hegel's schematism of 'the resolution of contradictions' the second option (the 'irreconcilable' struggle) is not excluded, even if Hegel himself thought it 'inadvisable', and always preferred the way of 'mediation' and 'reconciliation'. But the 'advisable' and the 'preferable' are not categories of logic; they simply express personal inclination. And what option of 'resolving the contradiction' the 'world spirit' (i.e. the deified human thinking) chooses in this case does not depend on the preferences of this or that person. That is why those whose mind was educated by Hegel's logic can become not only conservatives, but also ultra-revolutionaries who remained complete *idealists* in their understanding of the essence of dialectics until the end. It is sufficient to point to the example of Mikhail Bakunin. So it is not sufficient to shift the emphasis from 'reconciliation' to 'struggle' in order to transform Hegel's dialectics into materialist dialectics. Such shift of 'emphasis' leaves dialectics entirely Hegelian since the deification of the 'struggle to the death' is no better or rational than the deification of 'reconciliation' and 'mediation'.

'Revolution' and 'irreconcilable struggle', if turned into idols, into the new god, into the new 'absolute', do not promise the people anything good. The thinking of the 'New Left' and its theoreticians (including Mao Zedong, transformed by them into a deity) clearly demonstrates this circumstance. Idealism has been and remains *deification*, and *deification* (of anything and anyone whatsoever) is the essence of idealism.

And the idealist perversion of *dialectics* (i.e. Hegel's version of dialectics) is nothing but 'deification' of the *real human thinking that developed to the level of science* or, what is the same, it is the arrogance of *scientific thinking* that considers itself a creator, an all-powerful (because infallible) Demiurge, an author of all human civilisation, a leader and a teacher of the people in their historical development.

This illusion, characteristic not only for Hegel but also for all the professionals of mental (scientific-theoretical) labour, conditions all the other illusions, even the purely formal distortions of the real dialectics in the system of Hegel, i.e. its *idealist* distortions.

That is why the real constructive critical overcoming of the Hegelian form of dialectics could take place historically only together with the decisive *overcoming of idealism in the understanding of the history of humanity*, only together with the decisive transition unto the rails of its materialist understanding.

Materialist dialectics and the materialist understanding of *history* are not two different doctrines or two different theories (if they were, they could have been created and presented independently of one another, and the truth of one

would not necessarily presuppose the truth of the other), but two inextricably connected aspects of *one and the same* doctrine, aspects of the understanding of *one and the same* subject matter.

It is this decisive point that many revisionists missed in the theory of Marx and Engels. Beginning with Eduard Bernstein, they wanted to keep the 'materialist understanding of history', but tried to 'purify' it from all the traces of 'Hegel's dialectics' and, first and foremost, from the 'contradiction' – from that category which, according to their view, cannot in principle be interpreted materialistically and therefore should be excluded from the 'scientific thinking'.

Regarding what is and is not to be included in 'scientific thinking' these theoreticians decided based on the ideas from positivist and neopositivist textbooks; and all these 'textbooks' always took and still take as an indubitable axiom that cannot even be discussed the notion that the ideal of scientific thinking always was and is found in its 'non-contradictory' nature, and the 'contradiction' is always and everywhere a symptom and an indication of the *imperfection* of scientific thinking, its inadequacy vis-à-vis this 'ideal'.

The revisionists argued that dialectics was 'anti-scientific' by appealing to the fact that science (in reality, only their peculiar understanding of science) always attempted to construct a 'non-contradictory' theory and therefore could not tolerate 'contradictions'. But malevolent Hegel – and gullible Marx and Engels – tried to present 'contradiction' as a lawful *logical* form of scientific thinking and therefore did not see anything harmful in it; they even called for reconciliation with the fact of the existence of 'logical contradictions' as part of theory, part of 'science'.

This position is very clearly presented by a 'Marxist' writer Adam Schaff:

If we accept it [here he is talking about formal logic with its principle of the 'prohibition against contradiction' – E.I.], then it is impossible to reconcile this position with the acceptance of the logical contradiction that inevitably flows from the acceptance of the idea of objective contradictoriness that is found in material motion. Either formal logic is mistaken, or the proposition about the objective contradictoriness of motion is mistaken. Neither 'dialectical' phrases nor accusations of revisionism will save us from the necessity of the real solution of this problem. The scientific truth is above everything else ...<sup>14</sup>

14 Cf. Schaff 1957. [Ilyenkov does not provide a page number for this citation].

All of this is of course accompanied by the stereotypical reproaches directed at Engels who allegedly ‘uncritically’ copied from Hegel the discussion of the moving body that ‘both is and is not at a given time in a given place ...’. Hegel’s dialectics thus allegedly orients thinking toward such ‘incorrect’, ‘improper’ statements, gives them the highest – dialectical-logical – approval and thus ‘justifies’ them by forcing thinking to ‘reconcile’ with them. Science – and Adam Schaff speaks in the name of science and scientific truth – cannot under any circumstances agree with such statements ...

It is obvious that the thesis of the ‘congenital’ anti-scientific nature of dialectics is only the reversed thesis about the innate anti-dialectical nature of ‘science’. It is not difficult to show, however, that by the word ‘science’ here we mean not real science as a historically developing system of the human being’s knowledge about the world and himself, but only some ‘system of signs’, system of ‘terms’ and ‘propositions’, constructed in accordance with a number of previously deduced rules, among which we find, of course, the rule of the ‘prohibition against contradiction’.

Of course, if we accept this understanding of ‘science’ and ‘scientific truth’, then any talk of dialectics or dialectical development through contradictions is out of the question.

But since Hegel (and therefore the materialist interpretation of his logic) based his views on an entirely different understanding of science, that is to say of *thinking that reached the level of science*, then the question concerning formal determinations of thinking may be satisfactorily solved only on the basis of the clear solution of the question of the role and function of thinking in the development of the entire human culture, of the role and function of thinking in the history of humanity, of the place of ‘Reason’ in history.

And here materialism faces idealism in direct and clear form without any confusion of details and vague verbiage.

Idealism finds itself at this point in a rather unpleasant situation. Namely, if thinking begins to consider itself divine, the creator of history, then it is forced to assume responsibility not only for the ‘successes and achievements’, undoubtedly brought about by thinking people, but also for all the defeats, all the failures and inadequacies – for all the results of human activity that are hardly ‘rational’.

In this case, as Herbert Marcuse wittily noted, thinking, or ‘Reason’, may be, or even has to be, defined by such terms as slavery, Inquisition, child labour, concentration camps, gas chambers, and preparation for the nuclear war.

Naturally, by putting thinking (science) on the throne of the previous God, idealism is forced to put on this God all the responsibility for Auschwitz, Hiroshima, pollution of the oceans, air and water by the industrial waste, and

for all such events that threaten to become a catastrophe for the thinking itself. Indeed, if there were no scientific thinking, there would be no such problems. Thus we arrive at a kind of neo-Rousseauist position.

Idealism can find a solution in this fateful situation only one way – by uniting all of these issues into a category of the ‘necessary costs of operation’ and give it some diplomatic label such as the ‘negative aspect of the positive’, the negative side of successes and achievements.

For the time being it is possible to ignore this ‘negative aspect’ as some secondary, even if, unfortunately, necessary ‘addition’. And Hegel’s dialectics in general lead precisely to such attitude toward the ‘negative’.

But such conclusion awaited it not because it was a dialectics, but because it was an *idealist* dialectics – dialectics connected with the false arrogance of science (scientific thinking and thinking in general), with its self-deification.

And the problem does not cardinally change if the emphasis is made on the ‘negative’, while ‘successes and achievements’ are ignored as it is done today by the distant descendants of Hegel such as Adorno and Marcuse. Such change of emphasis does not make dialectics more materialist.

Dialectics here begins to look more like the trickery of Mephistopheles, like the diabolical toolbox for the destruction of all human hopes, and the ‘positive’ moments, i.e. the successes achieved by its use, begin to look like a worm on a hook, like a deceptive bait; people bite this bait, like trout, and find themselves in the pot of devil’s soup ... In this change of emphasis from the ‘positive’ to the ‘negative’ dialectics only changes its tonality – from the major-optimistic to the ‘tragic’ tonality – and that’s all – it remains a supernatural, superhumanly wise and insidious power that reigns over people instead of being a tool of their power over the ‘external world’ with its foreign (‘alienated’) images (among which we find yet again the nightmarish energy of the atom, monsters of modern technology, state, and so on and so forth).

And nothing can be done about it – the devil is God, only with the minus. He is the same superhuman ‘authority’, only with the opposite intentions ... He is the irresistible and unknowable ‘objective’ force that is ‘embodied’ in thinking people, turning them into its *speaking tools*, into his slaves who naively think that they are pursuing their own goals and interests while in reality they are mystically performing the commands of the ‘external’ and ‘alien’ cosmic force of the dialectics, irresistible power of the hopelessly tragic contradictions.

Idealist dialectics inevitably acquires the characteristics of either God or devil – the seducer of the human race – and as a method of thinking it turns into either ‘uncritical positivism’, as it does in Hegel and his faithful followers among the ‘Right Hegelians’, or it turns into supercritical negativism of the old and the new ‘Left’. These are two equally ‘natural’ hypostases of *idealism*

in understanding and application of dialectics, in understanding and application of the power of thinking that falsely represents to itself *its own function and role in history*, in development of social relationships between people and their relationships with nature.

Therefore the transition from the ways of idealist dialectics and illusion that emerge from it to the ways of scientific materialist understanding and its application presupposes, first and foremost, the decisive clearing away of all the traces of idealism, i.e. of the 'deification' of the dialectics' real subject matter – thinking that reached the level of *science*.

Yes, philosophical idealism, unlike the primitive-religious idealism, deifies *scientific* thinking. Or to put it differently and more justly, in the form of philosophical idealism of any kind *scientific* thinking deifies itself, ascribes itself such a role and function in the history of humanity, in the development of the productive force of human race, that in reality does not belong to it. It begins to imagine itself the *creator* of human civilisation when in reality it always was and still remains in the best case only its *helper*.

It is a wise and powerful helper, if the academic class correctly understands its real role in the development of the entire human culture and actually plays this real role.

It is a 'helper' – in quotation marks – in those cases where its work begins to be guided by *false* self-consciousness, i.e. false consciousness of its own role and function. In such cases scientific thinking, while *formally* remaining 'scientific', becomes an accomplice in rather shady deeds and schemes that are in reality directed against progress, and therefore against scientific thinking, against its own real 'interests'. In such cases it finds itself in the false role, not only in the role of an 'accomplice', but in the role of the main *perpetrator*, main *criminal*, solely responsible for Hiroshima, gas chambers, bugging of telephones and other such vile things. And why not? The technology for all these things was developed on the basis of science, and without 'scientists' it could not have been done ...

However, the real culprits remain in the shadows because they encourage the illusion of the academic class, when this class serves their purpose, in order to blame them when the scheme – in essence non-scientific or even anti-scientific – comes to a crashing failure and someone has to be held responsible for this failure.

And who is going to be held responsible if '*science*' already imagined itself to be the *creator*, the *author* of all things where it was only the *co-author*, and not even the main one? Who is going to be held responsible if the true main author announces that he has always followed science and its recommendations and therefore is not guilty if *science* let him down?

Such is the reality of idealist illusions of *science* about its own status, its own role and function. If you imagine yourself to be God, then be responsible for *everything*. And do not try to put the blame on the 'half-educated executors' of your prescriptions – they acted in the way you taught them to act. If you taught them badly, it is your fault and no one else's.

Pay for your own illusions regarding yourself, for your *idealism*, for trusting idealism in understanding your own role and function.

Another solution is to say farewell to this idealist illusion (illusion that is very good for the self-esteem of science during the period of 'successes and achievements' and very bad for it when the 'negative side' is revealed, i.e. when we see the unintended consequences of its recommendations), to acquire sober 'self-consciousness' – objective understanding of the real role, real possibilities of thinking and therefore of real limits of the 'force of science' and its 'conceptual power'.

First and foremost this means that science (and especially *specific* sciences like physics or philosophy, mathematics or chemistry) is after all *not omnipotent and not omniscient*; and it therefore does not have the right to the titles of a God that it deposed. One should not put a new God in the place of an old one and give it the same attributes of 'omniscience' and 'omnipotence'. To cease to consider oneself a God simply means to be slightly more humble and admit that *science* (scientific thinking), deified by idealist philosophy, is in reality not a creator and an author of everything that is taking place, but only an *educated reviewer-adviser* assigned to the real 'creator of history' – the *human being* understood as the 'collection of all social relationships', as the real concrete-historical 'ensemble' of all actually existing, i.e. actually creating life, individuals.

When Hegel deifies thinking and concept, it simply means that he provides a philosophical-scholastic expression for an illusion that always was and still is cherished by the *professionals of mental* (in our time, scientific) *labour*. Hegel shares with them this ancient illusion that consists in belief that 'thinking' made human beings what they are, that a human being 'is a thinking being', or, to put it differently, that it is precisely in *thinking* that we find the specifically human characteristic that distinguishes him from the rest of the inorganic and organic world.

According to such 'anthropology', a human being became human at the moment when he started 'thinking', i.e. when he acquired 'self-consciousness'. Thus it turns out that the *rest* of the 'powers and capacities of a human being', as well as their products, are but more or less distant *results of this capacity for 'thinking'*, *consequences of thinking* as a primary and fundamental 'power', that at some time awoke in the human being and now acts in him.



The products – the consequences – the results of thinking here are everything from a stone axe, a stone knife, and the human capacity to cut an axe and a knife from raw stone, to idols, temples (as well as the capacity to erect them), state institutions, machines – everything from primitive weaving equipment to automatic lines, synchrophasotron, grammatical rules and nylon underpants – everything up to space rockets and satellites.

All of this is understood (and theoretically defined) as the totality of ‘external embodiments of the power of thinking’, as ‘objectified thinking’, as a ‘realised concept’ (or ‘idea’ – the difference here is purely terminological).

A statue is the sculptor’s intention ‘embodied’ in marble. A machine is the mental plan of the engineer-designer ‘realised’ in woods, metal or plastic. State institutions are a ‘realised idea’ of a political leader, a ‘lawgiver’ of the status of Lycurgus or Solon, and so on and so forth.

The activity of those people who, due to the division of labour that took place before and independently of them, are occupied with special-mental labour, work with their ‘head’, creating *plans, projects, ideas and taking them to the point of their ‘embodiment’ in natural materials done with the hands of other people* – this is the reality, the ‘model’, from which idealism always copied its image of God, divine thinking, divine concept, divine idea, absolute spirit.

It is quite obvious that the clearer and the more distinct the difference between the mental and the physical labour (physical in the most general sense of the word) and the more distinctly the mental labour is separated into a special sphere of the division of social labour, concentrating *in the caste of professionals* of ‘thinking’, the more solid and deep becomes the soil for *idealist illusions* that these priests-professionals of thinking create regarding the importance of their own labour, its role and function, its significance and origin ...

The Hegelian system is the last, most developed and encompassing system of ‘self-consciousness’ of these professionals of thinking (professionals of ‘mental’ theoretical labour), and it shares with them all the illusions that inevitably emerge in this social class.

And first and foremost the illusion that humans ‘think first’ (accomplish a theoretical act), and only then transition to ‘practical realisation’ in wood, bronze, stone, dirt or any other natural material, creatively ‘embodying’ in it ideas, images, and plans thought out by the ‘spirit’, and thus – more and more – transforming the Earth into the material for its ‘external embodiment’, into the sphere of ‘realised thinking’, into a *noosphere*.

The kind of thinking that Hegel has in mind is of course not the thinking of an *individual human being*, not a *mental act* that is taking place in the skull of the individual, in the secret spaces of the brain’s grey matter. If by ‘thinking’ one understands only that, then one will never be able to grasp the genuine

meaning of Hegel's texts, and of course one will never be able to *understand* them critically and materialistically.

By the term 'thinking' Hegel always and everywhere means that *universal capacity* (or 'power') that occurs *without any mediation* and therefore is factually given to the logician-professional as the subject matter of his attention – not only and not even so much inside an individual head, as in the space that encompasses *millions* of 'heads', connected in a network of communications as into one, so to speak, 'collective' head – 'collective reason' of humanity.

By 'thinking' we therefore understand not the individual-mental process of ordering such mental 'units' as sensation, experience, representation or image, but an *actual process of the production of knowledge* as a *collective* treasure of humanity, presenting itself to a particular individual and his psyche in the form of science, technology and morality.

Let us again remember that 'morality' in Hegel's lexicon signifies not only an abstract 'ethical code', but also the entirety of all actual relationships between humans, including economic, political, juridical and everyday forms of such relationships, i.e. the entire system of 'communications' that connect humans into groups, classes, nations and, ultimately, into 'humanity', into 'human-kind'.

'Thinking', realised in the form of science, technology and morality, is different from a particular individual and his mind; it has a *special objective reality* – its process and its results do not depend on the individual and his will and consciousness, quite the opposite, it defines the will and the consciousness of the individual, the method and the character of his individual actions.

Hegel's 'Absolute Idea' is nothing but the label behind which we find the *real spiritual culture of humanity*, described in its internal division; and 'absolute thinking' is this same culture in its development, in the process of its production and reproduction. But why is this entirely real subject matter – real human thinking – described by Hegel as 'absolute thinking', as 'God in his pre-natural existence'? Where does this illusion come from? It would be extremely naïve to explain this fact by referring to Hegel's sympathies toward religion or his desire to dress up his clearly anti-religious concept, a concept that puts science above religion, into the garb more appropriate for his contemporaries, into the form acceptable for censorship. If this last consideration did play a role, then it was by far not the main reason. Of course, Hegel wanted to be more 'accessible' to his readers, brought up in the conditions of the official worldview, and that is why he illustrated his concept using Biblical images, even if he stipulated that these were just 'images', just 'metaphors'. However, when he did it, he admitted that in religious images there are some 'rational kernels' – metaphorical expression of his own ideas, that religion is not pure delusion and ignorance.

This way, replacing religion with science, he provided religion with a 'scientific justification'. In Hegel, science sublated religion in accordance with all the rules of logic, i.e. it simultaneously 'buried' it and 'preserved' it in itself, taking in its 'rational kernel'.

But what was that 'rational kernel'?

Hegel understood sufficiently well that the images of 'gods' always were and remain but peculiar *projections* in which a human being describes and comes to understand only his own 'powers' and 'capacities' – only now given the form of an 'external' power, the form of powers and capacities of a being 'external' to him, drawn by the power of his imagination in the external space, given the form of a mighty and wise old man with a beard, a moustache, arms and legs and other such attributes. Such a – *Catholic* – version of 'God' Hegel already rejected in his youth as a Protestant, a Lutheran, preferring to see in the Gospel parables only the moral – and not factual-historical – truth.

He saw the real 'power' and 'truth' of religion in the power and truth of those *moral* traditions that were proposed in the name of imaginary 'gods' by real people, those 'objective norms' of coexistence that were in reality established by the people who had the *thinking*, the *creative capacity* to invent such rules, to formulate and to establish them as universal and obligatory laws.

Hegel, in other words, understood perfectly well that in the name of God human beings always worshipped *themselves*, or more precisely, their own self-consciousness – this truly 'divine' power and might of history.

He was read this way at least by all the intelligent readers, and Hegel never objected to such an understanding; we have the sufficiently reliable witness account to this effect from Heinrich Heine.

But Hegel (like Ludwig Feuerbach later) explained the very fact of 'projection' of this 'power' onto the screen of heavens as the fact of 'alienation', *taking place only in imagination*, like a shadow that a thinking person casts onto the screen of 'external space'. It is the phenomenon of imagination and nothing more.

The human being 'imagines' God and then acts in accordance with the imagined (by him!) commandments of this imagined (again by him!) 'external' being. In reality – from the outside – no one is forcing him to perform this trick of imagination. It is only the power of imagination that draws these external images. Gods are natural and necessary products of the power of imagination, for the special function of imagination consists precisely in that it projects the 'internal states of the subject' from inside out, giving them the form of a picture, the form of an image, the form of a statue, the form of an external 'thing' as such.

This is absolutely correct – light stimulates the retina, visual perceptions are

transformed precisely by the power of imagination into the *image of an external thing*. Without this power we would not be able to see *things* in external space, but would only experience optical stimulations inside our own head, inside the eye. This is a reliable fact, proven by psychology and psychophysiology.

And purely psychological explanation of the phenomenon of 'deification' by the human being of his own 'powers' (capacities) that lays at the foundation of the Hegelian-Feuerbachian conception of 'alienation' is, it appears, absolutely indisputable. It is unlikely that we can add much to this explanation now, 150 years later.

But even the most complete 'psychological' explanation of religion, and the phenomenon of 'deification' by human beings of their own 'active (i.e. creative) powers' and *capacities*, leaves out in the shadow the most important issue.

Why does *thinking* continue to appear to be a *God* even after the mystery of 'God' was discovered in the 'alienated human self-consciousness' and the word 'God' became nothing but a pseudonym for a *thinking person* (and this was the discovery of the German classical philosophy from Kant to Hegel and Feuerbach)? It appears to be some absolutely *impersonal, super-personal, objective* 'power' that does not obey the will and the consciousness of individual human beings who can only 'attach' themselves, their will and consciousness, to it, transform it into their individual 'power', develop in themselves the capacity to act according to the dictates of this objective 'power of objective thinking' – 'Reason' – that acts outside and independently of them.

We have only to think about the characteristics of the 'objective' ('deified') thinking listed above, and we can easily discern in them the self-understanding of the historically developing *science*.

Yes, science is indeed opposed to the individual with his consciousness and will as a special 'object of assimilation'. Science is nothing but a 'collective' (i.e. entirely impersonal and super-personal) *reason of humanity* in the name of which 'scientists', its authorised 'representatives', speak and write; they worship it as deeply as the Egyptian priests worshipped Amun or Ra or the Pope worships the authority of the authors of the Bible.

Science is the experience of cognition accumulated by *humanity*, and not a fabrication or an invention of the consciousness and will of this or that scientist, whether Newton or Pavlov, Maxwell or Darwin. It is a universal and not an individual treasure of the human race; it is no less 'objective', i.e. existing outside and independently of the individual consciousness, than ingots, kitchen utensils or palaces.

More than that, science is 'objectified' not only in books, not only in terms or formulas and designs, not only in the form of institutes and academies, but also in the construction of real machines and automatic lines, in the threat-

ening weapons of armies and other organs of state power and even in the judicial structure of the real state. In this form science is the objectified power of knowledge, realised thinking, it really, and not in imagination only or thanks to imagination only, does stand over against the individual with his will and consciousness as the 'power' in face of which 'thinking of an individual' (or thinking in its individual-mental capacity) does have, in reality and not in the feverish imagination of idealists, the vanishingly small magnitude.

This way *thinking*, while remaining the thinking of *human beings*, i.e. of individuals in their real communal activity, stands over against them as a *special* 'power' and 'authority' that has been separated from them. And this 'authority' dictates its laws to the thinking of each individual, laws that the individual has to reckon with much more carefully than with any of his individual whims and desires, ideas and 'speculations'. These laws are the laws of logic.

The laws of the historical development of knowledge are the laws that the individual-mental processes obey willingly or unwillingly, whether singular 'subjects' of these processes, individual humans-scientists, want it or not ...

It is these laws, and not the laws of subjective-mental activity of specific individuals, about which Hegel writes in his logic.

Of course, mental activity of an individual always takes place within the boundaries of these laws, it is guided by these laws; but they are first articulated only and precisely as the laws of historical development of science, technology and morality, and only then are they more or less cognised by the individuals (in the form of logic) and become consciously 'applied laws' of mental activity – the laws of *thinking as one of the mental capacities of a specific person*.

More than that, thinking of an individual only becomes universal (and acknowledged as such) property, firstly, when it addresses some urgent need in science, i.e. solves this or that scientific problem, this or that contradiction in the system of scientific ideas and, secondly, when it does so using the means 'understood' by other individuals, i.e. it expresses its solution in the universally acknowledged and intelligible forms and uses the universally accepted *language* of this science.

In other words, the subjective thinking of an individual becomes the fact of scientific development only inasmuch as it is expressed in the form that is entirely 'impersonal', 'objective', and 'universal', in the form created before this individual, independently of him and imposed on him from the 'outside'.

Thus, the illusion inherent in Hegel as a representative of idealism, the illusion that turns a *human* capacity ('thinking') into an 'objective' (external to and independent of a human being) 'power', has a real foundation in the fact that all the 'forms', without exception, within the limits of which the thinking of an

individual person takes place, *are imposed* on him from the 'outside', from the preceding development of culture.

And this illusion settles in the consciousness because science, having changed into a separate sphere in the division of collective labour, in reality does 'alienate' itself from the majority of individuals and in this – 'alienated' – form is opposed to this majority as a special *social* force and not as *this majority's own capacity*.

Hegel describes thinking in this – alienated – form of its development; and this form becomes a profession for the more or less narrow circle of people and therefore reaches the 'higher stages' of its development only as the real 'power' of the very few.

The 'capacity' to think, i.e. to *develop* certain knowledge in any professionally isolated area (be it quantum mechanics or jurisprudence), is realised by professional scientists, and the rest of us see this capacity as some *external and even foreign* power, as a power and authority that belongs to 'others' who rule us in the name of science and who tell us *how* to understand this or that subject matter.

Always remaining the *universal* product of human development, science (scientific thinking) is not only represented, but in reality becomes a *special* product, a product of the special sphere in the division of social labour; and the more complex and entangled its relationships with the other spheres of production become, the more easily are its representatives persuaded by the illusion of the 'self-development of science', 'self-development of the concept' as of the form of scientific cognition, thinking and knowledge.

## Hegel's *Science of Logic*

To *understand* Hegel's logic means not only to grasp the direct meaning of its main positions, i.e. to make a kind of interlinear translation of its text into the more accessible language of contemporary life. That is only half the challenge. What is more important and more difficult is to discern in the peculiar turns of the Hegelian idiom the real subject matter addressed in it. It means to understand Hegel critically – to restore for oneself the image of the original on the basis of Hegel's peculiarly distorted presentation. To learn to read Hegel materialistically, the way Lenin read and advised us to read him, means to learn to critically compare Hegel's presentation of the subject matter with that subject matter itself while registering the differences between the copy and the original at every step of the process.

This task would be quite simple if the reader had before him two readymade objects for such a comparison – the copy and the original. But in this case the study of Hegel's logic would have been superfluous and have interest only to the historian of philosophy. It would not reveal to the reader anything new in the subject matter, and in its Hegelian presentation one would discover, naturally, only the 'distortions' – only the discrepancies with what is being presented, only the idiosyncrasies of an idealist. As a matter of fact, it is ridiculous to waste time on studying the subject matter using the distorted image if we have before our very eyes the subject matter itself or, at least, its exact realistically drawn portrait, purified of all subjective distortions ...

Unfortunately, or fortunately for science, the matter is not so simple.

First and foremost, we have the question: with what are we to compare and contrast the theoretical constructions of *Science of Logic*, this 'distorted copy'? With the original, genuine forms and laws of the development of scientific-theoretical thinking? With the process of thinking that proceeds in strict agreement with the requirements of the genuinely scientific Logic?

But this is possible only if the reader already has such thinking, has the developed culture of logical thinking, and therefore does not need either to improve it or to study its theory. Such a reader would indeed have the right to look down on Hegel, and we would not dare to recommend that such a reader waste his time on reading *Science of Logic*. Assuming that such a reader exists, we can only complain that he has not yet blessed humanity with his own textbook of logic, in all aspects more perfect than Hegel's, and that he did not yet make the study of the latter's book as unnecessary for everyone as it is for him.

A reader with such arrogance is not a figment of our imagination. He exists and he has many followers. Among those followers we find neopositivist philosophers who seriously think that the 'logic of science', the 'logic of contemporary scientific knowledge' – exact and undistorted description of the logical schemes of scientific thinking – is in their possession. Based on this idea, neopositivists think it unnecessary and even harmful to acquaint themselves with Hegel's logic. We begin to doubt the soundness of their pretensions when we see that all of their neopositivist works dedicated to logic taken together were and still are unable to stop the powerful influence on the real scientific thinking that Hegel's theoretical heritage and his tradition in logical science had and still continue to have. From another point of view, the analysis of the works of neopositivists shows that their pretentious 'logic of science' is nothing but pedantic and non-critical description of those routine logical schemes that for a long time now have been used by every representative of mathematical natural science. And that is why the 'logic of science' cannot really teach them anything new. It simply shows them, as in the mirror, what they already know perfectly well – their own conscious ideas about the logic of their thinking, about the schemes of its work.

And in what measure do these traditional logical schemes, purposefully applied in mathematical natural science, correlate with real logic of the development of contemporary scientific knowledge – this question is simply never raised by the neopositivist logic. Such logic 'describes' – and does so entirely non-critically – that which is, and in this non-critical attitude toward 'contemporary science' it sees its own virtue.

All the while the only serious logical question that now and again presents itself to theoreticians of the concrete areas of scientific cognition consists precisely in the critical analysis of the determinate logical forms from the point of view of their correlation with the real needs of the development of science, the real logic of the development of contemporary scientific knowledge. And in this matter Hegel's *Science of Logic*, despite all its idealist vices, may contribute to contemporary science infinitely more than the pretentious 'logic of science'. It may contribute precisely to the understanding of the real forms and laws of the development of contemporary scientific-theoretical cognition that authoritatively rule the thinking of certain scientists often going against their own determinate logical consciousness, against their consciously adopted logical objectives.

We must conclude then that the genuine Logic of contemporary science is not given to us immediately, it must still be identified, understood, and then transformed into a consciously applied set of tools for the work with concepts, into a logical method for solving those problems of contemporary science that



do not yield to routine logical methods presented by neopositivists as the only lawful, only scientific methods.

But if this is the case, then the critical study of *Science of Logic* cannot be reduced to the simple comparison of its positions with the logic that is *consciously* used by contemporary natural scientists that consider this latter to be faultless and indubitable. We should not think that Hegel is only correct where his views are in agreement with the logical ideas of contemporary scientists and incorrect in cases of disagreement with them.

Under closer scrutiny, it might turn out that the situation is exactly the opposite. It may be that it is precisely in these points of disagreement that Hegel's logic is closer to the truth than the logical ideas of the living theoreticians, that here he acts in the name of logic that is not found in contemporary natural science, logic that contemporary science needs and this need cannot be satisfied by traditional logical methods.

If we keep all of this in mind, then the task of every reader of *Science of Logic* is in essence a research task. The difficulty of this task is that in Hegel's presentation of the subject matter, which in this case is thinking, we must critically compare it not with its readymade and already known prototype, but with a subject matter the contours of which will only emerge for the first time in the very process of the critical overcoming of Hegel's constructions.

The reader finds himself in the situation similar to that of the prisoner in the Platonic cave – he sees only the shadows cast by figures invisible to him, and he must reconstruct for himself the images of these figures that remain invisible to him. And thinking in reality is invisible.

The reader can reconstruct for himself the prototype, given in Hegel's logic in a string of 'shadows' that replace one another, each distorting the original in its own peculiar way, if he clearly understands the structure of that optics that Hegel uses to look at the subject matter of his study. This distorting but at the same time magnifying optics (the system of fundamental principles of Hegel's logic) allowed Hegel to see, even if in a dialectically upside-down way, the *dialectics* of thinking, that logic that remains invisible to the philosophically naked eye, for simple 'common sense'.

Above all, it is important to understand what *real subject matter* Hegel studies and describes in his *Science of Logic* in order to gain the critical distance vis-à-vis Hegel's presentation of it. This subject matter is *thinking*: 'That *thinking* is the subject matter of logic, we are all agreed', underlines Hegel in *The Encyclopaedia Logic*.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore and quite logically, logic as a science is defined as 'thinking about thinking', 'thought thinking itself'.

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 47.

There is nothing yet specifically Hegelian or specifically idealist in this definition and the concept expressed in it. It is very simply the traditional idea about the subject matter of logic as science taken to its precise and categorical expression. In logic the subject matter of scientific thinking turns out to be this thinking itself, while every other science is thinking about something else, whether it is stars or minerals, historical events or bodily organisation of the human being with a brain, a liver, a heart and other organs. When Hegel defines logic as 'thinking about thinking', he shows quite precisely its singular difference from any other science.

However, this definition immediately poses the following question and requires that we provide a precise answer: but *what is thinking?*

Obviously, answers Hegel (and we must agree with him), the only satisfactory answer to *this* question is found in the very presentation of the 'essence of the matter', i.e. the concrete and detailed theory, the science of thinking itself, the 'science of logic', and not simply another 'definition'.

(Compare this with what Engels writes: 'Our definition of life is naturally very inadequate, inasmuch as, far from including *all* the phenomena of life, it has to be limited to those which are the most common and the simplest. From a scientific standpoint all definitions are of little value. In order to gain an exhaustive knowledge of what life is, we should have to go through all the forms in which it appears, from the lowest to the highest'.<sup>2</sup> And further: 'Definitions do not matter for science because they always turn out to be insufficient. The only real definition is the development of the thing itself, and that is already not a definition'<sup>3</sup>).

However, in logic, as in any other science, we must first and foremost preliminarily designate and outline the most general boundaries of the subject matter of the forthcoming study, i.e. we must indicate the area of facts that will receive attention in the given science. Otherwise we will not have a clear criterion for selecting facts, and the role of such a criterion will be given to arbitrariness that pays attention only to those facts that 'confirm' its generalisations and ignores the rest of the facts that are unpleasant for it because they are allegedly irrelevant to the matter, the competence of this given science. And Hegel provides us with such a *preliminary* exposition without hiding from the reader (as do many authors of the many books on logic) exactly what he means by the word 'thinking'.

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<sup>2</sup> Engels 1939, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Engels 1975, p. 578.

This point is extremely important and everything else depends on its correct understanding. Without having figured out this point, there is no reason to even begin the reading of *Science of Logic*, since without such an understanding the book will be misunderstood. It is not accidental that the main objections to Hegel, both fair and unfair, are directed at this area. Neopositivists, for example, in one voice reproach Hegel for allegedly 'expanding' the subject matter of logic in an unacceptable manner, by including the great mass of things that cannot, in the common and strict sense, be called 'thinking'.

First and foremost Hegel includes the entire sphere of concepts that are traditionally ascribed to 'metaphysics', to 'ontology', that is to say, to the science of the 'things themselves', the entire system of *categories* – universal definitions of reality found outside the human consciousness, outside the 'subjective thinking' understood as a mental faculty of a human being, as only one of his mental faculties.

If by 'thinking' one means this mental faculty of a human being, mental activity that takes place inside the human head and known to all as *conscious reasoning*, as 'reflection', then the neopositivist reproach to Hegel must indeed be considered just.

Hegel understands by 'thinking' something other, something more serious and, at first glance, mysterious, even mystical, when he speaks of 'thinking' that takes place somewhere outside and independently of a human being, when he speaks of 'thinking as such', of 'pure thinking', and when he considers the subject matter of Logic to be precisely this – 'absolute' – superhuman thinking. Logic, according to his definitions, must be understood as the 'exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature or of a finite spirit'.<sup>4</sup>

These – and others like these – definitions can confuse the reader and initially disorient him. Of course, 'thinking' as some supernatural force that creates out of itself nature and history, even the human beings themselves with their consciousness, does not exist anywhere in the universe. But then is Hegel's Logic a presentation of the non-existent subject matter, a made-up, purely fantastical object?

What are we to do in this case? How are we to solve the problem of the critical rethinking of Hegelian constructions? With what real subject matter can we compare and contrast the series of these theoretical definitions in order to distinguish in them truth from falsehood?

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4 Hegel 2010, p. 29.

With real thinking of a human being? But Hegel would respond that his *Science of Logic* is not concerned with it and that if the empirical common human thinking does not look like thinking he describes, then it is not an argument against his Logic, because the latter presents a *different* subject matter. The critique of any theory only makes sense if this theory is compared with the subject matter that is presented in it and not with something else. Otherwise the critique misses its target. After all, one cannot, for example, refute the multiplication table by pointing out the obvious fact that in empirical reality things aren't the way it presents them: two drops of water 'multiplied' by two drops of water give us not four but sometimes one, sometimes seven, or sometimes 25, depending on the random circumstances of such calculations. The same is happening with logic. We cannot compare Logic with the factual acts of thinking taking place in human heads for the simple reason that human beings time and again think quite *illogically*. And they are often illogical in an elementary way, so we do not need to bring up the logic of a higher order that Hegel had in mind.

Therefore when you point out to a logician that the real human thinking does not take place in the same way as it is portrayed in his theory, he can quite reasonably retort: 'Well, so much worse for the real human thinking'. It is not the theory that must be adapted to the empirical reality, but the real thinking must be made logical, must be brought into harmony with the logical principles.

However, there is here a fundamental difficulty for logic as science. If logical principles can be compared only with 'logical' thinking, then there is no opportunity to verify whether these principles themselves are *correct*.

It is obvious that they will always agree with the thinking that is in advance made to agree with them and is done in full accordance with their prescriptions. But that would only mean that the logical principles agree only with themselves, with their own 'embodiment' in the empirical acts of thinking.

Theory finds itself here in a rather awkward situation. It agrees to consider only the facts that in advance confirm it, and the rest of the facts it principally ignores as irrelevant to its subject matter. Any 'contradictory' fact that 'refutes' its positions (fact of 'illogical' thinking that 'does not agree with the requirements of logic') it can dismiss on the basis that it 'does not belong to the subject matter of logic', and is therefore irrelevant as a critical example directed against its positions, its axioms and postulates ... Logic considers only the logically faultless thinking, and 'logically incorrect' thinking is not an argument against its schemes. But by 'logically faultless' it agrees to mean only the kind of thinking that confirms its own ideas about thinking, that slavishly and non-critically follows their commands, and any deviation from its rules are judged to be outside the boundaries of its subject matter and therefore only as 'errors' that must be 'corrected'.

In any other science such claim would cause bewilderment. What kind of theory would announce in advance that it will only take into account those facts that confirm it and will not consider the facts that contradict it, even if there was a million or a billion of them? But that is precisely the traditional position of logic, taken by its proponents for granted ... And it is this position that makes such logic, on the one hand, absolutely non-self-critical and, on the other, incapable of any development. Like mythical Narcissus, it sees in the real thinking only itself, only the reflection of its own postulates and recommendations, only such acts of thought that are made in accordance with its rules, and all the rest of the richness of the developing thinking is declared to be the consequence of the interfering 'foreign', 'extra-logical' and 'non-logical' factors, intuition, pragmatic interest, purely psychological accidents, emotions, associations, political passions, empirical circumstances, and so on and so forth.

It is this position that gives us the famous Kantian illusion according to which 'logic' as theory formed its present character long time ago and not only does not, but is unable, due to its very nature, to develop its positions.

This illusion, as Hegel understood very well, becomes absolutely inevitable if the subject matter of logic as science is exclusively the forms and the rules of *conscious thinking*, or thinking understood as one of the mental faculties of a human being, one of several other mental faculties that are found in any human individual. 'When we talk about "thinking", it appears at first to be a subjective activity, one faculty among many others, e.g. memory, representation, volition and the like'.<sup>5</sup> But such an approach immediately locks logic within the boundaries of the study of individual consciousness, of the rules that a thinking individual acquires from his own personal experience and that therefore appear to him to be something given and self-evident, something 'his own'.

'Thinking considered in this perspective, with regard to its laws, is what usually constitutes the content of logic'.<sup>6</sup> Thus logic that proceeds from such an understanding of thinking only clarifies, brings to consciousness, the rules that each individual already uses without logic, and if we study such logic, then we continue to think the same way we did before we started, only 'perhaps more methodically, but with little change'.<sup>7</sup> It is perfectly natural, states Hegel, that as long as logic considers thinking only as a mental faculty of an individual and discerns the rules that this faculty follows during its individual experience, it cannot give us anything more than just that. In this case, logic 'would not have

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<sup>5</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 47.

brought forth anything that we could not have done just as well without studying logic. In fact, the traditional logic did no more than that'.<sup>8</sup>

The historical fate of this science is connected with such a justified but limited view of thinking as the subject matter of logic, and Kant famously mentioned it – it did not significantly change since the time of Aristotle. The medieval scholastics 'did not increase the material, but just developed it further', and 'the work on logic that has been done in modern times has principally consisted in the simple omission of many logical determinations elaborated by Aristotle and the Scholastics, on the one hand, and in stuffing logic with a lot of psychological material, on the other'.<sup>9</sup>

This is an almost verbatim repetition of Kant's words from the *Critique of Pure Reason*; it is a statement of the absolutely indisputable historical fact. However, in contrast to Kant, Hegel makes the opposite conclusion: 'If logic has not undergone change since Aristotle – and, in fact, judging from the latest compendiums of logic, the usual changes mostly consist only of omissions – then surely the conclusion to be drawn is that it is all the more in need of a total reworking'.<sup>10</sup>

And Hegel begins his 'total reworking' with the very notion of *thinking*. In logic we cannot understand thinking as one of the mental faculties of a human individual, as activity that takes place inside his skull. Such understanding is justified and acceptable in psychology, but if it is carried over into logic without any correctives, it becomes false, too narrow. The most immediate consequence of such an understanding is the prejudice according to which 'thinking' is taken to mean consciously performed 'reasoning' and nothing more, thus thinking appears before the one who studies it in the form of 'internal speech' that can be of course expressed externally in the form of spoken 'external' speech, as well as in the form of graphically fixed speech, in the form of writing. The entire old logic, beginning with Aristotle, understood the matter this way. For it 'thinking' was something like 'dumb speech', and spoken language was thinking, so to speak, 'aloud'.

It is not accidental then that the logical treatises took the form of dialogues and monologues, of the process of verbal expression of the subjective thought, and this thought was considered only in its verbal 'being', only in the form of sentences and chains of sentences ('judgements'). Therefore the old logic could never clearly distinguish the 'subject matter' of the logical judgement from the

8 Hegel 1991a, pp. 47–8.

9 Hegel 1991a, pp. 51–2.

10 Hegel 2010, p. 31.

'subject' as part of the sentence, the logical 'predicate' from the grammatical 'predicate', the 'concept' from the 'term', and so on and so forth.

We may note in passing that all logical schools without exception that bypassed Hegel's critique of the old logic still share this ancient prejudice as if nothing happened. Neopositivists adhere to this prejudice most sincerely by directly identifying 'thinking' with the 'activity of language', and 'logic' with the 'analysis of language'. The most comical part in all of this is the self-conceit with which this archaically naïve prejudice is presented by them as the most recent discovery of the logical thought of the twentieth century, as the principle of scientific presentation of logic, finally revealed to the world, as the axiom of the 'logic of science'. For neopositivists, Hegel's idea that the subject matter of logic as science is 'pure thinking', and not the forms of its verbal expression, appears as a 'bizarre mysticism'. How is it possible to study 'thinking' aside from the forms of its manifestation? This bewilderment may, at first glance, appear to be justified – it is a bewilderment of the soberly thinking theoretician who wants to study the factually observable phenomena of 'thinking' and not 'thinking as such', or thinking as 'pure activity', activity that does not show itself in any thing or object ...

However, in this particular case Hegel's thinking is much more sober than that of all the neopositivists taken together.

Who said that language (speech) is the *only* factual-empirical form in which human thinking expresses itself? Does the human being not also find himself as a *thinking* being in his actions, in the course of the real formation of his environment, in the making of things? Does he only act as a thinking being in the act of speaking? This question is, perhaps, purely rhetorical.

The thinking that Hegel is talking about manifests itself in human *deeds* in no less obvious a manner than it does in human words, in the chains of terms, in the lacework of phrases that flicker before the eyes of the neopositivist logician. More than that, a person discovers the genuine method of his thinking in real deeds in a more adequate manner than in the narratives about these deeds.

Who does not know that we can judge a person and this person's way of thinking much better if we observe what he does rather than what he says about himself? Is it not clear that the chains of actions reveal the genuine logic of his thinking fuller and more truthfully than the chains of signs-terms? Do we not have sayings such as 'The language is given to man so that he can hide his thoughts' and 'Thought expressed in speech is a lie'? We are not talking about the intentional deception of another human being, about the conscious concealment of truth as the 'genuine state of affairs', but about a perfectly sincere and 'honest' self-deception.

But if this is the case, then the *actions* of a human being and, therefore, the results of those actions, ‘things’ that are created by them, not only may but must be considered as the acts of ‘objectification’ of his thinking, his intentions, his plans, his conscious goals.

In logic, in the science of thinking, it is no less important to take into consideration the difference between words and deeds, to juxtapose deeds and words, than it is in real life. It is this simple consideration that Hegel puts forward against all the preceding traditions of logic that, in the spirit of scholastically interpreted Aristotle, understood by ‘thinking’ almost exclusively orally or graphically fixed ‘dumb speech’, and therefore made judgements about ‘thinking’ first and foremost based on the facts of its verbal ‘explication’. Hegel, on the other hand, demands from the very beginning that we study ‘thinking’ in all of its forms of manifestation, its ‘realisation’, and first of all in human deeds, in actions, in acts of creation of things and events. Thinking manifests itself, its power, its active energy, not only in speaking, but in the entire grandiose process of the creation of culture, the entire body of the human civilisation, entire ‘non-organic human body’, including tools and statues, workshops and temples, factories and chancelleries, political organisations and systems of laws – everything.

Thus Hegel directly introduces *practice* – sensuous-objective human activity – into logic, into the science of thinking, making a colossal step forward in understanding thinking and its science. Undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to the objective (‘absolute’, according to Hegel) truth. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice into the theory of knowledge: see *Theses on Feuerbach*.<sup>11</sup>

It is precisely on this basis that Hegel acquired the right to consider as part of Logic – part of the science of thinking – objective determinations of things located outside of consciousness, outside of the mental state of an individual human being, and in their full independence from this mental state, this consciousness. There is nothing ‘mystical’ or ‘idealist’ in this position so far; we are talking about the forms (‘determinations’) of things created by the activity of the thinking human being. In other words, we are talking about the forms of his thinking, ‘embodied’ in natural material, ‘given’ to it by the human activity. Thus a house from this point of view appears as the intention of its architect embodied in stone, machine – as the thought of its engineer embodied in metal, and so on and so forth, and the entire colossal objective body of civilisation – as ‘think-

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11 Lenin 1976, p. 211.



ing in its other-being', in its sensuous-objective 'embodiment'. Respectively, the entire human history is considered as the process of 'external manifestation' of the power of thought, the energy of thinking, as the process of realisation of ideas, concepts, representations, plans, intentions and goals of a human being, as the process of 'objectification of logic', of those schemas that goal-oriented human activity obeys.

The understanding and careful analysis of this aspect of human activity, its 'active side', as Marx calls it in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, is not yet 'idealism'. This real aspect may be understood without any mysticism. More than that, it is specifically in logic that the analysis of this aspect constituted a decisive step in the direction of real – 'intelligent' – materialism, in the direction of understanding of the fact that all 'logical forms' without exception are universal forms of the development of reality external to thinking, reflected in human consciousness and tested during the thousand-year-old practice. Considering 'thinking' not only in its verbal manifestation, but in the process of its 'objectification', its 'reification' in the natural material, in stone and bronze, in wood and metal, and so on – in the structures of social organisation (in the form of state and economic systems of relationships between individuals), Hegel does not leave the boundaries of *thinking*, the boundaries of the subject matter of *logic* as a special science. He simply introduces into logic's field of vision that real phase of the process of development of thinking without which logic could not and cannot become a real science, science of thinking in the exact and concrete meaning of this word.

By introducing *practice* into logic, and with it all the forms of things that are 'introduced' into the matter of nature, and then by interpreting these forms of things outside consciousness as 'forms of thinking in their other-being', in their sensuous-objective 'embodiment', Hegel does not cease being a *logician* in the strictest and most precise sense of the word.

If Hegel is to be reproached for anything, then it is not for introducing into logic material that is foreign to it and thus leaving established boundaries of the science of thinking. From the point of view of consistent materialism, Hegel is to be reproached for the exact opposite, as he remains a 'pure' logician even when the point of view of logic is no longer sufficient. Hegel's problem is that the 'matter of logic' consumes him so much that he ceases to see behind it the 'logic of matter'.<sup>12</sup>

12 [Translator's Note] Ilyenkov constantly brings up this distinction between the 'logic of the matter' and the 'matter of logic' found in Marx's *Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843): 'Philosophical work [for Hegel] does not consist in embodying thinking in political definitions, but in evaporating the existing political definitions into

This peculiar professional blindness of the logician reveals itself first and foremost in the fact that practice, i.e. real sensuous-objective human activity, is considered here *only* as a 'criterion of truth', only a testing ground for 'thinking', for spiritual-theoretical work that takes place before and independently of it, or more precisely, for the result of this work.

Therefore practice is considered abstractly, that is, it is presented only from that side, only in those characteristics, that it indeed owes to 'thinking', i.e. only as the act of realisation of some intention, plan, idea, concept, this or that goal set in advance, and it is not considered 'as such', in its genuine determination, without any dependence on thinking. Accordingly, all the results of the practical human activity, things created by human labour and the historical events with their consequences are also taken into consideration only insofar as there are some or other 'thoughts' 'objectified' in them. In the understanding of the historical process as a whole, this point of view, it is quite self-evident, represents the purest ('absolute') idealism. However, in relation to logic, to the science of thinking, this point of view is not only justified; it is also the only reasonable one.

Indeed, can we reproach a *logician* that he is abstracting from everything that does not have anything to do with the subject matter of his special study, and that any other fact he takes into consideration only insofar as it may be understood as the consequence, as the form of manifestation of *his subject matter*, the subject matter of *his science* – thinking?

To reproach the professional logician that the 'matter of logic' interests him more than *the logic of the matter* (i.e. logic of any other concrete area of human activity) is as ridiculous as to admonish the chemist for excessive attention to the 'matter of chemistry'. The famous words of Marx, directed at Hegel, have a completely different meaning.

The trouble with narrow professionalism is not found in its strict limitation of thinking by the boundaries of the subject matter of its science. The trouble is in its inability to clearly see the limits of competence of its science, the inability connected with this abstract limitedness of the perspective on things. While

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abstract thoughts. Not the logic of the matter, but the matter of logic is the philosophical element'. See Marx and Engels 1975, p. 18. The original German term for 'matter' is *die Sache* that has several possible meanings depending on the context but we follow the established English translation cited above. For reference, here is the German original: 'Nicht daß das Denken sich in politischen Bestimmungen verkörpert, sondern daß die vorhandenen politischen Bestimmungen in abstrakte Gedanken verflüchtigt werden, ist die philosophische Arbeit. Nicht die Logik der Sache, sondern die Sache der Logik ist das philosophische Moment'.

the chemist is preoccupied with the 'matter of chemistry', i.e. while he looks at the entire rich diversity of the world exclusively from his abstract-chemical point of view, thinks about anything in the universe, whether it is oil or the Sistine Madonna, only using the concepts of his science, no one, of course, is going to reproach him that he is not really interested in the matters of political economy or aesthetics. But as soon as he begins to imagine that in the concepts of his special discipline there is found the deepest, the most intimate mystery of the subject matter of any other science, his professionalism immediately reveals its negative sides. In this case he begins to imagine that, for example, biology is only the superficial-phenomenological description of phenomena the true mystery of which only he, the chemist, is able to explain, because he understands the particular field of his science – biochemistry. As a punishment for such arrogance he immediately gets a stab in the back from the physicist for whom all of his chemistry is nothing but the superficial manifestation of the deep 'subatomic' structures. And both are mocked by the mathematician for whom biology, chemistry and physics are but 'particular cases' of manifestation of the universal schemes of conjunction and disjunction of the 'elements in general' inside the 'structures in general'.

This insidious illusion is as characteristic for Hegel as it is for any typical professional-logician. As a *logician* he is absolutely correct when he considers both the 'proposition' and the 'deed' exclusively from the point of view of the schemes of thinking expressed in them, and only from that point of view. He is correct when the logic of any deed interests him only as much as the activity of thinking in general is revealed in it. From this point of view he sees only those forms, schemes, laws and rules that remain invariant in the thinking of Newton, as well as Robespierre, Kant as well as Julius Caesar. The 'specifics' of the thinking of these persons, naturally, cannot interest him as a logician. It is precisely from it that every logician, precisely because he is a logician, is obligated to abstract in order to see his subject matter as the subject matter of his special science.

The mysticism of Hegelian logic, and also the insidious peculiarity of it that Marx labelled 'noncritical positivism', begins where the special point of view of the logician is accepted and presented as the only scientific point of view from whose heights, allegedly, we can see that 'final', deepest, most intimate, most hidden, most important truth that was ever available to any human being and humanity ...

As a logician, Hegel is correct when he considers any phenomenon in the development of human culture as an act of 'manifestation' of the power of thinking, and therefore when he interprets the development of science, technology and 'morality' (in Hegel's understanding of it that includes the entirety

of all social relations between human beings – from moral to economical) as the process, in which the capacity to think manifests itself, i.e. as the process of *manifestation* of this capacity and nothing more.

But as soon as we add to this view (acceptable and natural in logic) just a small statement that in these special logical abstractions there is expressed *the very essence of phenomena* from which these abstractions are extracted, this truth immediately turns into a falsehood. It would be the same falsehood if in the exact results of the chemical analysis of the colours of the Sistine Madonna the chemist claimed to have found the only scientific interpretation of that unique 'synthesis' of chemical elements.

It is the same with logic. The abstractions that express (describe) the forms and schemes of the activity of logical thinking perfectly and exactly, in all the forms of its 'concrete' realisation – in physics and in politics, in technology and in theology, in art and economic activity, are immediately and directly taken for the schemes of the process that *creates* the entire diversity of human culture in the midst of which they were discovered.

The entire mysticism of Hegel's conception of thinking is found in this singular point. Considering the diversity of the forms of human culture as a result of the 'manifestation' of the active human capacity to think, that is, as that material in which he, as a logician, discovers the 'objectively appearing' schemes of thinking realised in them, he loses any opportunity to answer the question – where exactly does this unique capacity, with all of its schemes and rules, come from?

Raising 'thinking' to the level of divine power and energy that urges humans to historical creativity from within, Hegel quite simply presents the absence of an answer to this reasonable question as the only possible answer to it.

Thinking, according to Hegel, does not *originate* in a human being, but is only *awakened* in him, having been before this awakening a kind of dormant, without consciousness and self-consciousness, but real active power. In a human being this 'thinking' *awakens*, acquires consciousness of itself, i.e. 'self-consciousness', makes itself the subject matter of its own activity, appears as the 'thinking about thinking', and in that, allegedly, is found its 'genuine nature', its 'true face'.

But this 'thinking' cannot take a look at itself directly and immediately, for it is invisible, inaudible and in general impossible to sense. In order to take a look at itself this thinking requires a mirror in which it can see itself as if from the outside, as something 'other'. This 'mirror' is the world of things created by it, the entirety of its own 'manifestations' – in the verbal form, in the form of tools, in the form of state-political formations, in the form of statues, books and other creations of the 'thinking spirit'. While creating this rich diversity of things of

human culture, the 'thinking spirit' that dwells in a human being from the very beginning, creates 'outside itself' and 'over against itself' that very mirror in which it then sees itself for the first time, at first, of course, not understanding that in the mirror of things and events it sees its own images and nothing more.

In this entire mystical-fantastical picture that transforms the real thinking of real humans into the process of 'manifestation' of some omnipotent, and wholly objective, scheme, different and absolutely independent of their will, desires and needs, their consciousness and self-consciousness, it is not difficult to discern the very real characteristics of its earthly prototype, the thinking from which Hegel copies his portrait of 'God'.

This is not 'thinking in general' and not 'thinking as such', as Hegel himself thought. It is in fact the thinking of the professional logician with all of its characteristic features and peculiarities, taken for and presented as universal characteristics of thinking in general, as the expression of the 'nature of thinking as such'. If we take all of this into consideration, then all the mysterious definitions of 'thinking' that Hegel gives us turn out to be not only understandable but also often banal and self-evident.

It is he, the logician, who accomplishes the work that consists exclusively in 'thinking about thinking'; logic as science is this very 'thinking that thinks about itself'.

Its task is to think through the very process of thinking, to present to the consciousness of human beings those schemes, laws and rules within the boundaries of which their own thinking is taking place, even if they are not aware of these schemes and rules, but still obey them under the authoritative pressure of the entirety of circumstances within which they 'think' and act because they act precisely *as thinking* beings.

It is he, the logician, who considers and describes not his own thinking as his individual mental faculty, as mental activity that takes place in his individual head, but those entirely impersonal schemes that clearly articulate themselves in the process of goal-oriented life of any – every – human being, if this life is considered 'retrospectively' and without any reference to what he himself thought, what he himself came to realise as being part of his own actions (i.e. what he himself articulated in his own consciousness in clear verbal form).

It is he, the logician *ex professo* (professional logician) who realises in his own person the 'self-consciousness' of 'thinking' that occurs not at the level of a specific individual, but only at the level of the more or less developed collective of individuals, connected into one whole by the ties of language, customs, mores and norms that regulate their relation to 'things'; in his person is realised the 'self-consciousness' of this very 'thinking' that finds itself first and

foremost not so much in the silent monologue, as in the dramatically tense dialogues and the results of such dialogues, in common conclusions from the lessons of conflicts between the 'thinking individuals', in the 'rules' that they set as compulsory for everyone, in the norms of leisure and work, morality and right, in the laws of science and the commandments of religion, and so on and so forth.

He, the professional logician, represents in himself the process of comprehension of those forms, schemes and laws within the boundaries of which *this* – collectively achieved – thinking takes place. Thinking that realises *itself* not only in monologues and dialogues, but also in the conscious goal-oriented actions, in the formation of things and in the passing of historical events, in sum, in the process of producing the objective body of civilisation, the 'non-organic human body'. Thinking that as a subject matter of study presents itself to logic not in the image of a psychophysical process that takes place in the cranium of a separate individual, but as a world-historical process of the development of science, technology and morality. The forms and the laws of unfolding of *this* process (in the course of which an individual with his mind actually plays a subordinate role of the performer, or even the instrument of performance, of tasks, problems and needs that emerge outside and independently of him) constitute for a logician-theoretician as much of an objective subject matter for study as the laws of the movement of the planets, stars and galaxies are for the astronomer.

The forms and laws of thinking understood this way, as a natural-historical process that takes place not inside one single head, but only inside a million heads connected by the network of communications into one head, into one 'thinking' being that is in constant dialogue 'with itself' – these forms and laws are the objective subject matter of Logic in its Hegelian sense. This quite real subject matter is the prototype for Hegelian 'God' – objective Concept, Absolute Idea.

Behind these mystical titles is always hidden the real *human* thinking as it appears before the abstract theoretical eye of the professional logician, i.e. exclusively in its universal characteristics, purified of everything 'particular'. And that phraseology in which the real subject matter is dressed up in *Science of Logic* can be fully rationally decoded in its general and particular details. But only under one condition – this decoding or recoding must be done from the materialist point of view on that *same subject matter*, thinking in the interpretation described above, and not in that sense of the word given to us by psychology or, for example, by the neopositivist 'logic of science'.

If by 'thinking' one understands something else, say, a subjective-mental faculty and activity that takes place in one's head, and therefore something fixed

in the form and the image of 'dumb speech', 'dumb monologues', in the form and the image of 'proposition' and the chain of such 'propositions', then, if one compares such understanding of 'thinking' with Hegel's Logic, one will take the latter to be pure and absolute mystical delirium, a description of the 'non-existent subject matter', a made-up object and nothing more.

If, however, we compare Hegel's presentation with the subject matter that is presented in it – with thinking realised and still being realised in the form of Science and Technology, in the form of real actions and deeds of a human being ('thinking being', 'subject') that purposefully changes both the external nature and the nature of his own body, then in the turgid turns of Hegel's speech we suddenly discover the meaning that is much more earthly and deep than in any pseudo-commonsensical 'logic of science'.

At the same time, however, we also discover the 'gaps' that open up in Hegel's presentation of this real subject matter, thinking, and that Hegel was forced to cover up with needlessly complicated turns of phrase, and often even with the help of linguistic trickery and untranslatable play on German words that caused so much pain to the translators of his *Science of Logic*.

The problem is that idealism, i.e. the idea that 'thinking' is a universal capacity that only 'wakes up' in a human being when he reaches self-consciousness, and that, strictly speaking, it does not *emerge* on the basis of conditions that exist outside and independently of him, leads to a number of absolutely irresolvable problems within logic itself. And these unresolved problems – principally irresolvable on the basis of idealism – Hegel is forced to 'resolve' by purely linguistic means, i.e. by simply avoiding them with the help of witty, but often simply nonsensical, turns of phrase.

Let us take a closer look at his understanding of thinking. Clearly, Hegel takes a step forward in the understanding of thinking, a step of colossal import, when he establishes that this 'thinking' takes place not only in the form of 'words' and 'chains of words' ('propositions' and 'syllogisms'), but also in the form of 'deeds', in the form of human actions and acts of human labour, human activity that directly shapes the natural material. In accordance with this view, the 'forms of thinking' as logical forms are understood as universal forms of any active goal-oriented human activity, regardless of the material in which it is 'embodied' (words or things).

A logical category (a logical concept) is an abstraction that encompasses two particular forms of expression of 'thinking in general' (words and things), and therefore, naturally, ignores the 'specific peculiarities' of both forms, if they are considered separately. That is why the 'essence of words and things', the internal form of movement of one and of another, is expressed in it, and not just the essence of 'things' or just the essence of 'words'. In 'logos' – in

'reason' – we find expressed in their logical aspect (and not their psychological-phenomenological aspect) both 'Sage und Sache' – 'talk and object', or, better, 'history and actual life'.<sup>13</sup>

By the way, here we have a very characteristic example of Hegel's play on words, a play that highlights the genetic kinship between the notions expressed in these words. 'Sage' – saying, talk, epic – from which we get 'Saga' – legend about exploits, *fairy tale*; 'Sache' – capacious word that means not so much a singular sensuously perceived thing, but the 'essence of the matter', the 'state of affairs', the 'essence of the problem', factual condition of events (of things), all that is and was in reality, 'history'.

The Russian word 'thing' corresponds literally to the German word 'das Ding'. This etymology is used in *Science of Logic* to express the very important nuance of the thought that in Lenin's translation and in Lenin's – materialist – interpretation appears as follows: 'With this introduction of content into logical consideration, the subject becomes not Dinge, but die Sache, der Begriff der Dinge. Not things, but the laws of their movement, materialistically'.<sup>14</sup>

However, while taking a colossally important step forward in understanding the 'logical forms' of thinking, Hegel stops half-way and even turns back as soon as he encounters the question of the relationship between these 'external forms' of thinking, sensuously perceived objective forms of the 'embodiment' of the activity of the spirit (thinking), its 'determinate being' or 'existence', in which it – the thinking spirit of a human being – becomes the subject matter for *its own* examination.

Refusing to consider the *word* (speech, language, 'saying') as the *only* form of the 'determinate being of spirit', Hegel nonetheless continues to treat it as its privileged, most adequate to its essence, form, in which thinking contrasts itself with itself in order to discern itself as something 'other', as some thing that is different from it, in order to look at itself as if from the outside.

'In the beginning was the Word'. In relation to human thinking (thinking spirit of a human being), Hegel keeps this thesis from the Gospel of John unchanged, accepting it as something self-evident and using it as a found-

13 Cf. Hegel 1983, p. 90: '[Consider] Logos, reason, the essence of the thing and of speech, of object (Sache) and talk (Sage), the category – [in respect to all of these,] man speaks to the thing as his. And this is the being of the object. Spirit relates itself to itself: it says to the donkey, You are an inner [subjective] entity, and that Inner is I; your being is a sound which I have arbitrarily invented. The sound, 'donkey', is altogether different from the sensate entity. Insofar as we see it, and also feel or hear it, we are that entity itself, immediately one with it and fulfilled. Coming back as a name, however, it is something spiritual, altogether different'.

14 Lenin 1976, p. 94.



ing principle (axiom) of the entire consequent construction, or to be more precise, 'reconstruction' of the development of the thinking spirit toward self-consciousness, toward self-knowledge.

The thinking spirit of a human being wakes up for the first time (i.e. poses itself over against 'the rest') precisely in the Word, through the Word – as a capacity of 'naming', and therefore the spirit is first formed primarily as the 'kingdom of names' and labels. The *word* appears as the *first*, both in essence and in time, 'objective reality of thought', as the original and *immediate* form of 'being of spirit for itself'. This form is the form in which the 'thinking spirit', while posing itself over against itself, nonetheless remains 'within itself'.

To put it differently, one 'finite spirit' ('individual thinking') makes itself the subject matter for another similar 'finite spirit' in the Word and through the Word. Having emerged from the 'spirit' as a particular articulated sound, the Word, having been 'heard', turns back into the 'spirit', into the state of a 'thinking spirit' of another human being. The vibrations of air (audible word) turn out, in this scheme, to be pure mediators between the two conditions of the spirit, the method of relation of spirit to spirit, or, using Hegelian language, of spirit *to itself*.

The word (speech) appears here as the first tool of the external embodiment of thinking which the thinking spirit creates 'out of itself' in order to become the subject matter for itself (in the form of another thinking spirit).

The real tools of labour like a stone axe or a chisel, a rake or a plough in this construction begin to look like some secondary – derivative – tool of the same process of 'objectification', the process of 'mediation' of thinking with itself, as the sensuously objective metamorphosis of thinking.

This scheme, most clearly outlined in *Jena Realphilosophie*, is preserved in both *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*. It consists in that the 'thinking spirit' (or simply thinking) wakes up in a human being primarily in the form of a 'naming power' ('Namengebende Kraft'), and only then, after having cognised itself in the word, does it begin to create labour tools, houses, cities, machines, temples and other attributes of material culture.

Thus in the word and in speech Hegel sees that form of 'determinate being' of the thinking spirit in which it reveals its creative-productive power (capacity) before anything else – before and independently of the real formation of nature through labour. The labour simply realises what the 'thinking spirit' discovers in itself in the course of *speaking out loud*, in the course of its dialogue with itself. But in this approach the 'dialogue' turns out to be only a monologue of the thinking spirit, only a manner of its 'manifestation'.

In *Phenomenology of Spirit* the entire history therefore begins with the analysis of the contradiction that emerges between 'thinking' that expressed itself

in what is contained in it, in the words 'here' and 'now' – and the rest of its content that is not yet expressed in these words. *Science of Logic* also assumes this scheme and begins with the very same, not clearly expressed, presupposition – thinking cognised and is cognising itself primarily in the word and through the word. It is no accident then that the final realisation of the entire 'phenomenological' and 'logical' history of the thinking spirit, its return to its original point of absolutely precise and purified image of the 'thinking spirit' takes place, naturally, in the form of the printed word – in the treatise on logic ...

The whole grandiose conception of the history of 'alienation' ('objectification') of the creative energy of thinking and its 'reverse appropriation' of the fruits of its own labour ('de-objectification'), beginning with the word and ending its cycles in the word, is exactly the history whose outline is presented in *Science of Logic*.

The key to this conception is not very complex – the foundation for the entire complex outline is the same ancient notion according to which a person *thinks first* and only then really *acts* in the world. From here follows the outline: the word – the deed – the thing (created by the deed) – the word again (this time as verbally fixed report about the deed). And further there is a new cycle in accordance with the same outline but on the new foundation thanks to which the entire movement acquires the form not of a 'circle', but a spiral, a cycle of cycles, a 'circle of circles', each, however, begins and ends in the same point, in the word.

The 'rational kernel' – and at the same time the mystifying moment of this scheme – is best seen in an analogy (although it is more than just an 'analogy') with those metamorphoses that political economy discerned in the analysis of the commodity-money circulation. The pattern of the latter is expressed, as is well known, in the formula: C – M – C. Commodity (C) here takes the position of both the 'beginning' and the 'end' of the cycle, and Money (M) – that of its 'mediating link', of the 'metamorphosis of the commodity'. But at the definite point of the infinitely closing on itself cyclical movement C – M – C – M – C – M money ceases to be a simple 'mediator' – the means of the circulation of the commodities – and suddenly acquires a mysterious capacity for 'self-growth'. Schematically, in the formula, this phenomenon is expressed in the exact way as the following: M – C – M'. The commodity, the true beginning point of this entire process as a whole, takes on the role of money, i.e. the role of the mediator and the means, the passing metamorphosis of money; money is 'embodied' in the commodity in order to achieve the act of 'self-valorisation'. Money that acquired this mysterious quality is *Capital*, and in the form of capital Value 'by the virtue of being value, has acquired the occult ability to add value to itself' – 'it suddenly presents itself as a self-moving substance which passes through

a process of its own, and for which commodities and money are both mere forms'.<sup>15</sup> In the formula  $M - C - M'$  value appears as 'an automatic subject', as a 'substance-subject' of the cyclical movement that continuously returns to its original point.<sup>16</sup> '... Value is here the subject of a process in which, while constantly assuming the form in turn of money and commodities, it changes its own magnitude, throws off surplus-value from itself considered as original value, and thus valorises itself independently' and this is taking place 'in reality'.<sup>17</sup>

In *Science of Logic* Hegel describes absolutely the same situation, only not in relation to 'value', but in relation to *knowledge* ('concept', system of concepts, 'truth'). Effectively he is concerned with the process of accumulation of knowledge, for 'concept' is the accumulation of knowledge; it is, so to speak, 'constant capital' of thinking that in science always appears as the *terminologically fixed* 'wealth of knowledge', or 'concept' in the *verbal form*.

And thus we have a notion that is perfectly analogous to the notion of value as the 'self-growing substance', as the 'substance-subject', for which commodities and money are but passing metamorphoses, acquiring in passing and discarding in passing its 'forms' of the 'determinate being'.

Imagine now an economist who is trying to theoretically explain the riddle of the 'self-growth of value', taking as the starting point of his explanation Money, and not Commodity.

In this case we will have the absolutely exact equivalent of the Hegelian conception of the development of thinking. Hegel from the very beginning describes 'thinking' (thinking cognition, 'concept') in its verbal form of 'embodiment', its 'determinate being', as the consciously pronounced Word. While the real things created by the thinking human being (tools of labour and consumption) in this scheme inevitably appear as something secondary, derivative, as the 'form of embodiment' of this same 'thinking', that first 'formed itself' as the Word ...

The 'concept', for which the word and the thing (created by human beings) turn out to be but 'forms of embodiment', quickly passing 'metamorphoses', in such an explanation is defined as an 'automatically active subject', as 'subject-substance', as 'self-developing substance (= subject of its own changes)'.<sup>15</sup>

This scheme, it is easy to see, is not at all a feverish delirium and a fabrication of an idealist. It is simply a non-critical description of the real process of production and accumulation of knowledge ('concept', 'system of con-

15 Marx 1977, pp. 255–6.

16 Marx 1977, p. 255.

17 Ibid.

cepts') similar to the political-economic theory that takes as its starting point precisely described, but not theoretically explained, fact. It is the fact that Money, while appearing as the 'form of the movement of capital', as the original point and goal of the entire cyclical movement of the process that returns to 'itself', reveals the mystical-enigmatic capacity for self-valorisation, 'self-development'.

In this case we have to necessarily ascribe to the value that is already 'embodied' in money, in some monetary sum, 'immanently contained in it' capacity for self-development ...

The fact left without explanation is transformed into a mystical-enigmatic fact. There is ascribed to this fact, as a capacity that 'immanently belongs' to it, a quality that does not belong to it; it belongs to completely different process that is *expressed* ('reflects itself') in its form.

Marx, having solved the mystery of the 'self-valorisation of value' in *Capital*, the mystery of production and accumulation of the surplus value, employs, not on a whim or out of coquetry, but intentionally and consciously, the entire above-mentioned Hegelian terminology, Hegelian conception of thinking, the 'concept'.

The idealist illusion, created by Hegel the logician, has the very same nature as the practically necessary ('practically true') illusions in the sphere where dwells the entire consciousness of a human being forced into the process that is incomprehensible for him and that goes on independently of his consciousness and will, the process of production and accumulation of surplus value, the process of the 'self-valorisation of value'. The logical and socio-historical scheme of the emergence of these illusions is objectively and subjectively the same.

For the capitalist the definite sum of money, the definite value in a *necessary monetary* form, is the beginning point of his entire activity as a capitalist (and therefore it is a prerequisite and a condition sine qua non of this activity), as 'capital personified', and therefore it is the formal goal of his specific activity, his life as a professional capitalist. Where this sum of money with its magical properties comes from does not especially interest him. It is 'none of his business'. He, as 'capital personified', must transform this monetary sum into commodities of some kind in order to, having modified and sold these commodities, return the monetary sum with a surplus, with a 'profit'.

The same happens with the professional logician, with the man who represents in his own person 'Knowledge personified', 'Science personified', 'Concept personified'. For him, for his profession, Knowledge accumulated by humanity, not by him personally, and at that only in the strictly fixed words-signs, in the form of the 'language of science', appears simultaneously as a *starting point* and as a *goal* of his specialised work. His personal participation in the

process of production and accumulation of Knowledge ('determinations of the Concept') is to add *new* determinations to the original Concept (to the knowledge received as part of his education).

The practice, however, as the process of the production of 'things', taking place outside and independently of him, and the 'things' produced by it, interest him mainly as the process of 'reification' and testing of his theoretical calculations, his recommendations, as the process of the 'embodiment of the Concept', as the 'phase of the logical process'.

This theoretician inevitably looks at 'practice' the same way the playwright looks at the play performed on the basis of his text – he is naturally interested in how precisely and fully his intention, his idea, is 'embodied' in it, what corrections must be made in his text so that his intention might find a more adequate 'embodiment' on stage.

Because the Concept (or the system of concepts, lower case) plays the role of the starting point for the theoretician, as well as the goal of his activity, he inevitably looks at the whole process from his own point of view as the process that takes place according to the following scheme: the Concept – process of 'reification' of the Concept – analysis of the results of this 'embodiment' – expression of the results of this analysis again in the Concept. The Concept, having concluded its cycle of transformations, again 'returns' to 'itself', to the original form of its 'determinate being' – to the Word, to the formula, to the system of terminologically elaborated determinations.

Of course, from this specialised point of view the Concept begins to appear as the 'self-developing substance', as the 'automatically acting subject', as the 'subject-substance of all of its changes', all of its 'metamorphoses'.

The question about the origin of Concept itself, first emerging in the image of the Word and then in the form of the Thing, created by the Deed (as conscious and purposeful activity that relies on the Word) becomes, from this point of view, firstly, insoluble and, secondly, pretty much irrelevant. It is as irrelevant as is the question of the origin of Value is for the capitalist. For him – for his life activity – the *presence* of value is a *prerequisite* as 'natural' and 'necessary' as the presence of air is for any living being.

He is not especially interested in the question of the origin of 'value', but only in the question of what he is to do with this 'value' so that he can make a 'profit', so that he can transform it into 'self-valorising value'.

The origin of *prerequisites* that make possible his specific life activity, its specific forms, rules and laws, prerequisites that appear outside, before and independently of his own work, naturally cannot especially interest him. He is forced to accept them as something readymade, as something given, as something already present, as the *material* for his own activity.

The theoretician and the professional of intellectual (spiritual) labour looks on the entire 'external world' in an analogous way – it is the 'raw material' or the 'pre-fabricated material' of the production and the accumulation of Knowledge, of the 'determinations of the Concept'. The 'Concept' is from the very beginning that 'element' by which he lives, which he breathes, which he personifies, that 'subject' in the name of which he acts as a plenipotentiary.

From here – from the real form of life activity of the professional logician – grow all of those practically necessary illusions about 'thinking' and 'concepts', the systematic expression of which is found in Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

Therefore the easiest way to understand Hegel's logic is to consider it as a systematic but simultaneously non-critical description of those 'forms of thinking' within the boundaries of which takes place the entire process of the 'production of the Concept', i.e. to consider it as a special activity of the professional logician, the professional of intellectual labour for whom the Concept (system of concepts) is both the original point, its *condition* and *prerequisite*, and the goal, its *final result*, of labour; and 'practice' plays the role of the 'mediating link' between the beginning and the result, the role of the 'metamorphosis of the Concept', the role of its 'other-being'.

To put it more precisely, Hegel's logic describes that system of the 'objective forms of thought' within the boundaries of which takes place the process of the *extended reproduction* of the Concept, the process of 'accumulation' of determinations of concepts, the process that in its developed forms never begins 'from the very beginning', but takes place as the process of 'perfection' of the *already determined* concepts, as the process of the transformation of the *already accumulated* theoretical knowledge, as the process of its 'increase'. The Concept as such is always *presupposed* as some sort of a bridgehead for future conquests, since we are talking about the *expansion* of the sphere of the known – and here the already given concepts play the most active role. The more capital we have, the more profit it will give us, even if the *rate* of this profit has the inevitable tendency to reduction ...

Let us take a closer look at the analogy of the process of expanded reproduction of the Concept and the process of production and accumulation of the surplus-value that, on the surface, appears as the process of the '*self-valorisation of value*', taken as its starting point. Here is the very same appearance – the process as a whole appears as the process of the 'self-development of the Concept' as the process of the 'self-valorisation of the determinations of the Concept'; and the forms within the boundaries of which this process takes place also appear as 'natural' and 'eternal' forms of production of the labour products in general.

If we articulate the specific forms of manifestation that the expanding, 'growing' Knowledge acquires in its living cycle, then we arrive at the following definitions: Science (accumulated knowledge) consists of words ('language of science'); Science consists of things (created on the basis of knowledge, 'objectified force of knowledge').

Knowledge ('concept') becomes here the subject of some process in which it, constantly exchanging its verbal form for its objective-reified form, changes its magnitude, its scale, pushes some part of itself from itself as a surplus knowledge, added on to the original knowledge, and thus *self-develops*. For the movement in which it attaches to itself new knowledge is its own movement, and therefore, its growth is self-growth, self-deepening, self-development. It acquired a magical capacity to create knowledge because it itself is knowledge ...

Therefore here, as it is in the process of production and accumulation of the surplus value, the real forms of this process appear as the forms of 'self-valorisation of value', the *logical forms* (the real forms of production of knowledge) begin to appear as the forms of *self-development* of this knowledge. Thus they are *mystified*.

And this mystification consists 'simply' in that the scheme, perfectly and precisely expressing the moments of activity of the professional theoretician, is accepted and presented as the scheme of the development of knowledge in general.

This is absolutely the same mystification as in political economy where 'commodity' and 'money' turn out to be 'metamorphoses' that capital alternately undergoes in order to accomplish the act of 'self-valorisation'.

The formula of capital (= accumulated surplus labour) –  $M - C - M'$  – is juxtaposed with the formula of simple commodity production and exchange, where Money only 'mediates' the exchange and where it 'disappears' in the final point of the movement, in the Commodity.

But the insidiousness of this formula ( $M - C - M'$ ) is found exactly in the fact that here 'both the commodity and the money function only as different modes of existence of value itself, the money as its *general* mode of existence, the commodity as its particular or, so to speak, its disguised mode'.<sup>18</sup>

And if the movement of 'value' is considered immediately in that form that it acquires in capital, i.e. in the form  $M - C - M'$  where the starting point is the money and the commodity plays the role of the mediator-means of the act of 'valorisation' of the original monetary sum, then the 'value' inevitably

18 Marx 1977, p. 255.

begins to be presented as the *subject* of both 'forms of its own appearance' – the money and the commodity, i.e. of some mysterious 'essence' that we are forced to *assume* as existing before its 'manifestation' in money and commodities ...

In this formula we implicitly (vaguely, secretly) find the notion that both the 'commodity' and the 'money' are but passing 'metamorphoses of value', certain kinds of masks under which it appears to us, donning them and discarding them in order to accomplish the act of 'self-valorisation'. The mystification is found already in the fact that the *commodity*, as well as the money, are taken immediately as the 'forms of manifestation of value' when the matter is exactly the opposite and the 'value' itself originally emerges, comes into existence in the 'form of the commodity', in the form of the abstract moment of this 'simplest economic concreteness'. Exposing the mystifications related to the category of value Marx emphasised that his study was to begin not with the analysis of 'value', but with the analysis of the *commodity*.

From the logical point of view this is principally important, because it is precisely the analysis of the commodity, the commodity form of the product of labour, that reveals the mystery of *birth*, of *emergence* of 'value', and, as a result, the mystery of its 'manifestation' in money, in monetary form.

If we consider the 'commodity' immediately in the role that it plays in the *movement of capital* – in the process expressed in the formula  $M - C - M'$ , in the role of the 'mediating link' that concludes the cycle, the beginning and the end of which is money, then the mystery of birth of value becomes principally insoluble, it remains a mystery.

Exactly the same happens to the concept of 'thinking', to the 'concept of concept' in Hegelian scheme.

Hegel begins immediately with the consideration of thinking that has already developed to the level of *scientific* thinking, *scientific* cognition – thinking already transformed into Science; and he considers not the process of the *emergence* of knowledge, but the process of its *valorisation*, in the course of which the already accumulated knowledge plays the most active role.

It is perfectly natural that the real things created as a result of the real human activity are considered here exclusively in the role that they play within the boundaries of this process – the process of increasing the already accumulated knowledge, the already existing 'determinations of the concept', articulated in words, in the 'language of science'.

Hegel articulates these moments that the process of thinking really passes through in its developed form, in the form of science as the special (separated) sphere of the division of social labour, and the formula that reflects in a perfectly precise manner the surface of this process is the following:  $W - D - W'$ ,



where W stands for verbally articulated knowledge (the Word), knowledge in its universal form, in the form of the 'language of science', in the form of formulas, schemes, symbols of all kinds, models, sketches, and so on and so forth.

The Word – language in the broad sense – actually is that universal form in which the *accumulated* knowledge appears without mediation. The real things (and events) created by the purposeful human activity within the boundaries of this formula appear as the 'mediating link' of the process, the beginning and the end of which is the Word, knowledge in its universal form.

The Word and the Thing then appear as two forms of 'manifestation', 'realisation' of Knowledge, the Concepts that this 'concept' goes through in its life cycle, constantly 'returning to itself'.

The picture is exactly the same as that of the surface of the movement of capital, the accumulated labour, expressed in the formula  $M - C - M'$ . In this formula there is expressed the real quality of 'value', that appears in the image and form of capital. Within the boundaries of this formula (and in reality expressed in it) value 'is constantly changing from one form into the other, without becoming lost in this movement; it thus becomes transformed into an automatic subject'.<sup>19</sup>

The same is taking place in Hegel as well. His interpretation of 'thinking' (the 'concept') *as the subject* that exists outside, before and independently of human consciousness, only at first glance appears wild, incomprehensible and absurd.

In reality this notion is nothing but uncritically described real quality of human thinking, developed to the level of scientific thinking, thinking as it is accomplished in the form of Science. Because Science is thinking developed into a special sphere of the separation of social labour, isolated into a special sphere of activity that *stands against* all other forms of activity and, therefore, the individuals that accomplish them.

In the form of Science, in the form of the system of the 'determinations of the concept', thinking actually, and not at all in the fantasy of an idealist, stands against an individual with his consciousness and will as something that exists *outside* of his consciousness, as something that was formed *before* his birth, as some developing 'reality' that is absolutely *independent* from his individual consciousness and will. Reality that is directly 'embodied' in the 'language of science', in its terminology, in its formulas and symbols, and that is then also 'embodied' in things, created in accordance with its plans, emerging as a *productive force*. As the creative force that first matured and cognised itself in the 'word', and that then emerged from the reign of the 'shadows of Ament' into

19 Marx 1977, p. 255.

the sphere that exists outside and independently of it and that stands against it as 'coarse material' reality ...

And it is this Thinking, thinking in the form of the developing science and technology, as the wholly objective, i.e. independent of the will and consciousness of the individual, and even as the process that is taking place *outside* the consciousness of the specific individual, and not as the mental process taking place under the frontal lobe of this individual, is the real subject matter the description of forms and laws of the development of which is given in *Science of Logic*. This 'thinking' is accomplished as a completely faceless and impersonal act throughout the entire history of human culture, and the 'subject' that accomplished this act turns out to be humanity in its development. Therefore the 'logical forms' are the forms of the development of universal, collectively accomplished 'deed', and they can be discerned only within the boundaries of *this deed*.

An individual with his 'conscious thinking', 'drawn' into this process that takes place completely independently from his will and consciousness, participates in it only inasmuch as his individual thinking contributes to the common deed, the goals and forms of which are given to him from the outside in the course of his formation as an individual; only the 'contribution' that *corresponds* to the requirements of the 'universal' development and therefore is assimilated by this universal development, *is accepted* by it and thus becomes a small detail – a 'determination' – of the universal 'spirit', universal human Thinking. Otherwise the result of the individually accomplished – 'conscious' – thinking is rejected, not accepted, or significantly *corrected* by the 'conscious thinking' of other individuals, sometimes beyond recognition.

This way 'universal thinking' realises itself in the 'individual' by causing within this individual thinking – within this 'conscious thinking' – completely unexpected and strange collisions, disturbances, contradictions, conflicts, antinomies and thus forcing the individual with his individual thinking to look for a solution until he finds such a solution or he is thrown away since he is useless for the 'universal development of spirit' – or the 'development of universal spirit', which is the same.

The universal – logical – forms and 'rules' that this universal development follows, even though none of the individuals immediately accomplishing it might be aware of it, cannot be expressed in the 'experience' of a separate thinking individual, in the 'experience of finite thinking', as Hegel puts it. They only become visible on the scale of that grandiose lifecycle that is accomplished by the 'spirit as a whole', and in whose cycles are involved millions of thinking individuals, each 'thinking' partially in accordance with the requirements of the 'universal spirit', and partially in contradiction with it.

The main shortcoming of the entire preceding tradition of logic Hegel sees first and foremost in its attempt to present the image of 'thinking in general' using the 'experience of finite thinking', according to the image ('model') of individually realised thinking. Here we find the main error since Thinking in general (which Hegel calls 'infinite', 'absolute' thinking) was conceived as simple multiple repetitions of the individual ('finite') thinking. Thus only the forms and rules of this 'finite thinking', understood as *a consciously realised act*, are raised to the level of 'logical' forms and laws of thinking, i.e. only the *general* schemes that are *detectible* in every consciously realised process of reasoning as the schemes that are *accepted* equally by every thinking individual, as the 'rules' that every such individual knows and acknowledges as 'his own', even if he does not always find their clear verbal formulation.

An individual with his thinking (understood as the consciously accomplished activity) is already drawn into the process of development of Science and Technology, a process that takes place independently of his will and consciousness; the course of his thinking is always significantly corrected by the 'universal thinking', immediately going against him as thinking of the 'rest of the individuals', and in the end he obeys this corrective influence.

However, the actions that individual thinking accomplishes as *his own* actions, even if under the pressure from the 'outside', from the side of the universal (collective) thinking, will be accomplished by him without the realisation that he is ruled by *logical* laws, the laws of Thinking. These laws and forms of Thinking will be realised through his individual mind *unconsciously*.

(Not unconsciously in general, but without their *logical* consciousness, i.e. without their expression in the logical categories. He will of course be conscious of the necessity to accomplish such actions in some way. Only he will always ascribe these actions of his own thinking, actions that do not fit with the schematism of formal logic – to the influence on his thinking of some other, extra-logical and non-logical factors, to the influence of 'reflection' or 'intuition', 'fantasy' or 'will', 'desires' or 'memory', and so on and so forth, while under the mask of these 'factors' hides the power of 'thinking in general' over his individual thinking).

Thus we arrive at a rather ridiculous situation in which all the actual forms and laws within the boundaries of which and in accordance with which proceeds all real thinking in its real realisation, i.e. in the form of Science, Technology and Morality, are taken and are evaluated not as the forms or laws of *Thinking*, but as completely 'external' in relation to thinking necessity, and therefore not studied in logic as science ...

In connection with this Hegel introduces one of his most important distinctions between 'thinking in itself' (an sich), which constitutes the subject matter,

the object of study, in logic, and 'thinking for itself' (*für sich selbst*), i.e. thinking that fully cognises schemes, principles and laws within the boundaries of which it is itself accomplished, and accomplished in accordance with them quite consciously, giving itself a clear account of what, how and why it does.

And that means that Thinking – thanks to Logic – must, in the course of the spontaneously occurring act of creation of Science, Technology and Morality, become 'for itself' while before Logic it was only 'in itself'.

Logic, interpreted as 'consciousness' that *this* thinking has of itself, of 'its pure essence', on the one hand, and as actual 'deeds' of this thinking, on the other, reveals 'too wide a difference that one would not be struck, even on the most superficial observation, by the disproportion and the unworthiness of the latter consciousness as contrasted with spirit's other elevations'.<sup>20</sup>

Hegel gives logic an assignment – to make the consciousness of thinking about itself *identical* to its subject matter, i.e. to those forms and laws that in reality, despite its existing consciousness (current logic), 'thinking in itself' obeys in its development.

This, and nothing else, is what Hegel means by the principle of *identity of subjective and objective*. This means only that in *Logic* both the 'subject' and the 'object' are *one and the same thinking*. We are talking about the correlation of the schemes of the 'conscious thinking' with the schemes of that 'universal thinking' that created the entire world of science, technology and morality – about the adequate realisation of these latter schemes, and nothing else.

Therefore when Hegel claims that in Logic (and only in Logic – we must not forget this point) the 'antithesis between subjective and objective (in its usual meaning) disappears',<sup>21</sup> then it means directly and immediately only that in logic the subject matter (object) of thinking is thinking itself, and not something else, that logic is 'thinking that thinks about itself', i.e. the 'subject' that makes itself the *object* of its own activity, or the 'object' that acquires in logic consciousness of its own actions, their schemes and 'rules', and thus becomes the 'subject'. In other words, here we take 'subject' and 'object' not in the 'usual' meaning of these terms, but as the purely logical concepts in the Hegelian sense of this word, *as the categories of thinking*, but thinking in its explained meaning as the capacity realised in the form of science, technology and morality, and not only and not as much in the form of *speaking*, in the form of 'dumb speech'.

20 Hegel 2010, p. 31.

21 Hegel 1991a, p. 56.

It is not difficult to notice that in this scholastically disguised form Hegel very precisely expressed the fundamental peculiarity of human life activity, human being's capacity (as a 'thinking' being) to look at himself as if 'from the side', as on 'something other', as on a special 'subject matter' ('object'), or, in other words, the capacity to transform *the schemes of its own activity into the object of that activity*.

It is the same peculiarity of a human being that young Marx – in the course of his critique of Hegel – described in the following way: 'The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is its life activity. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges.'<sup>22</sup>

Since Hegel considers this real peculiarity of human life activity from the perspective of the logician, he considers it only in that form where it has already been transformed into a scheme of thinking, into a 'logical' scheme, into a rule, in accordance with which a human being more or less consciously constructs his particular actions (either in the material of language or in any other material).

The 'things' and the 'states of things' (deeds) outside the consciousness and will of an individual ('Dinge und Sache') are considered by him within this scheme exclusively as 'moments', as 'metamorphoses' of thinking ('subjective activity'), realised and in the process of being realised in the natural material, including the organic body of a human being. Therefore the peculiarity of human life activity, described above in the words of Marx, appears in Hegelian presentation as the *scheme of thinking*, 'realised' in a human being.

The real picture of human life activity with its real peculiarities receives here the inverted, upside-down, presentation.

In reality a human being 'thinks' in accordance with this scheme because such is his real life activity. Hegel, however, says the opposite: real human life activity is such because a human being *thinks* in accordance with a certain scheme. Naturally, all real determinations of human life activity, and through it of the 'state of things' outside of the human head, are considered only inasmuch as they are 'posited by thinking', appear as a *result* of thinking.

We say 'naturally', because a logician who studies thinking as his speciality is interested not in the 'thing' (or the 'state of things') as such, as reality that exists before, outside and independently of human being with his activity (this is the

22 Marx and Engels 1975, p. 276.

subject matter of study for a physicist or a biologist, an economist or an astronomer, not a logician), but in the 'thing' as it appears in the eyes of science, i.e. as a result of activity of the thinking human being, the 'subject', as a *product* of thinking, understood as activity that has *concept* as its specific product, concept as an understanding of the essence of matter.

The activity of thinking is summarised, 'objectified', in understanding the 'essence of matter', and therefore the 'determinations of the concept' immediately appear as the determination of 'things' that are, for a logician, sublated in the product of the determination of activity that created this product.

Therefore Hegel's thesis, according to which the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' in the usual meaning of these words is not related to logic with its peculiar point of view, is not an expression of naïve blindness of an idealist in relation to this most obvious distinction, but a consciously adopted disposition that puts an emphasis only on those forms and laws of the activity of a thinking being that have wholly objective character, i.e. that do not depend on the will and consciousness of these thinking individuals, even if they are realised only in the conscious and willing acts (actions) of these individuals, in their 'subjectivity'.

These are objective forms and laws of subjectivity itself, the schemes of its development that it must unconditionally obey even in the case when the subject is not consciously aware of them. In this case they are realised outside of and even despite the subject's will, his consciously accomplished actions, outside of those 'logical schemes', in accordance with which he is *consciously* constructing the schemes of his actions.

Hegel, in other words, traces the dialectics of 'subjective' and 'objective' in that form in which it is already expressed (reflected) inside the 'subject', inside the very process of thinking, the process of the development of concepts.

By 'objective' he means here not the object as such, but the object as it is represented in the concept, as the concept ('understanding') of the object given to the professional logician by the science of his time, by the Thinking (with a capital letter).

It is this 'thinking', represented in its results, that is the only 'object' for the logician, the only object that he studies. And he finds in this object the obvious difference, obvious discrepancy between what a thinking person does *fully consciously*, i.e. giving himself an account of what he does and how he does it, in the concepts of a 'logic' known to him, and what he does in reality, without giving himself such an account, but ascribing the necessity of such actions, actions that do not fit the schemes of a logic known to him, to 'extra-logical' factors and circumstances that systematically force him to 'violate' the consciously held logical rules and imperatives ...

His own thinking, thus, refutes the very 'rules' that he considers to be the 'laws of thinking', i.e. it 'falls into a dialectics', that very same dialectics that is unconditionally prohibited by these rules.

Therefore this obvious discrepancy between 'logic' as a totality of all consciously applied 'rules' of conscious reasoning and Logic as the genuine – objective – law of the development of thinking, although still not fully cognised, is explained by Hegel as the contradiction *within thinking*, expressed as well within conscious thinking, thinking in accordance with these 'rules'. Here this contradiction appears as a constant, systematically (i.e. regularly) accomplished 'violation of rules', dictated by the impossibility of following them in *real thinking*.

Hegel demonstrates this fact using thinking that produces concepts about itself, i.e. thinking as it appears in the logic itself, that is realised as 'logic'; he points out that the 'rules', established by this logic, are violated in the very course of establishing of these rules ... While claiming the right of law-giving authority in the kingdom of thinking, traditional logic acts like a provincial feudal lord who considers the 'laws' issued for his vassals necessary for all, except himself.

All so-called 'logical laws' that must play the role of the rules of demonstration, of conditions of demonstrability of thinking, are not demonstrated in such logic, but simply postulated, presented as dogmas which are to be followed blindly without any questions as to why. Such logic does not substantiate these rules, does not 'mediate' them, but simply assures us that our 'faculty of thinking' is made this way ... This is especially obvious in the case of traditional logic's formulation of the 'law of sufficient reason'.

In setting up this law of thought, formal logic gives the other sciences a bad example, since it asks them not to take their content as valid in its immediacy; while, for its own part, it sets up this law of thought without deducing it and exhibiting its process of mediation. With the same right that the logician asserts when he maintains that our faculty of thinking happens to be so constituted that we must always ask for a ground, the doctor could answer that people are so organized that they cannot live under water when he is asked why a person who fall into the water drowns.<sup>23</sup>

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23 Hegel 1991a, p. 189.

Of course, Hegel's irony here is absolutely justified – the 'law' that is announced as the 'logical law', i.e. the law that thinking in general must obey, thinking in its every particular use, is established exactly through its own blatant violation.

Hegel, however, requires that, above all, logic itself must be logical, since if logic is also science, also thinking, then in the development of its own positions and concepts it must first obey all the requirements that it formulates as universal, as 'logical'. Because it itself does not follow these laws, it demonstrates, despite its own will and its own conscious intentions, that rules formulated by it are not universal, i.e. are not logical.

Let us go further. This logic requires that thinking be 'consistent'. But 'the fundamental defect reveals itself through the inconsistency of uniting what, a moment earlier, was declared to be independent, and therefore incompatible ...'.<sup>24</sup>

Thus inside this very 'logic', and inside thinking that is guided by the dictates of its rules, reigns hopeless pluralism and a lack of any necessary connection between particular propositions. It is filled to the brim with formal contradictions, but prefers not to notice it.

Thus, proclaiming the 'law of identity' and the 'prohibition of contradictions in determinations', the 'law of non-contradiction', to be the highest and absolute laws of thinking in general, this logic announces in the very opening lines of its presentation that *logic is a science*. But the logical formula for these kinds of statement ('Ivan is a man', 'Buddy is a dog', 'logic is a science', and so on and so forth) prescribes the direct identification of the immediately different, non-identical determinations (particular is universal, singular is general).

Thinking that 'cognises itself' in the form of traditional formal logic *lacks* the '*simple consciousness* that, in this very to-ing and fro-ing, each of the simple determinations is declared to be unsatisfactory; and the defect consists in the simple incapacity to bring two thoughts together – and in respect of form there are only *two* thoughts present'.<sup>25</sup>

This manner of reasoning ('thinking'), according to which all things in the world must be considered 'from the point of view of their identity with one another', 'and from the point of view of their difference from one another', 'on the one hand – this, on the another hand – that', i.e. just the opposite – 'in one relation as one and the same, in another relation – as not one and the same' – this is what constitutes the genuine logic of this 'logic'.

<sup>24</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 105.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



This is why the former logic corresponds, as a theory, to the very practice of thinking that is 'logical' only in appearance, but in reality does not contain in itself any necessity.

This logic (both theory and practice of its 'application') in reality ('in itself') is *thoroughly dialectical* in its own reproachful sense of the word; it is filled to the brim with unresolved contradictions while pretending that these contradictions do not exist. It constantly commits actions that are prohibited from the point of view of its own postulates, its 'laws' and 'rules', but this practice is not brought up to the clear consciousness, to the expression in its own principles.

Inside the theory of logic this dialectics is already expressed in the fact that the so-called 'absolute laws of thought', or more precisely, the 'several propositions that are set up as absolute laws of thought', turn out 'on closer examination' to be 'opposed to each other: they contradict each other and mutually sublimate each other'.<sup>26</sup>

Hegel, it is easy to notice, launches a critique of traditional logic – and thinking that corresponds to this logic – using that 'immanent' method that constitutes one of the main achievements of his own Logic. To be exact, he opposes to the statements ('laws' and 'rules') of this logic not some other *statements*, but a process of the practical realisation of its very own positions in real thinking. He shows it its own reflection in the mirror of its own 'consciousness', its own fundamental principles.

He does not challenge its ideas, its 'concept of thinking', i.e. he agrees with it in that '*conscious thinking*' (the only kind that it investigates) really is such that it acts in accordance with those 'rules' that it gives itself and therefore accepts as a 'code', in accordance with which it may and must be judged. Hegel shows, however, that it is precisely this strict adherence to the principles of 'conscious thinking' that necessarily, with inexorable force, leads it to the negation of these very principles, and in that is found *its own abstract nature*, i.e. its incompleteness and one-sidedness.

This is the same critique of understanding from the point of view of understanding itself that was already launched by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is the same critique that concludes: 'the very nature of thinking is the dialectic, that, as understanding, it must fall into the negative of itself, into contradictions ...'<sup>27</sup>

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26 Hegel 2010, p. 356.

27 Hegel 1991a, p. 35.

Kant himself already arrived at this conclusion, and if before Kant 'logic' could be lacking in self-criticism unknowingly, then now it can preserve its positions only if it consciously turns its nose away from the facts that are not pleasing to it, only if it *consciously rejects self-criticism*.

Hegel sees the main weakness of the old – purely formal – logic in that, piling contradictions on top of contradictions, it tries to ignore the 'product' of its own work, tries, again and again, to pretend that there are no 'contradictions' in it at all, that there are only 'seeming contradictions', 'contradictions of different relations' or 'at different times' (i.e. on different pages of its own expositions), and therefore it leaves these contradictions in thinking *unresolved*.

Hegel sees the most important and acute problem for logic as science, raised by the works of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, precisely in that it must find, identify and show to the real thinking the logical method for resolving contradictions into which this real thinking falls precisely because and insofar as it is consciously and strictly guided by the traditional logic, i.e. it has relatively correct, but extremely abstract, consciousness of itself, it has abstractly incomplete 'self-consciousness'.

It is precisely here that we find the actual difference between Hegel's logic and the preceding logical conceptions. And it is not found, as some adherents of the archaic pre-Hegelian state of logic claim, in that previous logic, allegedly, cared about 'freeing' thinking from 'contradictions in determinations', while evil Hegel decided to legitimise these contradictions and give them the status of the 'correct form' for any logical construction and reconstruction of reality. This explanation of Hegel's approach to the 'contradiction' until today inspires many with a desire to use all necessary means to discredit the idea of dialectical logic, since it is impossible to defeat it on a theoretical field.

Meanwhile the opposite is the case. Hegel is in complete agreement with the preceding logic in that there should not be any 'logical' contradictions in the sense of insoluble, 'unmediated' contradictions – antinomies should not be part of any developed theory (including logic itself).

In this he sees the 'rational kernel' of the infamous 'prohibition against contradiction'. According to Hegel, 'contradiction' must not only be revealed in thinking, not only strictly articulated in it, but also must find its logical-theoretical *solution*. More than that, this solution must be reached in the same logical process that first revealed it, in the course of the development of determinations of the concept, of *understanding of the essence of the matter* in which it was first found.

And it cannot be done by the way of sophistic cheating, or by pathetic self-deception and self-suggestion dictated by the desire to 'demonstrate' by all means that there are no contradictions in thinking, that there cannot be any

such contradictions if this thinking is 'correct' (i.e. done in accordance with all the 'rules' of formal logic), so there is only an 'appearance of contradiction' produced by mixing of 'different senses of terms', 'different relations', and so on and so forth. In short, the preceding logic always tries to interpret contradictions found in thinking as a result and an indication of *error*, committed by this thinking 'along the way', i.e. as a result of *deviation* from the 'rules' that took place during some preceding 'reasoning'.

Such interpretation of the *origin* of contradictions in the determinations of the concept was already debunked by Kant and to insist on it after Kant is rather embarrassing. Hegel states, in full agreement with Kant, that 'contradiction' in thinking (as part of the determination of the concept) emerges not as a result of carelessness, unscrupulousness or 'oversight', but precisely as an inexorable and unavoidable result of 'correct' thinking (i.e. thinking that is consciously guided by the so called 'absolute laws of thinking' – the law of identity and the law of the prohibition of contradiction).

However, unlike Kant, Hegel understands and insists that these contradictions may and must be resolved in the course of the further *logical* development of the determination of the concept, that they cannot be preserved for ages in the form of antinomies.

But – and here is the crux of the matter – on order for thinking to resolve these antinomies, it must first grasp them clearly and distinctly *as* antinomies, as *insoluble* contradictions, as logical or as actual, and not as simply 'alleged' problems.

This attitude toward contradictions is precisely what traditional logic does not teach. And not only does it not teach it, but it directly interferes with any attempt to teach it because it stubbornly interprets these contradictions as a result of some previously committed 'violation' of the rules of 'conscious reasoning'. On the basis of this – pre-Kantian, 'pre-critical' – idea it invents the trickiest technique for *getting rid* of contradictions, of *hiding* them from consciousness, of 'shunting' them, i.e. of *disguising* them with the help of the subtlest linguistic dexterity, verbal resourcefulness.

It thus turns thinking that trusts its recipes into blind and non-self-critical thinking, teaching it to persist in dogmas, in abstract non-contradictory propositions, and to avoid real problems that must be studied scientifically, because the real problem that cannot be solved by thinking is here always 'logically' expressed in the form of an antinomy, in the form of insoluble contradiction in the determinations of the concept, as a part of theoretical construction.

That is why Hegel rightly describes this traditional formal logic as the logic of *dogmatism*.

Purely formal logic differs from Hegel's logic not in that the former 'prohibits' contradictions and the latter 'permits' contradictions in the determinations of concepts, as the matter has been presented by the representatives of the formal logical tradition. The difference is that they give thinking that encountered a contradiction opposite, mutually exclusive, recommendations regarding the course of action it must take in order to resolve that contradiction.

When old – pre-Hegelian – logic encounters a contradiction, created as an inevitable result of rigorous adherence to its own 'rules', it always 'retreats' from it, *retraces* its steps by going back to the preceding course of 'reasoning' (i.e. which in reality turns into pedantic-linguistic analysis of the terms that constituted the previous steps of 'reasoning'), and it does not rest until it finds in it some 'error', some 'confusion of different meanings of words', some use of a term 'in different relations', and so on – in other words, some 'imprecision' that allegedly led to the 'contradiction'.

Thus *contradiction* becomes an insurmountable obstacle in the *forward* progress of such thinking in the further *development* of the determinations of the concept, in the further theoretical study of the 'essence of the matter'. It prohibits any further movement until the 'error' in the preceding course of 'reasoning' that led to the contradiction is identified.

As a result, such thinking (and such 'logic') is forced to save itself from contradictions by retreating further and further 'back' – to the lowest forms of its own development: '... thinking despairs of being able to bring about, from its own resources, the resolution of the contradiction in which it has put itself, then it returns to the solutions and appeasements in which the spirit has participated in its other modes and forms'.<sup>28</sup>

It is absolutely unavoidable because contradiction does not appear as a result of an 'error', and thinking cannot find any error in the preceding 'reasoning' (everything was done 'correctly') – so it is forced to retreat even further 'back', hiding in the 'non-contradictory comfort' of the forms of thinking that precede 'conscious reasoning', in the realm of *lower* (in comparison with logical thinking) forms of consciousness – in the realm of 'contemplation', 'intuition' and 'representation', in those areas of spirit where there is no 'contradiction', but that is only because it was not yet found and revealed in the strict 'language of science' ...

(Of course, Hegel never denied the utility of *checking* the course of 'reasoning' that precedes the appearance of contradiction with the purpose of finding out whether there is any formal imprecision or terminological fault. And it

<sup>28</sup> Hegel 1991a, p. 35.

often turns out that the 'contradiction' is purely verbal, is only alleged. The problem with formal logic is not that it does not consider such contradictions and does not recommend the appropriate way of getting rid of them. The problem is that it considers only such contradictions and does not think any other kind exists. Therefore purely formal logic excludes Hegel's logic while Hegel's logic includes it on the condition that its truth is relevant, thus limiting the validity of its considerations and depriving it of that *absolute* importance that it gives itself and its rules ...)

Dialectics, used intentionally as the method of development of the determinations of the concept, is Logic that includes the process of identification (as clear detection and strict expression in the language of science) of *logical contradictions* (produced by 'reason' unconsciously and against its will, i.e. produced by thinking in accordance with the rules of formal logic), and the process of *their concrete solution* by the way of logical development of the determinations of the concept, i.e. as a part of the more concrete and deeper understanding of the subject matter in the expression of which the 'contradiction' was identified, in the course of the higher development of science, technology and 'morality' (by which Hegel understands the entirety of social relationships between human beings), i.e. of the entire actuality that he calls 'objective spirit'. This movement in which the 'subjective thinking' must take active part turns out in Hegel's *Science of Logic* to be the only rational way of resolving the logical contradictions that emerge in 'subjective thinking' (in 'conscious reasoning').

This capacity of Hegel's Logic makes it head and shoulders above any other logical conception, and its study is edifying even today.

## Hegel and Hermeneutics: the Problem of the Relationship between Language and Thinking in Hegel

Hermeneutics that we are going to discuss here is not the ancient discipline, developed within the framework of classical philology in relation to its special purposes, the art of translation and 'interpretation' of the works of ancient literature. Hegel, as well as philosophy in general, has only an indirect relation to this art with its peculiar and special technique. However, recently in the works dedicated to hermeneutics we find certain pretensions toward the solution of the cardinal problems of philosophy as science, and primarily the problem of thinking and its relation to 'true being'. The penetration into the mysteries of 'true being' is presented here as an act of disclosure of the secret 'senses' and 'meanings' of the phenomena of human existence, i.e. of the images of the life of 'spirit' that acquire self-consciousness in language and by means of language. Language appears here as the 'true house of being' (Heidegger), and hermeneutics – as the only method of penetrating into the mysteries of this 'house'. Thus the true philosophy of today (and the secret of philosophy of previous epochs), we are told, is the 'philosophy of language', i.e. a particular understanding of the relationship between language and thinking.

And it is indeed a serious problem, and in its light the theme 'Hegel and Hermeneutics' acquires a clear and, in essence, philosophical meaning, and therefore it deserves special consideration.

Obviously, since thinking is understood by Hegel not only, and even not so much, as one of the subjective-mental human faculties, but as the 'absolute power' that creates the world, from his point of view thinking realises itself and is realised not only in language. The entire world that surrounds human beings – rivers, stars, temples, guillotines, statues, and machines – is considered by Hegel to be objectified thinking, intellect 'fossilised' in its own products. Language appears here only as one of the forms of the universally objectified thinking.

But it is also obvious that when we are talking about the process of self-cognition, achieved by the absolute thinking in the person of an individual human being, language turns out to be that privileged form of external manifestation in the elements of which thinking begins and ends its work of self-cognition; it is precisely in and through language that thinking returns to itself

from all the cycles of its self-alienation, once again acquiring its own original image, the image it had before its Fall – ‘before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit’.<sup>1</sup>

Empirically this ‘in-itself-and-for-itself existing thinking’ presents itself in the form of *Science of Logic* – in the form of the literary work or, to be more precise, in the form of the reader who adequately understands the text of this treatise. In the act of reading of the text of *Logic*, a text that illustrates the ‘absolute’ forms of thinking, these ‘absolute forms’ – categories – are no longer just *illustrated*, but also *exist* as the living active forms of the work of thinking that comprehends itself, its ‘essence’. In this act the ‘finite’ thinking of the human reader merges with the ‘divine’ infinite Thinking by immediately realising it. The human reader here not only ‘cognises’ Hegel’s God as something ‘other’, as something that is different from him, but is that God himself.

This way absolute thinking, or thinking as such, is realised and exists (has ‘determinate being’) precisely in such an act of understanding an interpretation of the text, that is immediately as the *system of the meanings of words* that express the ideal scheme of creation, its categorical scheme.

Historically this aspect of Hegel’s conception turned out to be quite tenacious. The motifs that are related to it are not hard to find even in such otherwise distinct philosophical schools as existentialist hermeneutics and the structuralism of Levi-Strauss, the ‘linguistic philosophy’ of Austin and pedantically formal analysis of Wittgenstein and his followers. All of these movements are characterised by their tendency to discern the original fundamental structures of thinking in language and through language – through this or that study of the verbal explications of the spiritual activity – whether it is the ‘language of science’ or the semantics of myths, philosophical works or the data of ‘natural language’.

This circumstance forces us to take a closer look at Hegel’s understanding of the relationship between thinking and language, understanding that in the last 150 years still did not lose its theoretical relevance.

Since Hegel himself did not systematically present his own understanding of this problem anywhere in his writings, his conception must be reconstructed by gathering together some of his indirectly explicated assumptions. Nevertheless the picture that emerges is fairly unambiguous. Undoubtedly, in this sense the authors approaching Hegel from the positions of hermeneutics and ‘philosophy of language’<sup>2</sup> are absolutely correct – language (in the wider sense of the word) is discussed in Hegel indirectly much more often than directly.

1 Hegel 2010, p. 29.

2 See, for example, Simon 1966 and Gadamer 1971.

But it is also unquestionable that language interests Hegel not in and of itself, but only as an external form of manifestation of thinking. Therefore even in the forms of language Hegel aims to discern pure forms of thinking, logical forms 'alienated' in it, and therefore peculiarly deformed by the specific resistance of the material in which they are embodied.

The logical form for Hegel is under no circumstances a form of language (no matter how widely the former is understood). It is a form of some reality that must be understood in its absolute independence from language – as existing (and therefore thinkable) before, outside and independently of language, and only expressing its actuality in language.

To reproach Hegel for understanding language this way, i.e. only as the form of external manifestation of the power of thinking that assumes the existence of thinking as a special reality existing before and outside (and therefore independently of) language, is to reproach him, more or less, for preoccupying himself for his entire life with logic, and not linguistics, for dedicating his life to the study of thinking, and not of language.

But it is precisely this reproach that is directed at Hegel by 'hermeneutics', according to which it is not thinking that becomes aware of itself in and through language, but, conversely, language finds in logic the awareness of its own abstract schemes. It is not the forms of thinking that express themselves in the forms of language, but, conversely, language finds in 'thinking' and in Logic the external, that is, more or less distorted, expression of one of its own aspects.

In this interpretation all logical categories, organised by Hegel into a systematic order, obviously lose the significance of being determinations of reality that exists outside of language (no matter how one understands this reality – either as 'God in his pre-natural existence' or as material reality of nature and human beings) and are understood exclusively as stable schemes of expression of 'being' in language, that is, as forms of language and language alone, erroneously taken by Hegel (and following him, by materialists) to be the forms of the development of 'reality' that exists outside and independently of language, of 'genuine being' that is not represented in these forms and is not captured by them.

It is not the 'logical' categories that therefore 'deposit themselves in language' (as Hegel put it), but, conversely, the forms of language (its grammatical, syntactical and semantic order) achieve their expression and are legitimised by culture under the nominal (and confusing) pseudonym of the 'logical forms of thinking' ... In reality, these are allegedly only the forms of language, 'hypostatized' by Hegel and his materialist descendants ...

Hegel's logic (dialectics) is thus assimilated by this understanding as the perverted-inverted presentation of the 'genuine' relationship between lan-



guage and thinking, between thinking and reality, between reality and language. Thus we have Gadamer's slogan – 'to return dialectics into the realm of hermeneutics', that is to use Hegel's dialectics as a brilliantly developed technique of working with language and in language, as a technique of 'meaningful interpretation' of literary text, as a tool box for the work with verbal formations, and only with them. Any other understanding and 'application' of dialectics from this point of view must be decisively rejected as illegitimate and illusory. The genuine 'being' – Heidegger's 'aletheia' – is grasped not by logical ('dialectical') means, but in acts of irrational 'enowning', inspired intuition, and so on and so forth.

But because we are talking about a 'scientific' understanding of this elusive 'aletheia', then the last and the deepest justification and the mystery of any scientific-theoretical presentation that may and must be discovered by philosophical critique is language and its immanent 'forms' that include nothing but themselves, that 'express' nothing and cannot be critically correlated with anything that exists outside of them.

In this view existentialist hermeneutics directly gives its support to the most extreme expressions of neopositivist formalism that reduces the entire purpose of logic as science to analysis of language – 'language of science' or 'natural language'.

Hermeneutics together with neopositivism arms those who are interested in it (and there are plenty of such people) with a technique that allows them to turn any real discussion about real problems into a discussion about words, 'meanings' of used words, and thus to turn any real problem, any real contradiction of real life into a scholastic-linguistic problem, into a contradiction between various meanings of one and the same word, and so on and so forth, and to see the resolution of contradictions in inventing new – 'non-contradictory' – words ...<sup>3</sup>

Logic as the science of thinking is basically liquidated in both cases, its material is divided between a number of narrowly specialised subdivisions of linguistics, only loosely connected with one another, such as grammar, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and so on.

And what remain after this execution by quartering falls into the hands of irrational intuition of whatever latest fashionable designation.

Of course, the difference between the two methods of annihilation of logic – the positivist pedantry and the exuberant inspired hermeneutics – does exist, and this difference shows itself in the interpretation of Hegel's logic.

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3 The reader can get acquainted in great detail with the neopositivist version of such conceptions in the works by I.S. Narskii dedicated to the critique of neopositivism.

If neopositivists simply refuse Hegel any significant role in the history of logical thought (Hegel allegedly did not and does not have anything to do with logic, since he destroyed the proper boundaries of its subject matter by including in it the world of things and events located outside of thinking, and therefore what he called 'logic' was in fact 'metaphysics', and not 'thinking'), then hermeneutics considers Hegel's logic to be the most important stage in the development of the scientific understanding of logic and thinking and, therefore, the stage of preparation of its own hermeneutical interpretation. The genuine heir of Hegel in this view turns out to be Martin Heidegger and his school.

Hegel, we are told, made a huge step forward in figuring out the real subject matter of logic as the science of intellect. He did not include any 'things' or the 'world of things' as part of the subject matter of logic – all of his life he only studied the expressed things, only things determined in words, and the general forms of verbal determination of things ('determinate' in German is 'bestimmt' – determined by voice – from 'die Stimme' – 'voice').

Therefore we do not need to separate Hegel from 'contemporary' understanding of logic since it would be more correct to describe him as a sophisticated analyst of language, speech, the world of words and verbal constructions. His *Science of Logic* may be and must be interpreted as the most sophisticated – and also dialectical – study of the factual forms of expression of 'being' in language. Hegel's 'logical structure of the world' is in reality nothing else but 'hypostatized structure of language', and it is sufficient to eliminate this 'hypostatization' in order to see in Hegel the greatest representative of the 'philosophy of language', the precursor of 'contemporary' understanding of logic and thinking.

Hegel is even given the following compliment: his analysis of the transitions from one category to the next is most persuasive and clear where Hegel pursues it as a linguistic analysis, relying on the study of the historical collisions in the system of meanings of words, and especially German words ...

Hegel's logic thus begins to appear as the specific logic of German thinking – thinking in German language – and not very persuasive for thinking of non-German nations and peoples ...

This is of course partially true: Hegel does resort to purely verbal play where he is unable to 'deduce' one category from another by any other means ('Wesen' – 'essence' – is deduced from the past tense of the verb 'sein' – 'to be'; it becomes 'being' with an addition of the definite article – 'das Wesen', then 'Grund' – 'foundation' – is deduced from the German idiom 'Zu Grunde gehen' – to perish and to 'sink to the bottom', 'to get to the bottom', and so on). In this clever play on words, hermeneutics finds the 'most persuasive' element in

his logical deduction of the categories of his logic. That is a questionable compliment. As the most valuable content of Hegel's dialectics we have here the untranslatable and purely linguistic trick that only a German reader can fully appreciate ...

And the conclusion is obvious: Hegel's logic did not, does not and cannot have any universal significance. It must be rationally interpreted and accepted only as a specific national logic of German scientific-theoretical thinking, presented as 'universal' logic.

And 'universal logic' – logic of 'thinking in general' – is an illusion that was feeding on pan-Germanic aspirations of Hegel and his followers. For all other countries and nations it does not appear as necessary, persuasive, and acceptable.

It is not difficult to understand that this compliment to Hegel is simultaneously aimed, but this time as a poisonous arrow, in the direction of Marx, in the direction of the logic of *Capital*.

'Hermeneutised' Hegel thus turns into an argument against universal (international) significance of theory in general, science in general, thinking in general.

A human being lives in the world of words, or more precisely, in the world of dreams created by the magical power of words, and each nation dreams in its own language. Life is a dream, science is a dream structured by words, by language. This dream has no relation to reality (to 'aletheia') and only the inspired genius of Martin Heidegger's kind is able to establish some kind of connection between these two worlds, to determine which dream should be considered the allegorical presentation of 'being-aletheia', and which dream shouldn't ...

So thinking that is 'described' in Hegel's *Logic* is in reality only a verbal activity that is regulated by the rules of connecting words, it is a mechanism of words-cogwheels that are connected with each other but have no relation to anything outside of language, outside of words.

Of course, Hegel interpreted this way has very little in common with uninterpreted genuine Hegel and his understanding of thinking and logic. We have to admit, however, that there are some reasons and grounds for such interpretation found in Hegel's conception of the relationship between thinking and language. Hermeneutical version of dialectics is potentially found in it because Hegel, with all of his excuses, does give the word (speech and language) the sense of a privileged form of 'manifestation' of thinking to itself, Hegel does give it the role in history – in history in general, in history of culture and in history of logical culture in particular – that the word in reality did not play and could not play.

Thus it is important to clearly identify in Hegel's conception – in its very foundation, that is, in the relationship between thinking and language, between thinking and reality, between reality and language – some axioms that are not directly formulated by Hegel himself, but that are 'self-evident' (for him) preconditions.

But this must be done not in order that we may accept these preconditions (as hermeneutical dialectics does), but in order that we may establish a truly critical attitude toward them, in order to get rid of all the traces of linguistic fetishism in our understanding of thinking and its relation to the world existing outside thinking, to the world of real nature and real history.

The issue, in other words, is that of settling serious critical score with Hegel's understanding of thinking (and thus with his understanding of the subject matter of logic as the science of thinking) by destroying some axioms of this understanding that even today appear as self-evident, and not only for the orthodox Hegelians.

The axiom that was already clearly expressed in Jena system and that turned out to be quite persistent – more so than the rest of the Hegelian building that was founded on it – consists in the following: the word (as language, as speech, as proposition) is considered as the first – both in essence and in time, logically and historically – form of the determinate being (manifestation) of spirit, its logical order, in relation to itself. In relation to the history of earthly incarnation of the 'absolute spirit', Hegel fully endorses Saint John's thesis: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made'.

It is precisely in the word and through the word that Hegel's God, that is to say the deified human thinking, originally awakes to conscious life. In the form of the word – in the form of organised vibrations of air caused by the tremor of the vocal cords, the voice – 'thinking', until that moment asleep in humans, in stones, and in donkeys, 'posits itself as an object', as a 'thing', as a form of vibrations of air, and through them reaches the eardrums of another human being (another 'finite spirit'). As a sound the word is 'extinguished' in the act of hearing, turning once again into the same state of the 'spirit' from which this sound originated. The word – as sound that has meaning – is born here as a mediator between two 'finite spirits', that is between two thinking beings, it connects two spirits into one. In Hegel's idiom this situation is described in the following way: the word is the mediator between spirit and spirit, or, which is the same, the mediator of spirit with itself ... The 'meaning' – at first without a body – acquires the body of sound, is 'embodied' in sound, and then, having reached the ears of another human being, it again changes into 'pure meaning', into the state of the spirit.

Thus thinking reveals its creative force initially as the force to create names – as ‘Namengebende Kraft’ [the power to give name]. It appears at first as the kingdom of names, and then in this kingdom there is found some clear order, created, even if entirely unconsciously, by the very same creative force as the one that created the ‘names’. In it is revealed for thinking (for ‘spirit’) its own original innate capacity – capacity to order. This order in the kingdom of words, created by the spirit (‘posited by thinking’), immediately appears to the spirit as the connection of names, i.e. as the ‘grammatical order of language’. Thus the grammatical order of language is the first form of manifestation – external display – of the logical order of the force that created the language – the creative force of thinking; and, in grammar, thinking thus grasps its own original and immanent logical nature.

‘Grammatical study ... constitutes the beginning of logical training’,<sup>4</sup> postulates Hegel in his role of the gymnasium principal, and ‘this study consequently can be looked on as a preliminary instruction in philosophy’.<sup>5</sup>

Grammatical learning of an *ancient* language affords the advantage of necessarily implying a continuous and sustained activity of reason. In speaking our mother tongue, unreflective habit leads us to speak grammatically; but with an ancient language it is otherwise and we have to keep in view the significance, which the intellect has given to the parts of speech, and call to our aid the rules of their combination. Therefore a perpetual operation of subsuming the particular under the general and of specifying the general has to take place, and it is just in this that the activity of reason consists.<sup>6</sup>

This understanding of the relationship between logic and grammar may be found in all works by Hegel – it remained one of his axioms until the end. ‘The forms of thought are first set out and stored in human *language*’, he repeats in *Science of Logic*.<sup>7</sup>

As we see, the presented understanding of the relationship between thinking and language lies at the foundation not only of logic, but also of Hegel’s understanding of anthropogenesis, of history and of the essence of the pedagogical process. It is the universal axiomatic foundation of his entire grandiose system.

4 Hegel 1948, p. 328.

5 Hegel 1948, p. 329.

6 Hegel 1948, p. 329.

7 Hegel 2010, p. 12.

And if we accept it, it is going to be difficult, if not impossible, to argue with the 'hermeneutical' interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. The understanding of language as the first and immediate form of manifestation of thinking runs like a thread through *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophy of Right*, and *Science of Logic* – language everywhere constitutes the element in which begins and ends the history of acquisition of self-consciousness by the absolute spirit (i.e. by the deified human thinking) – from its first hints to the final self-report in *Logic*. It is true, and therefore Hegel's construction can be, without any serious and obvious violence done to the texts of his works, presented as a historically overcome prototype of contemporary 'philosophy of language'.

However, this interpretation is connected with some significant deficiencies in understanding of genuine Hegel and with rejection of those tendencies of his conception that led (eventually, of course) to materialism, to a materialistic understanding of his dialectics, his logic. Let us take a closer look at his conception.

First of all, we must point out that language (speech) was, for Hegel, by no means the only form of objectification of thinking, the only form of determinate being of the spirit, that is, the 'immediate reality of thinking'.

Let us leave aside for the moment the fact that for Hegel all sensuous-perceived diversity of creation is 'alienated thinking' – sun, moon, oceans, and so on. All of it, including the organic body of a human being, belongs to the 'pre-historical' conditions of thinking and does not require thinking for its own existence.

The matter is different when it comes to those sensuously perceived 'things' that, even though they exist outside human consciousness, nonetheless are created by its purposeful activity – pyramids and temples, tools and machines, railroads and Sputniks. And in relation to this category of things, Hegel is not incorrect when he defines them as creations of reason, as reason embodied in natural material – in stone, in wood, in metal – as the 'reified force of knowledge and thinking'.

There is nothing fatalist or idealist in this understanding. More than that, we find here the strong realist – materialist in its tendency – characteristic of Hegel's thinking and Hegel's philosophy.

It consists precisely in that language is considered as the first but not the only form of the 'external manifestation' of the force of thinking. The entire world of things, created by humans for humans, the entire material body of human culture, appears in his conception as the external manifestation of human thinking. Humans discover themselves as 'thinking beings' not only in speaking, not only in the activity of language and exercise of vocal cords and resulting air

vibrations, but also in the activity of human hands that form external nature in accordance with the commands of understanding and reason.

In the work of the hand, thinking ‘manifests itself’ no less obviously than in the vibrations of air produced by language – and this is not a secondary motif in Hegel’s thinking, not a casually thrown remark.

The arm and especially the *hand* is ... something that is unique to a human being; not one animal has such a versatile tool for externally directed activity. Human arm is the *tool of tools*, capable of serving as an expression of the infinite multitude of manifestations of will.<sup>8</sup>

And here even more eloquently: ‘Next to the organ of speech, it is the hand most of all by which a man manifests and actualizes himself ... We may say of the hand that it is what a man does, for in it, as the active organ of his self-fulfilment, he is present as the animating soul ...’<sup>9</sup>

We may say without exaggeration that it is precisely through this understanding of the role of the ‘hand’ that in *Phenomenology* and in *Philosophy of Spirit* there bursts in some fresh air of reality, of human thinking; for, regardless of the importance of the word, speech, and language in human life, and the life of humanity, the essence of the matter expressed in this word is still more important and more interesting for philosophy as science. This is how a philosopher is different from a linguist, and Hegel is different from Carnap and Gadamer.

Already in our daily life it is important for us to distinguish between words and deeds – what someone says about oneself and what someone does in reality. ‘What someone does’ manifests one’s real way of thinking much more fully and adequately than what one says, talks about, or tells us about it.

... Reasonable men pay attention not to the word but to the thing [Sache] itself, yet this does not give us permission to describe a thing in terms inappropriate to it. For this is at once incompetence and deceit, to fancy and to pretend that one merely has not the right word, and to hide from oneself that really one has failed to help of the thing itself, i.e. the concept. If one had the concept, then one would also have the right word.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Hegel 1986, p. 194.

9 Hegel 1977, p. 189.

10 Hegel 1977, p. 198.

Any materialist would agree with Hegel's sentence with a clear conscience. However, it does not fit the 'hermeneutical' interpretation of Hegel very well. The following passage also does not fit this interpretation: 'The person can be known in a much lesser degree by his external appearance than by his *actions*. The *language* itself is destined both to hide and to reveal human thoughts'.<sup>11</sup>

'What a person does' – the system of his actions, his deeds – manifests everything that he hides both from himself and from others. In this sense, the 'hand' (since it represents 'what a person does') is more truthful than the organ of speech, tongue – and without its help human thinking would have never acquired not only the 'absolute', but even the relatively correct 'self-consciousness'.

Therefore the practical act, or thinking in the form of Will, is included in Hegel's conception of logic not only as a purely external realisation of the commands of reason, that is, of the earlier theoretical acts of the spirit, but also as a peculiar filter that lets through only that which is objective in both theoretical acts and in the words that expressed them. The purely subjective gets stuck in this filter like garbage, including the verbal garbage.

In Hegelian idiom it sounds like this: the practical act, and only it, reveals the true meaning of the words, meaning hidden from the purely theoretical act that precedes it. Thus Robespierre's guillotine 'revealed' the true meaning of Rousseau's beautiful phrases, hidden from Rousseau himself ...

Only when we take that into consideration can we understand why in Hegel the forms of language, no matter how widely the notion of language is understood, cannot be the actual forms of thinking (actual logical forms). Actual and not imaginary thinking is that actual activity of a thinking person that is realised equally well not only in words, but also in deeds. That is why the logical form – 'Logos' – is the '*essence* of the thing and of speech, of *object* [Sache] and *talk* [Sage], the category'.<sup>12</sup>

The logical form – the form of thinking – is therefore realised equally well in the form of the word (in the form of an articulated sound, in the form of speech) and in the form of the thing in the most direct and rough material sense of this word, or to be more precise, in the form of the system of things that constitute the material body of culture – 'non-organic human body', humanised nature.

Doubtlessly, it is here that we find the materialist tendency of the Hegelian conception. Things are included by Hegel into the logical process as its

11 Hegel 1986, p. 192.

12 Hegel 1983, p. 90.



moment, as its metamorphosis, as the dependent ('posited' and finite) component and part of the process, as something that emerges and disappears in it, in its flow; and practice is understood here as the criterion of truth.

It is in this that we find, despite its idealist limitations, the breadth and the majesty of Hegel's logic as science that studies the forms and laws of production and reproduction of things by the activity of a thinking being, including such 'things' as words.

It is precisely here, in understanding of thinking as the activity that realises itself equally well in words and in things (and not only in words), that we find the embryo of a wider – materialist – understanding of the world, understanding of both actuality and thinking itself.

It is understandable that 'hermeneutics' would pay little attention to this point and only touch upon it superficially and without much interest, and thus without penetrating into the depths of Hegel's dialectics, and especially Hegel's understanding of history.

It is easy to demonstrate that only the materialist reading of Hegel's complicated passages would reveal not only very 'earthly', but also very deep content, undetectable with any other approach or only appearing as an artificial piling up of specifically Hegelian words and turns of phrases.

According to Hegel, 'things' ('objects') are included in the logical process precisely through the activity of the hand that realises in them this or that intention, this or that 'thought'. In this thinking is 'objectified' in the material and the material is 'deobjectified', that is, it loses its natural form and acquires instead the new form that is 'posited' by thinking, thus turning into an 'alienated thought'. Here emerges the most complex 'polemical' relationship between the 'active universal' and the resistance of the 'particularity' of the unyielding material, between the living and the 'dead' (abstract) universality, and so on and so forth, because the active action causes counteraction, passivity turns into activity, and so on, 'one's own' turns into the 'other', and the 'other' into 'one's own'.

The fact that Hegel saw in the activity of the hand this quite non-trivial – dialectical – situation belongs to his deepest insights. In order to express this truly complex and contradictory work, he needed respectively complex and dialectical system of concepts and 'appropriate words'.

Hegel's greatest achievement was the inclusion of practice (transformation of the natural material by the activity of the hand) into the logical process, interpreting this practice as the phrase of the logical process, and in addition that phase that 'sublates' the one-sidedness of the purely theoretical relationship between the thinking being and the world, and that appears as the criterion of the purely theoretical truth, that is, of truth in its verbal expression.

Because of this, thinking appears in his conception as the reciprocating process, as the series of cycles of 'theoretical' and 'practical' activity where each of these cycles concludes 'on itself' precisely at the point at which it began in the previous cycle while simultaneously giving impulse to the next cycle; this is a well-known Hegelian image of infinity – the spiral, the circle of circles.

The cycle of the purely theoretical movement, embodied and realised first and foremost in the word, having returned to the point of origin, flows into the cycle of the practical realisation of the 'theoretical' truth where thinking is embodied not in the vibrations of air, but in the forming transformation of the less malleable material – it is embodied in the process where the formless stone is transformed into an idol, into wall of a temple, into stone (and later bronze or iron) axe, into a plough, into a machine, and so on and so forth, and further, into the attributes of the state apparatuses, economics, and so on.

In this understanding of thinking we find fused together both the dialectical strength and the idealist weakness of Hegel's reconstruction of the history of earthly embodiment of the logical idea (i.e. of the deified, by Hegel, logical structure of human self-consciousness). Its weakness is found precisely in that the purely theoretical consciousness that immediately objectifies itself in the word as 'Namengebende Kraft' is set forth as the first form of manifestation of the thinking spirit that does not require the existence of any external preconditions. And the labour tools – stone axe, flint or plough – and the products that are created with the help of these tools (bread, house, temple, and so on) only appear in Hegel's conception as a result of a secondary, derivative from the word, metamorphosis of the 'thinking spirit'.

In other words, in the form of the labour tools, with the help of which the intelligent hand changes nature, there shows itself (reveals and thus 'alienates' itself) that thinking spirit (or absolute idea) that already sufficiently well articulated itself in the word, already 'talked through' its own internal – ready-made, divine – content.

It is this obviously upside-down (in comparison with the actual historical sequence of anthropogenesis) order – first the word as the 'tool' of mediation between the finite spirits as the mediation of the infinite spirit with itself, and only then the labour tool as the tool of mediation between the ready-made spirit and nature, as the tool of spiritualisation of nature – that forces Hegel to accept the most objectionable precondition and axiom of his entire philosophy – the definition of 'pure thinking' as 'God in his pre-worldly existence'.

Since we are talking not about the birth or the emergence of thinking in humans or any other thinking beings, but only, and exclusively, about the forms of manifestation in them of this power, this active capacity of thinking, Hegel is thus forced to take it for granted as such, as some cosmic force that until some

proper time is dormant in humans, stones, and stars as the 'objectified' scheme of the activity of the spirit as such.

This conclusion is forced upon Hegel precisely because he considers language (*die Sprache*) to be the starting point of the history of the 'earthly' incarnation of thinking, and the sensuous-objective life activity of humans, and the world of 'things' created and recreated by them, as the secondary and derivative metamorphosis of this very thinking, but now mediated by language and logical categories that were discerned in language.

Because the process, within which real human thinking originates, emerges (and not simply 'manifests itself'), is understood by Hegel in advance as the consequence of the already awakened (already aware of itself in language) thinking, in Hegel's system of concepts it is impossible to even pose (much less answer) the question of the origin of the emergence of this 'power', i.e. of this active human capacity.

When Hegel gives thinking the title of a 'God' – more than that, a 'God in his pre-worldly existence' – we must understand this simply as a diplomatic gesture that uses the language of the times; he cannot give us any sensible explanation of the mystery of birth and emergence of thinking with its logical order. And he cannot do so precisely because he has already interpreted sensuous-objective life activity, this true cause of thinking, as thinking's effect.

Here the cause, as often happens in Hegel, is taken for and presented as the effect of its own effect. Here 'the son is giving birth to the father', and it becomes unacceptable and illegitimate to ask about the cause of the 'son's' birth. This logical trick is always easy to perform where there are cyclical processes or spirals that return to their own starting points. In these cycles thinking really does immediately appear as 'causa sui' (as its own cause) that periodically returns 'to itself' – in the word – as to its own 'immediate reality', from the cycles of its 'alienations' in the external material, from its 'mediated' (by the activity of the hand) 'reality'.

Yes, if this 'immediate reality of thinking' is the word, speech, language, and things created by hands are the more complex and 'mediated' reality of thinking, then theoretically speaking the matter cannot be presented in any other way.

For in language, in the word, thinking really only expresses itself, only shows itself ('for the other', and thus 'for itself'). As real active human capacity it is a capacity that is more fundamental than a simple capacity to 'name' and to act in accordance with 'names', more than 'Namengebende Kraft', and here Hegel is absolutely correct. Language is indeed the product of understanding.

However, this does not seem to be the case when we look at the 'work of the hand'. Here thinking does not 'show itself', does not 'express itself', but emerges,

originates, begins precisely as the function of the 'brain–hand' system that is managed not by thinking, but by entirely material factors. It is managed by the pressure of the need in some material thing on the one hand, and by the conditions of the satisfaction of this need on the other, i.e. by the conditions of finding or producing such thing (the object of need, at first animal need and then cultural-human need).

Emerging as the form of real objective life activity, as the form of the 'work of the hand', thinking does not 'manifest itself' in this work, but is immediately that very work, and is thinking in its immediate reality. And when it comes to the word, it only manifests itself, only externally reveals itself.

Therefore there is a rational sense in Hegel's definition of language as the 'product of understanding'. But things created by the human hand (objects of labour, means of labour, and products of labour) cannot be considered as the 'products of understanding' because it is more likely that 'understanding' is the product and the form of activity that creates things. And not the other way around, as it is in Hegel.

The fact that in the activity of the hand there is immediately given not the 'expression' of thinking but thinking itself, thinking as such, Hegel understood perfectly well. The 'expression' of thinking in this case turns out to be the product of the hand's labour, and not the labour itself.

'For the inner, in so far as it is in the organ, is the activity itself' (of the organ, of course) and therefore the 'speaking mouth, the working hand' 'give not merely an *expression* of the inner, but directly the inner itself'.<sup>13</sup>

For 'immediate reality' of the inner – that is, of thinking – is the very activity of the organ in the moment of its realisation and under no circumstances its product that has 'separated itself' from the organ, whether it is a pronounced or a written word or a produced thing. It is impossible to see thinking in the analysis of the 'constitution of the organ' that accomplishes it. In the anatomy of the hand, skull, and brain thinking only expresses itself, while remaining something entirely 'other'. Therefore the intention to understand thinking through the study of the 'constitution' of the organs that accomplish it is as fruitless an exercise as the desire to understand the music of Mozart by looking at the construction of the clavichord on which it is performed. This is an insight that is still relevant today in the age of cybernetics.

The matter is exactly the opposite; the study of the forms of activity of the hand (as well as the forms of activity that is accomplished by the vocal cords) is the study of thinking that is immediately present in them as their 'internal' aspect.

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13 Hegel 1977, p. 187.

From this understanding it is sufficient to make only a small step in order to reach the vast scope of the materialist view of thinking and the mystery of its emergence, while carefully preserving all the actual achievements of Hegel's dialectics.

It is sufficient to see the first and 'immediate' reality of thinking not in the work of the vocal cords, not in speech or in language, but in the work of the hand, in the process of transformation and creation of the objective world, in order to reject any need in assuming the alleged existence of the 'manifesting itself' (and therefore already somehow previously existing) 'absolute' thinking, logically structured idea.

In the work of the hand thinking 'manifests itself' by initially emerging as such, as the real human capacity to actively correlate his actions with the form of another body (any body), and not with the form and position of the parts of his own 'constitution'.

This understanding of thinking, formulated by Spinoza and undoubtedly known to Hegel, constitutes a real alternative to Hegel's understanding – its materialist alternative.

The work of the hand is defined, determined by the 'forms and positions' of other bodies, their own determinations, and therefore any determinateness of its activity is posited from the outside – by the form and position of the bodies of the external world – while the work of the vocal cords that moves the absolutely plastic elements of air is not bound by anything 'from the outside'. Roughly speaking, using language, one can babble about anything and in whichever way one wants, but in order to actually make a thing, the hand must take into consideration the externally given forms of the material for its labour and correlate its actions with the objective characteristics of that material, otherwise it will come up against its resistance and will be forced to change the form of its own actions by conforming them to the conditions and requirements of those 'elements' in which these actions are performed.

This way the alternative – 'materialism or idealism' – is articulated here in a dilemma: which of the two forms of the 'external manifestation' of thinking must we consider as fundamental? Either it is speech (giving a determinate form to vibrations of air) or it is production of the entirely material things by the activity of the hand (giving a determinate form to stone, wood, metal).

For Hegel such 'fundamental' (primary) form of the expression of the power (capacity) of thinking is the production of names, articulation of sounds as activity that is wholly determined by the thinking being 'from the inside', and therefore the word is taken as the 'mediating link' between one spirit and another spirit, as the form of mediation of the spirit with itself. Naturally, here the 'spirit' is taken as the 'active element', in which there already exists – before

its manifestation – the logical determination of the air forming actions, inherent in it as the ‘logical instinct of language’.

The thing created by the hand, however, whether it is an axe, a flint or a plough, is considered by Hegel in accordance with the image and the likeness (in accordance with the ‘model’) of the word, also only as the ‘mediating link’ that links ‘spirit and spirit’ together or links ‘spirit with itself’. The spirit even here remains the already posited beginning (and end) of the process – the absolute point of departure and return. It is first alienated in words and things, and then returns to itself, into the pure element of the ‘meanings’ of words and things, throwing off the dirt of the natural, sensuously perceived material of its embodiment, its objectification and alienation.

Therefore, the only state in which the spirit achieves complete ‘sublation of alienation’, for Hegel, is the state of floating in the element of ‘pure meanings’ (either the meanings of words or of things), and the act of understanding, the act of pure knowing, externally ‘embodied’ in words and things.

This entire clever construction crumbles as soon as the real material activity of the hand, realised immediately in the natural material, becomes the fundamental and immediate primary form of the expression of the ‘force of thinking’, where thinking is ‘with itself’, in its true element.

Then it is precisely in language, in the word, that we must see the ‘external expression’ and ‘alienation’ of this original force and understand the production of words in accordance with the image and likeness of the production of things – in accordance with the ‘model’ of the real productive activity of human beings, and the act of ‘sublation of alienation’ we see in the sphere of the production of things – labour tools and their products.

And only then will we find the ‘positive science’ that really solves the mystery of ‘alienation’ and shows the way to ‘sublate’ and eliminate it not in linguistics, syntax or semantics, but in political economy. This is the path of the critique of ‘vulgar Hegelianism’ that Marx chose from the very beginning, and it is along this path that Marxism develops and expresses in language the natural and social reality and its laws of motion.

# The Problem of the Ideal in Philosophy

## Part One

The problem of the ideal is complex and multi-faceted.<sup>1</sup> First of all, naturally, there is the question of the place of the concept of the ideal in the theory of reflection, the question of how it can be interpreted from the point of view of this theory. As a matter of fact, the theory of reflection states that only such knowledge is correct and true that reflects what exists in reality. But in the ideal there is expressed not what *is* but what *must* be or what a person *wants* to see. Can one interpret the desired or the obligatory from the point of view of theory of reflection? In other words, is it possible for the ideal to be ‘true’?

Philosophy discovered this difficulty long ago and has tried to solve it for a long time too. Materialists from previous epochs encountered this problem as they were struggling against the clerical-idealist doctrines, against the religious ideal; and they tried to solve it in agreement with the theory of reflection, on the one hand, and with the requirements of real life, on the other. Until Marx and Engels the ideal appeared to philosophers as the product of self-development of human self-consciousness, of the evolution of his moral, aesthetical and scientific principles. In the view of the thinkers of the pre-Marxist period, the problem was presented in the following way:

The church always attempted to persuade people that the highest goal and destiny of a human being on earth is to prepare himself for the afterlife, eternal life in a heavenly paradise. In order to reach this highest goal, humans were supposed to act in a certain way. As means and ways of reaching this eternal ideal, the church offered obedience to fate and the powers that be, humiliation of the flesh and its desires, rejection of ‘this-worldly’ happiness and other such ‘sinful pleasures’. The ideal of a human being here was an ascetic monk, and the image of this ideal, made poetic in human fantasy, was that of the crucified ‘saviour’ on the cross. The way to this ideal was the way to Golgotha, to redemptory suffering, self-humiliation, self-flagellation, that relieved the spirit from the dirt and filth of earthly existence ... And for many centuries of the

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1 [Translator’s Note] The ‘ideal’ here is a noun rather than an adjective, i.e. ‘ideal’, and not ‘ideal’noe’. Later in his philosophical career Ilyenkov worked on the problem of the ideal (ideal’noe) – for context, see Levant and Oittinen 2014.

feudal Middle Ages human beings accepted this ideal and considered it to be the only true and possible image of the higher essence of life and world. Why? Because the image of the 'saviour' was in fact the mirror in which human beings saw reflected their own image, exhausted and covered in the sweat of suffering and horror, as the ones 'in need of salvation'.

But then, at the distance, there appeared over Golgotha the light of the beautiful dawn of the Renaissance. In the rays of the morning sun, human beings suddenly saw the image of the crucifixion for what it was – a wooden structure with a wax dummy on it that smelled of dust and incense. Their eyes were able to see once again the pink marble of the Parthenon, the eternally youthful beauty of Aphrodite and Apollo, Heracles and Myron's Discobolus, Prometheus and Nike of Samothrace. They once again began to spread the wings of their dream, the wings of Daedalus and Icarus, in order to get to the sun, to fly high over the blue waves of the Mediterranean sea, breathing in the fresh air, enjoying the power of their thoughts, their hands and their healthy flesh.

The inspired age of Renaissance gave way to the age of Enlightenment, the age of rational justification of the beautiful dream of human rebirth, and this new age formulated its theses regarding the ideal, set forth against the medieval spiritualist ideal its own, earthly ideal.

There is no god and no paradise! There are only human beings and nature. There is nothing after death. Therefore the ideal must be found and realised here, on earth.

And materialists formulated this new ideal in the following manner: it is the earthly full-blooded expression of life of each living human being. Let everyone do what they are capable of doing by nature, and let them enjoy the fruits of their labour! Nature is the only legislator and authority, and in its name only science, only independent thinking, that grasps the laws of nature, is able to give humans the ideal, and not revelation that speaks from the pulpit or from the pages of the Scriptures.

If this ideal is not an idle dream or a powerless wish, then it must express and reflect something real, sensible and earthly. What is it?

'The natural, that is, nature-given needs of the healthy and normal human body', responded materialists. The ideal reflected the natural needs of 'human nature', and therefore all the powerful forces of Mother Nature are on its side. Study nature, study human nature, and you will acquire the true ideal of a human being and a societal order that corresponds to that nature! This answer satisfied the French materialists of the eighteenth century such as Helvetius, d'Holbach, Diderot and their supporters. The answer appeared to be exhaustive to all of their contemporaries who were oppressed by the monarchy and the church. In order to satisfy the 'perverse' and 'unnatural' pleasures of the



court and the church bureaucracy, the majority of the nation was stripped of their 'natural' rights and worth: their bread and their freedom to be in charge of their bodies and life, and even their freedom of thought ... If only these 'natural' rights were not violated by the court, the bureaucracy and the church! What veritable paradise would then spring up on the fertile French soil!

And this new ideal became an energetic formula, a slogan: 'Liberté, égalité, fraternité!' ('Freedom, equality, brotherhood!'). Let anyone do what they want or can do as long as they do not violate the freedom of other fellow human beings! If it is not yet the case, then it must be the case! And the miracle happened. The mighty sounds of *La Marseillaise* and gun shots rang over France, the walls of numberless fortresses fell, the herd of priests and bureaucrats ran in all directions and the people raised the tri-coloured banner of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood. The ideal – that which must be – turned out to be stronger than the existing forces, despite the fact that these existing forces were defended by the entire might of the state and the church, by the walls of fortresses and offices, by the bayonets of soldiers and the pens of official 'scholars', by the chains of thousands of the 1,000-year old habits and traditions, by the official ecclesiastical morality, art and jurisprudence. It seemed as though the natural rights of 'humanity as such', of every human being, were finally upheld. But the difficult experiences that followed were necessary in order for the people to understand that it was not the case, that in the pink haze of 'universal' ideals there still raged a battle between classes and this battle gave these abstract-general phrases their own, not at all universal, meaning. Very soon this truth began to come to light in the form of some unexpected turns of events.

The question arose: why is it impossible to fully realise such a clear, beautiful, and understandable ideal? Why does this 'white-as-snow' humanitarian ideal walk on earth over the piles of corpses covered by the gunpowder smoke? And why do yesterday's comrades and brothers in the pursuit of the ideal become today's mortal enemies and send each other to the guillotine? Many were satisfied with the following answer: the resistance of the old 'perverted' world was too strong, the people were too corrupted by the thousands of years of bodily and spiritual slavery, even those who appeared to themselves and others as crystal clear heroes of Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood – Danton, Robespierre and all their friends.

And the further the events developed, the more insidious and cunning they became. The banner of the ideal, having fallen from the hands of Robespierre, was raised by the Directory, but it was unable to hold it up either. It was snatched away by the artillery officer Bonaparte. He raised the banner high and led the people into the smoke of battles, but one beautiful morning the people discovered with amazement that under the uniform of the revolutionary officer

was hiding their old acquaintance – the monarch. They discovered that having crisscrossed half the globe they ended up in the same place as in 1789 – the court of Napoleon I was again full of predatory officials, false priests, lecherous ladies; and the people again had to give them their last penny, their last piece of bread and their last son.

But that wasn't all. The working people of France felt more and more distinctly that they were deceived twice. Year after year the new master of life – industrialist-capitalist, banker and speculator – became fatter and more gluttonous. This new master got all he ever wanted from the revolution – complete freedom of action. And he used this freedom to rebuild the life of the country in accordance with his own ideal, in the image of the revelation of his own god, the god of money, gold, cash and profit.

How did this happen? Did the beautiful ideal of the Enlightenment turn out to be a ghost, a fairytale, a dream that could not be realised here on earth? Did life, practice and reality confirm the truth of the church? And on the soil of this disappointment, this feeling of complete helplessness in the face of the world that was created by the people themselves, as in the old days, there bloomed the poisonous flowers of religion, and there once again were heard the sermons about the unachievable hope for earthly happiness.

Only a few had enough intellectual and moral courage not to fall before the cross in repentance, only a few were able to remain faithful to science and the ideal that this science formulated. Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier lived and thought at this time while being inundated by contemptuous remarks of well-fed philistines and the 'commonsensical' apologists of reality. But while remaining faithful to the main principles of the scientific thinking of the Enlightenment, these stubborn and noble minds tried to find and show humanity the way out of the moral and intellectual crisis.

The conclusion that these heirs to the progressive philosophy of France arrived at as a result of the analysis of the conditions coincided with the findings by the Englishman Robert Owen. If science, and not the church, is correct, if Reason and Justice are not empty words, then the only salvation for humanity from the threat of physical and moral degradation is socialism. Humanity was forced by history to choose between two alternatives: either complete domination of religious ignorance, moral and mental barbarism under the oppression of the golden calf, or the blossoming of mental and physical capacities of every human being under the conditions of communal ownership of the means of production, on the basis of correct, rational management of societal affairs. There was no third option. Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood are real only in combination with rationally organised Labour of all people who voluntarily unite into a harmonious collective.

Fourier and Saint-Simon selflessly promoted their ideal by appealing to 'reason' and the sense of 'justice' of their contemporaries. But their brilliant ideas did not attract many people during their time. Their voice did not reach the ears of the people, and the 'enlightened' public had only irritation and ridicule for the utopias of Saint-Simon and Fourier. The tragedy of the utopian socialists was the typical tragedy of heroes who came into this world too early. It is not coincidental that the ideals of Saint-Simon and Fourier were quickly transformed into caricatures by their disciples and followers; they began to strongly resemble the ideals of Christianity, and the organisations of Saint-Simonists and Fourierists turned into religious sects.

But the life of the ideal of the Enlightenment was not over yet. It was forced to relocate from the land of France to the cloudy sky of German philosophy in order to catch its breath in the higher speculative regions and then return to earth but now in a different guise.

While the French were going about their business, the Germans attentively observed them and philosophised. They took the French ideal to heart immediately – liberty, equality, brotherhood, and unity of nation – what else can be better and more desirable? Concerning the ideal, i.e. the final goal, the Germans were in agreement with the French. But the means that were used in Paris – the Germans did not like them and therefore did not find the courage to imitate them. The secret here was quite simple.

The German bourgeoisie simply did not have enough strength to fight for its interests and rights. But it took its own powerlessness for a virtue, for an expression of the genuine German 'decency' and 'morality'. And this attitude strongly influenced the thinking of its ideologues, its theoretical philosophers.

At the Königsberg University the old Kant was thinking about the situation with purely German systematicity. He also admired the French ideal. And he also disagreed with the means used in Paris. And not only from his humanitarian beliefs, not only because of his rejection of the guillotine, blood and struggle of man against man. He had good reasons to disagree. The course of events itself, Kant thought, proved that the revolutionary means 'contradict' the very goal of the ideal and therefore they cannot be used to reach this goal. One cannot establish Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood by force, by cutting off heads and by firing cannons. The 'usurpation' of power by a small circle of people is also against the principle of equality, even if they call themselves the 'revolutionary government', the expression of the will of the people. It destroys the very 'freedom' in the name of which everything is done.

However, Kant himself did not articulate these thoughts to their full clarity and concreteness of expression. He preferred to use abstract and academic terminology. But this was quickly done by his talented disciples: Fichte, Schelling,

and then Hegel. The expressions used above are almost verbatim statements from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (from chapters 'The struggle of Enlightenment with Superstition' and 'Absolute Freedom and Terror').

The problem, thought Kant, was that the French philosophers incorrectly understood 'human nature'. They were absolutely correct to consider a human being as an *end in itself* and not as a means for someone or something that exists outside of human beings. Human beings should not be understood as 'tools' of some external God who sits in heaven. But materialists made a mistake when in place of the authority of God the Father they put the authority of the matter of nature. It is foolish to replace one idol with another. Nature cannot give anyone an end for his life activity, because in and of itself it does not have any ends. It acts in accordance with blind necessity. And if we take the ideal to be the satisfaction of 'natural desires', then human beings will simply be slaves to their organic needs and impulses, slaves and instruments of the blind necessity of nature. And this is no nobler than being slaves of God. The difference would only be that of the name of the 'external lord'. In both circumstances human beings become slaves of surrounding 'external' circumstances, and immediately – slaves and instruments of other human beings, their 'means'.

Thus the ideal cannot be deduced from the study of 'nature', and it is ridiculous to replace the authority of the Roman Pope with the authority of the natural scientist. Physicists, anatomists and physiologists can tell us about the 'true human nature' about as much as some provincial priest. It is impossible to deduce the idea about the 'end' of human life activity from physics, anatomy and physiology.

Human beings, continues Kant, are 'free' only when they act in accordance with the ends that they set for themselves in an act of free self-determination. Then and only then are they truly human and not passive instruments of external circumstances or the will of other human beings. But then what is 'freedom'? It is action in accordance with *universal* necessity, i.e. action in spite of the pressure of the immediate empirical circumstances. Without it, there is no freedom, no difference between humans and animals. Animals only care about the satisfaction of their organic needs, about their self-preservation; interests and 'ends' of the species are realised here only as an unexpected and unintended 'side effect', as blind necessity. Human beings are different from animals precisely in that they are able to accomplish the necessity of the perfection of their own – human – species consciously (i.e. 'freely'). And because of that they must constantly repress the animals in themselves, i.e. repress their selfish and egotistical selves, and even act against the interests of their selves. So acted Socrates and Giordano Bruno both of whom voluntarily died but without

betraying their ideal, their best self. Only such people can be proudly called Humans with a capital letter. An individual who only cares about his own person does not rightfully carry this name.

And Kant's ideal is based on the moral and intellectual self-improvement of the human race. He rethought the ideal of the Enlightenment from this perspective. When every human being on earth (but at first perhaps only in Germany) will *understand* that we are all brothers and sisters, equal to one another and free in relation to our actions and thoughts, then the ideal of the Enlightenment will triumph everywhere without the help of cannons, guillotines and committees for public safety. And not before that.

We cannot deny that Kant's intentions were noble. But still ...

Moral self-improvement? Haven't the church preached it for thousands of years already? The very same church that contributed to the moral decay by transforming human beings into ascetic and humble cattle for secular and spiritual rulers, into slaves of heavenly and earthly Gods! Yes, but that only means, thought Kant, that the church 'perverted' the true meaning – moral meaning – of its own teaching. It must be corrected and reformed; the cause of Martin Luther must be pursued further. Then the church itself will announce from its pulpits the message of the ideal of 'liberty, equality, and brotherhood'. But not in this – French – form (since this form of the ideal can be mistaken for a call for revolution, for a call to realise the ideal with the help of violence against our neighbours), but as the highest principle of morality, as the moral postulate that may be (if one wants to, of course) discerned in the Bible itself. It does after all say in Matthew 7:12 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets'.

This manner of thinking allowed Kant to 'reconcile' the ideal of the Enlightenment with the ideal of Christianity, the principle of the 1793 Constitution with the Sermon on the Mount, and Robespierre with Christ. And the world famous 'categorical imperative' was born. 'So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law'.<sup>2</sup> In its real content, it was the same principle as the one used as a foundation for the revolutionary legislature of 1789–93, and in its form – a moral-ethical postulate in the high style of the Gospels. This 'form', on the one hand, allowed for an open propaganda of the French ideal in the conditions of the complete domination by the church over the hearts and minds of the people, and, on the other hand, it proposed not a revolution but a reform in the sphere of the state law as the ideal's only 'appropriate' means of realisation.

<sup>2</sup> Kant 1996, p. 164.

As a result, the immediate political and atheistic impact of the principle of 'liberty, equality and brotherhood' was undermined. The slogan that motivated Parisians to storm the Bastille was now successfully transformed into well-intended but – alas – powerless good advice, into the principle of 'good will'. Thus was expressed the earthly weakness of German bourgeois democracy in relation to the heavens of its philosophy, its theoretical self-consciousness.

And still, having thrown off the bloody toga of the Roman Republican tyrannicide and having put on the frock coat of the Protestant pastor, the ideal of Enlightenment survived. Thus all the progressive people in Germany saw in the *Critique of Practical Reason* the Gospel of a new faith – faith in the human being as the only God on earth. And Kant was understood that way by Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel, Beethoven and Goethe.

Hegel wrote:

I think that there is no better sign of the time than the fact that humanity is beginning to appear to itself as deserving respect. And it demonstrates that the halo around the heads of oppressors and earthly gods is beginning to dissipate. Now the philosophers are validating this esteem and soon nations will learn to feel it and will not only demand, but will take their rights that were so far trampled upon. Religion was working together with politics. It taught what despotism wanted it to teach: contempt for the human race that is allegedly incapable of good, incapable of being anything by its own efforts. With the spread of the idea of how things *must* be the inertia of the moderates who always accept everything *that exists* will disappear.<sup>3</sup>

But soon the disciples went further than the teacher. Fichte, the follower of Kant, allowed for violence as a 'legitimate' means: we cannot simply wait until the ethical ideal is accepted by the last lord and priest. It is sufficient that it is accepted by the majority of the nation, and the stubborn orthodoxy of the old faith may be forced to accept it and to obey the will of the nation. Schelling and Hegel also did not reject revolutionary violence, just the Jacobin extremes, the bloody horrors of Robespierre's dictatorship. Napoleon became the earthly incarnation of the ideal for the young Hegel – 'the world spirit that rules the world on horseback' – the commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army, the hero of Beethoven's third symphony. In other words, the disciples started to

3 [Translator's Note] This quote is from Hegel's letter to Schelling of 16 April 1795. The original is found in Hegel 1952, p. 24.

develop the doctrine of Kant by trying to overcome its weaknesses and increase the power of the ideal. Hölderlin, Schiller and Schelling put all their hopes in the power of art; Fichte – in the force of moral example, in the pathos of his own speeches to the German nation. The steel-cold rationality of Kantian constructions soon drifted into the background as a past milestone; poets and philosophers were more and more often adopting a poetical-prophetic tone. However, only the methods of propaganda of the ideal improved, but not the ideal itself.

Only Hegel preserved the respect for the mathematical precision of Kantian demonstrations. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* he tried to order precisely and logically the images of world events, to outline their main schemes and to separate the accidental from the necessary, the essence of the matter from its husk, to understand the ways that the ideal uses when it comes down to earth. The goal was already clear and Hegel's thought immersed itself in the study of the ways and the means of reaching it.

Moral self-improvement? But the events showed that on the scales of fate of the world, the 'beautiful soul' does not weigh very much, much less than the 'passions and the force of circumstances, education, example and governments', thrown on the other side of the scales. Moralising sermons were yet to change any bad person into a good person ... The ideal's fate would be sealed if its only weapon in the world were beautiful phrases and sermonising. One would have to wait a very long time to find out whether the Kantian ideal would turn out to be as 'other-worldly' and 'beyond-the-grave' as the ideal of the church. And that is what happened in Kant and Fichte. The absolute unity and consensus of all people on earth, the complete identity of their views, hopes and desires – all of this must come; or, to be precise, must be coming but never actually come, because the ideal is the infinite *task*, the *direction* of movement pointed out with the finger of the 'categorical imperative', and nothing more.

Therefore the ideal is always ahead of us, regardless of how far we have come in its direction. According to Kant and Fichte, it is absolutely akin to the horizon – an imaginary line where the sinful earth touches the heavens of truth – it moves away in the same measure as one is approaching it. And thus we cannot even imagine this ideal in some form of 'theoretical' or 'practical' perfection. We can only know the *direction* towards the truth, but never the truth itself. That is why the ideal is given not in the form of the *result* of actions, but only as a 'regulative principle' of these actions. The 'highest perfection' of human beings appears, in the form of an image, only in art, in artistic imagination of a genius, says Kant in *Critique of Judgment*.

Does it all not remind us of 'orthodoxy', of the religious ideal? Both in Kant and in religion the ideal is beyond our reach. Is it possible that any living real

human being that actively strives for happiness and justice here on earth will be seduced by this ideal? A living human being justly thinks that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

And what is the foundation for Fichte's optimism, this most consistent champion of the 'categorical imperative'? Relying on the winning might of the ideal, he exclaims in his speech 'Concerning Human Dignity': 'Hinder and frustrate his plans! They may be delayed but what are thousands and thousands of years in the almanac of humanity? No more than the gentle dream of the morning once we have awakened!'<sup>4</sup>

In the 'almanac of humanity'? Perhaps. But while humanity is still enjoying its sleep, tens of living generations will be overtaken by the sleep of death from which – alas – they will never be awoken. For a human being, and not for 'humanity', the difference between the early morning and the sleep of death is quite significant and here the time is measured not in 'thousands of years', but in tens of years ... That is why a living human being does not follow Fichte.

Kant's ethics is rooted in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the system of logical first principles, postulates and prohibitions, presented in that compendium as the 'rules' of thinking. But are these rules themselves correct? Why should I, a thinking person, accept them 'a priori', before and independently of the experience of real thinking, accept them as a 'revelation'?

Following the revolutionary logic of things, Hegel came to realise the necessity of a revolution in logic as science. This revolution, even though it was the only one that Germans could ever accomplish, gave results that were no less valuable for the 'perfection of the human race' than all the victories of Napoleon – dialectics as logic and theory of cognition; that is to say, it gave us that form of thinking with the help of which the problem of the ideal was finally resolved, although it wasn't done by Hegel himself.

In Kant's logic there is also a kind of 'categorical imperative', a highest first principle of theoretical thinking – the prohibition against logical contradiction – the absolute, a priori formal condition of truth. Kant presented the ideal of theoretical thinking in the form of this 'categorical imperative'. And this ideal consisted in the full and absolute *non-contradictory nature of knowledge*, that is to say, in the full *identity* of the scientific ideas of all the people on earth concerning the world, its existence in itself, outside human consciousness and experience, concerning the 'things in themselves', the '*essence*' of things, independent of those contingent conditions of place and time in the context of which they are given to human intuition.

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4 Fichte 1988, p. 85.



Kant understood perfectly well that the law of identity (that in its negative form is the prohibition of contradiction) is impossible to deduce as a 'rule' that is followed by real thinking, real history of the development of knowledge. The ongoing development of knowledge (and Kant based his argument on this) reveals the exact opposite – it shows the futility of all attempts to overcome once and for all the logical contradictions that emerge within knowledge. Every time a theoretician thinks that he already built a theory that embraces with its principles all the infinite diversity of the empirical material in its own field, that is to say, when he thinks he has already grasped the 'thing in itself', the falsity of this opinion is revealed in the emerging antinomies found in his theory.

Kant interpreted the emergence of logical contradiction in knowledge as an indication of the eternal incompleteness of experience, and therefore of any theory that unwittingly relies on experience, but claims to know the 'things in themselves', to grasp the universal laws of reality itself that do not depend on any experience and that therefore cannot be refuted by it. According to Kant's theory of cognition, science is forever doomed to this antinomian discord. This means that concerning any 'thing in itself' (concerning any subject matter of any science) there are always possible – at least in the limit case – two mutually exclusive theories, each of which is equally 'correct' from the point of view of logic and from the point of view of experience.

Therefore the ideal of theoretical thinking – the non-contradictory identity of the complete synthesis of all the empirical-experiential data – can be formulated only in the form of an a priori postulate, in the form of the demand that never was or will be fulfilled in real science. The prohibition against contradiction in theoretical unity (synthesis) of experiential data plays here the same role as the 'categorical imperative' of ethics plays in the sphere of morality. This 'natural' and fatal desire of reason to 'comprehend incomprehensible', the ideal that cannot be realised in knowledge, is the dialectical illusion that attracts reason and then ultimately always slips away from it.

Thus, according to Kant's logic, the prohibition against contradiction appears as an a priori postulate, as eternal duty, and the presence of contradiction – as the same eternal empirically evident imperfection of the developing knowledge. Why then, asks Hegel, must this unrealisable duty be taken for the highest and inviolable canon and law of thinking, and the real form and law of the developing thinking be considered an illusion, fiction, even if it is a 'necessary' one? Is it not more rational to think the exact opposite? Why not call these things by their real names? Why not call the real law of historical development of knowledge and morality – the dialectical contradiction – the law of thinking and deprive the prohibition against contradiction of its status? By presenting

the fiction as the 'highest first principle of reason', as the highest a priori formal criterion of truth, Kant commits the same sin in logic that is described in his ethics.

So Hegel destroyed both of these highest postulates of Kantian philosophy – the '*categorical imperative*' and the '*prohibition against logical contradiction*' – by the arguments from the history of knowledge and morality. (Morality here is understood in its widest sense. In Hegel it includes (1) abstract right, (2) morals, (3) everyday moral relationships such as family, civil society, State; see Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach*). The history persuasively demonstrates, thought Hegel, that neither the 'prohibition of contradiction' nor the 'categorical imperative' was that ideal in the pursuit of which people built civilisation and culture. It was exactly the opposite; culture developed thanks to the internal contradictions that emerged between scientific theses and between human beings, through their struggle. The dialectical contradiction at the very heart of the matter, inside it, and not some 'ideal' that is eternally 'ahead of us' and exists outside of the activity, is that active force that gives birth to the progress of the human race.

The dialectical contradiction (the collision between two theses that mutually assume and yet simultaneously mutually exclude one another) is, according to Hegel, the real highest law of the development of thinking, thinking that creates culture. And the obedience to that law is the highest 'correctness' of thinking. Accordingly the 'correct' way of the development of the moral sphere is also contradiction and struggle between human beings. It is another matter that the form of this struggle is becoming from age to age more humane and that this struggle does not always need to turn into bloody knife fights ...

So, Hegel's ideal, visible in the results of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, already looked different in comparison with Kant's version. The ideal is not the image of the 'state of the world' that must only come into existence as a result of infinite progress. The ideal is this very movement forward considered from the point of view of its universal contours and laws that slowly, from age to age, become distinct in the chaotic interweaving of events and opinions. The ideal is the eternal renewal of the spiritual world that 'sublates' each of the states that it achieves.

The ideal cannot be found in the serene, devoid of any contradictions, absolute identity or unity of consciousness and will of all the infinite individuals. Such an ideal is death of the spirit, not its living life. In each presently achieved state of knowledge and morality, thinking discovers a contradiction, brings it to its antinomian peak and solves it through establishing a new, next, higher state of the spirit and its world. Therefore any present state is the stage of realisation of the highest, universal ideal of the human race.

The ideal is real here on earth, in the activity of human beings.

Hegel thus helped philosophy break with the idea of the ideal as an illusion that eternally beckons human beings with its beauty, but also eternally deceives them, turning out to be the antipode of the 'existing' in general. The ideal, that is the image of the highest perfection, is perfectly reachable for human beings. But where and how?

In thinking, responded Hegel. In philosophical-theoretical understanding of the 'essence of the matter' and finally in Logic which is the quintessence of this understanding. At the heights of dialectical logic, human beings are equal to God – to that 'absolute world spirit' that previously realised itself spontaneously and torturously in the form of the collective Reason of the millions of people who were creating history. The mystery of the ideal turns out to be the Idea, the absolutely precise portrait of which is drawn in Logic, in thinking about thinking. The Ideal is the idea in its 'external', visible and sensible embodiment, in its sensuous-objective existence.

In the process of the 'external embodiment' of the idea, in the dialectical collisions of this process, Hegel attempts to find the solution to the problem of the ideal. And this is what happens as a result.

Theoretical thinking, the ideal image of which Hegel presented in *Science of Logic*, is always dialectical. Everything that was said above is relevant in relation to thinking as well – only pure thinking is always full of internal disquiet, drive forward and upward, in it, again and again, immanent contradictions mature and rush toward resolution.

But 'pure thinking' exists only in *Science of Logic*, only in the abstraction of philosopher-theoretician, in his professional activity. Yet in addition to philosophical logic, the 'absolute spirit' also creates world history. And here 'thinking spirit' encounters inflexible, immovable and unyielding matter with which the creatively thinking spirit must deal, if it does not want to remain but a helpless dreamer or a beautiful soul chatterbox.

The tireless worker-spirit creates world history by using human beings as the tools of its own embodiment in the external, natural material. This creation, in Hegel's presentation, is very much like the work of the sculptor who moulds his own portrait from the clay. Having finished his work, the artist realises that his initial intention was only partially successful and that the 'external image' resembles him only in some aspects and not in others. Comparing the finished product of his activity with himself, the sculptor sees that in the process of creation he himself changed, became more perfect than before and that the portrait now needs further perfection, further corrections. And he once again gets to work, sometimes limiting himself to small corrections, sometimes pitilessly destroying what he created in order to recreate something better from

its debris. The spirit-creator (the absolute, 'world' spirit) does the same from epoch to epoch, creating his external image to be more and more like himself, leading science and morality to better agreement with the requirements of the 'pure thinking', the Logic of Reason.

But – alas! – no matter how hard the thinking spirit tries, no matter how developed his skills become, the matter remains material. And therefore the self-portrait of the spirit-sculptor, executed in the bodily-natural material form of the State, art, the system of particular sciences, industry, and so on can never become the absolute image of its creator. The ideal (that is to say, the pure dialectical thinking) always deforms in its expression in natural material according to the requirements of this material, and the product of the creative activity of the spirit always turns out to be a compromise of the ideal with dead matter.

From this point of view, culture created as a result of many centuries appears as the 'embodied ideal', or as the ideal that is corrected by the natural (and therefore insurmountable) limitations of that material in which it is embodied. For example, in the form of the only possible in human-earthly conditions moral-legal expression of the ideal Hegel legitimised the contemporary economic structure of the 'civil' (read: bourgeois) society and, further, its corresponding legal and political superstructure, namely the constitutional monarchy of Britain and the Napoleonic Empire. He then interpreted the Prussian monarchy as the natural modification of the idea in the national peculiarities of the German spirit, i.e. also as the ideal ...

This turn of thought was not at all the result of his personal betrayal of the revolutionary principles of dialectics. It was the natural conclusion that came from his dialectical idealism. His dialectics could not produce any other result without rejecting the notion that world history is created by pure reason that develops its images by the power of its own immanent contradictions.

Hegel considered art to be the highest manner of sensuous-objective embodiment and therefore the problem of the ideal was connected for him with aesthetics. Art, according to Hegel, has one advantage over any other method of the external expression of the idea insofar as it is free in its choice of material in which the absolute thinking desires to execute its self-portrait. In real life, in economic, political and legal activity, human beings are limited by the conditions dictated by the material character of their activity. Things are different in art. If someone feels that he is unable to embody his ideal intention in granite, he abandons it and begins to work with marble, and if marble turns out to be not malleable enough, he abandons his chisel and picks up a brush and some paint; if the possibilities of painting are exhausted, he leaves the spatial forms alone and enters the element of sound, the kingdom of music

and poetry. This is the general outline of Hegel's picture of the evolution of the forms and types of art.

The meaning of this scheme is fairly transparent. Human beings, by trying to embody the idea in the sensuous-natural material, move toward more and more malleable and plastic material, search for such 'matter' that can embody the spirit more fully and easier. First – granite, and in the end – air that trembles in resonance with the most sophisticated movements of the 'soul' and the 'spirit' ...

After the spirit is reflected in the mirror of art in all of its poetic diversity, it can attentively examine itself, using the eyes and the brain of the philosopher-logician, in its 'external' expression and see its own logical skeleton, the logical scheme of its own image, 'alienated' in music, poetry, and so on. At this stage of self-knowledge the logical thought of the absolute spirit is not longer interested in the fullness of human image, and the living human being is seen by it in the same form as, if we use the contemporary imagery, as the image on the X-ray machine. The harsh rays of reflection, rational cognition, destroy the living flesh of the ideal and discover that it was only the 'external' finite shell of the absolute idea, that is, of the 'pure thinking'. That is the current epoch, notes Hegel not without some sadness, the present stage of the development of the spirit toward self-knowledge. The human being must understand that the absolute spirit already used his body, his flesh, his brain and his hands in order to 'objectify' itself in the form of the world history. Now he has only one task – to take a purely theoretical look at this alienated image, discerning in it the abstract contours of the Idea, the dialectical scheme of logical categories.

The present epoch is in general inhospitable for art, for the flourishing of the 'beautiful soul', as Hegel repeats many times. The artist, like the rest of the people, is infected with the loud voice of reflection of the surrounding thinking and is incapable of the unmediated vision of the world as an adult is incapable of looking at the world through the naïve eyes of a child. The happy childhood of humanity – the classical kingdom of the beautiful soul – is gone and will never come back. Therefore what people call the 'ideal' is not in the 'future' but in the exact opposite direction, in the irrevocable past of humanity.

The contemporary human being can relive this naïvely beautiful stage of his spiritual development only in museums, only on his day off from the hard and joyless service to the absolute spirit. In real life he must be a professor of logic or a burgomaster or a shoemaker or a businessman and he must obediently carry out the functions that are assigned to him by the absolute idea. The comprehensively and harmoniously developed individuality in today's world with its division of labour is – alas! – impossible. In his sensuous-objective practical being, every human being from now on must be a professionally limited cretin.

And only while reading the books on dialectical logic and in the contemplation of the masterpieces of art may he soar to the heights of the absolute spirit, be and feel himself to be equal to gods ...

Thus the problem of the ideal is exiled by Hegel entirely into the realm of aesthetics, the realm of the philosophy of 'fine art', since, according to his theory, the ideal can be realised and seen only in art, only in the realm of objectified fantasy, but never in life, in sensuous-objective being of living human beings. The real actuality is prosaic and hostile to the poetic beauty of the ideal – Hegel understood perfectly well that the ideal cannot be divorced from beauty, and beauty cannot be divorced from the free, harmoniously comprehensive development of human individuality, and neither is compatible with the prose and cynicism of the bourgeois way of life. And despite the genial sharpness and sagacity of his mind, Hegel could not see the way out of this way of life. This way out did not exist during his time and Hegel felt deep and justified mistrust towards utopias of any kind.

As a result, the conditions that guarantee the harmoniously comprehensive development of an individual in 'contemporary' (and even more in the coming) form of the world, according to Hegel's conception, are already impossible. Such conditions were only thinkable in the early state of the world culture – in the framework of classical democratic order of the city-state – and these conditions will never come back, will never be reborn. To dream about these conditions is to fall into 'reactionary Romanticism' and to be in the way of the progress. For the democratically organised community of people is no longer possible due to the 'great spaces' of modern states and great scales of their temporal existence. Democracy that guarantees the full development of each individual is only possible in a small space and during a shorter period of time. This was accomplished in Athens but that time is gone and will never return. And the golden age of art disappeared forever together with it. In modern times, according to Hegel's logic, the 'ideal' order is the hierarchical-bureaucratic structure of the State that relies, as on its own 'natural' foundation, on the system of economic relationships of the 'civil society', i.e. on the capitalistically organised economy ... This is the only order that corresponds to the 'highest ideal of morality'.

Thus the final result of Hegel's 'revolution' in the understanding of the ideal is idealisation and deification of the entire present-empirical trash; it is slavery under the guise of serving the ideal. But the history of the 'earthly embodiment' of the ideal was not, luckily, over at that point. The coat of the professor of Berlin University was a bit wider in the shoulders than Kant's pastoral cloak, but it was somehow still too tight for the ideal. And not by accident. It was tailored in the same atelier and, what is more important, it was sewn using the same

thread – the white thread of idealism – and therefore it was threatening to break at the seams at the first sharp turn in the street hustle of history. The suit was good enough to wear to the lectures about the nature of the ideal. But it was not good enough for the fight for the Ideal. Here a more reliable coat was needed.

And it was found as soon as the revolutionary democratic public began to raise its head, as soon as the events called the dialectics, so far hiding in the gloomy lecture halls of universities, to life, to the fight, to the barricades, to the pages of political newspapers and journals. Here the ideal found new life. But we will talk about this in the next essay.

## Part Two

The problem of the ideal, as we saw, was already quite acute at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It even appeared to have been solved. But as soon as ground began to shake from the earthquake of the approaching revolution against the gothic cathedrals of European monarchies, the walls of philosophical-theoretical constructions built, it seemed, with previous experience taken into account, again started to show cracks and gaps of the new problems. Through these cracks, into the auditoriums and corridors of the official universities – these treasuries of the officially recognised and legalised wisdom – more and more often blew the fresh air of the streets, introducing into the monotonous professorial speeches echoes of furious party discussions, echoes of half-forgotten melodies and moods of the revolution of 1789, its heroic-optimistic slogans, hopes and ideals. Every person who did not have enough air to breath in the suffocating atmosphere of Christian-bureaucratic ‘morality’, in the stale air of Prussian or Russian barracks and chancelleries, avidly breathed in this fresh air. Every person who still had a thirst for action, sharply felt the necessity for radical changes, waited for the saving thunderstorm that was already visible on the horizon ...

The fresh air burst into the quiet apartments of Hegel’s Reason as well, reminding people that, in addition to the brain – this temple of the Concept – they also have the lungs that cannot be filled with the rarefied air of the speculative heights, they have the heart that is able to beat and supply the brain with hot blood, they have the hands that are capable of many things. ‘Human beings at the present time must set up another ideal for themselves. Our ideal is not some castrated, disembodied, abstract being. Our ideal is whole, actual, comprehensive, complete, educated human beings ...’ – proclaimed Ludwig Feuerbach, expressing the mood of the time. Human beings in place of God,

the absolute, and the concept – this is the principle of the philosophy of the future, the principle of the coming revolution in the sphere of politics, in the sphere of morality, in the sphere of logic, and in the sphere of art! ‘We were all in high spirits and we all immediately became Feuerbachians’, recalled Friedrich Engels many years later. If we read *The Holy Family*, we can easily imagine with what enthusiasm Marx greeted this new view and what powerful influence it had on him, despite all the critical remarks.

Feuerbach’s thought was simple. Neither God, nor Absolute Concept, nor State nor Church create Human Beings (as it seemed to the religious-philosophical consciousness), but, with the power of their brains and their hands, human beings created gods (earthly and heavenly), religious-bureaucratic hierarchy, mutual subordination of concepts and ideas, as well as bread and statues, factories and university buildings. We must directly and distinctly accept this fact and make appropriate conclusions based on it. Namely, we do not need to create fetishes and idols from our own creations. We must understand the actual relationship between human beings and the world that surrounds them. And only then, having understood that reality, we can arrive at the true ideal.

But what is this reality? Is it simply what we can see immediately around us? In their lives people worship all kinds of idols, and they do not just worship them, they are slaves to them, they sacrifice their own life and happiness to them, and even life and happiness of those who are close to them. One serves gold and prays to it; another serves the mantle of the monarch or the coat of the bureaucrat; yet another – the Absolute Concept or the Old Testament Yahweh or Allah or a simple piece of wood, decorated with feathers and shells. It turns out that human beings first create the State or the Concept, and then for some reason begin to worship them as if they were God Almighty, as if they existed outside of them and were alien, even hostile to them, beings. This phenomenon came to be known in philosophy as ‘alienation’. Taking it into consideration, Feuerbach decided that the ‘existing’ (in opposition to the ‘ideal’ or ‘what must exist’) is the product of human stupidity, the product of the lack of philosophical education. We need only to dispel these illusions and the ‘existing’ will disappear like smoke. Human beings will feel themselves to be the kings of nature, the masters of earth and cease worshipping the made-up idols. Therefore philosophers must stop working out the details and the subtleties of theoretical systems and turn to the propaganda of clear and already discovered by philosophy understanding of the ‘real essence of human beings’, turn to the sharp critique of the ‘existing’. We must measure the ‘existing’ by the ‘essence of human being’, we must show the unreason of this ‘existing’.

In other words, Feuerbach basically repeated what French materialists of the eighteenth century were saying. And the young Marx began with the same



ideas. He also thought that philosophy already accomplished everything, already created the full picture of 'reality' in opposition to the 'that which exists', and the contradiction between the one and the other appears in the world as the opposition of Reason of philosophy and Unreason of the empirical reality. Philosophy must simply 'exit the kingdom of shadows' and 'turn against the reality that exists outside of it' in order to make this reality correspond to the plan that matured in the minds of philosophers. It is necessary to 'transform philosophy into actuality', and 'make actuality philosophical'. In this great act of the 'secularisation of philosophy' young Marx saw the essence and the meaning of the forthcoming revolution. Theory must capture the consciousness of the masses and be transformed into moral and then into 'material' force that can crush the 'irrational', 'non-philosophical' reality.

But was this not a simple return to Kant's conception, already destroyed by Hegel's arguments? No, it was not. Here we have a number of principally new moments that took Hegel's sharp objections into consideration. Marx, like Hegel, understood 'morality' in a wider sense. It contained, as we saw in the first essay, not only (and not so much) the phenomena of the personal mind of an individual, but the entire totality of the conditions that actually determine the ways of the relationships between human beings, including the political-legal organisation of the society (that is, the State) and even the organisation of economic life of the people – the structure of the 'civil society'. Therefore to the young Marx the discrepancy between the 'human essence' and the 'existence' of specific individuals from the very beginning did not appear as only the difference (non-coincidence) between the abstract-general concept and the motley sensuously given diversity. The real issue could only be the discrepancy *within* the reality itself, *within* the sensuously given diversity, even if that reality was interpreted as the product of 'thinking' (not of separate individuals but of all the preceding generations as such that 'objectified' in the form of the existing norms their ideas about themselves and the world). And by 'human essence' was understood the universal human culture in all the concrete diversity of its forms. Consequently, the contradiction between 'human essence' (expressed in philosophy) and 'existence' was articulated by the young Marx not as the contradiction between the concept of 'human in general' and the factual state of affairs, but as the contradiction of the reality itself, contradiction between the universal human culture and its expression in specific individuals.

That all the wealth of spiritual and material culture was the creation of human beings and in that sense belonged to them (and not to God or the 'concept'), was their 'property', was clear and could be considered as an obvious fact established by philosophy. But from that followed that there never

existed any problem of 'alienation and re-appropriation' for the Human Being with a capital letter (that is for the entire humanity). Real humanity never gave its wealth to some supernatural being because such being never existed in the world. And if humanity did think that the true creator and master of the human culture was not a human being but someone else, then only in the fact of imagination that was eliminated in a simple turn in consciousness, a purely theoretical act.

However, when it came to the human being with a small letter, that is every separate human individual, the matter was different. This individual possessed only a microscopically small part of the social-human culture, and realised in himself only a minuscule part of the genuine 'essence'. And when the full measure of the 'human essence' was applied to any specific individual, it turned out that he was extremely poor, miserable and naked. And at that everyone was poor in their own manner: one – in relation to money, another – in relation to knowledge, third – in relation to physical strength and health, fourth – in relation to political rights, and so on and so forth.

Thus the abstract philosophical problem of the discrepancy between the 'essence' and the 'existence' of human beings under closer inspection turned out to be the problem of the distribution of the spiritual and material wealth between concrete individuals, and further – the problem of the distribution of *activity* among them and, finally, the problem of the distribution of property in a society. 'The division of labour', wrote Marx, 'and private property are, after all, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity'.<sup>5</sup> But since the problem of the difference between the Human Being and a human being was understood this way, its solution could only be found in the disposal of the weight of idealist prejudices, in the sharp turn toward materialism in understanding of human activity, that is, in understanding of history of society. On the other hand, the solution to the problem also required the rejection of the understanding of private property as the only natural and only rational and commonsensical form of personal appropriation of the spiritual and material wealth, the only way of human participation in the universal human culture. In short, any further development of the scientific thought was impossible without the transition to the positions of materialism in philosophy and to the positions of communism in the social sphere.

In the beginning of his theoretical biography Marx rejected both materialism and communism. He accepted them only when he was persuaded that it

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<sup>5</sup> Marx and Engels 1976, p. 46.

was possible to solve the sharpest and dialectically complicated problems of modernity – theoretical as well as practical-political – solely on their basis.

The path of Marx's development toward communism has nothing to do with that legend that was later spread around by neo-Kantians and that is still around even today.

According to this legend, Marx already in his youth, that is, before any independent theoretical study of reality, took to heart a beautiful but – alas! – utopian and unrealisable dream of universal happiness for all and only after that he began to study the world 'theoretically' through the prism of this ideal accepted a priori, trying to find the forces and means for its realisation. And thus, following the principle 'you will find only what you are looking for', he turned his attention to the proletariat, putting all hope on it as on the force that is capable of being carried away by the same illusion, the same a priori unrealisable ideal. Marx became a communist allegedly only because the ideals of the utopians, found among English and French proletarians, best conformed to his personal ideals.

However, the real story of Marx's transformation from a revolutionary democrat into a communist, from an ideologue of the radical bourgeoisie into a theoretician of the proletarian movement, from an idealist Hegelian into a materialist was very different. Marx never approached the consideration of reality from the point of view of some a priori accepted ideal. He first studied the real contradictions of life, trying to discern how the reality itself attempts to solve these contradictions in its very movement. In other words, Marx first and foremost aimed to see which 'ideals' were born in the development of life itself, which existing 'ideals' correctly expressed the needs of the social human progress, and which belonged to the number of unrealisable utopias because they did not correspond to any real needs. And even though he understood 'reality' in Hegelian manner, that is, he thought that the genuine universally human needs were born in the sphere of thinking, in the sphere of the spiritual-theoretical human culture, in general Marx's point of view even at that time had nothing in common with what neo-Kantians now are trying to conjure up.

Marx noticed the utopian ideas very early on and was critical of them. 'The *Rheinische Zeitung*, which cannot even concede *theoretical reality* to communist ideas in their present form, and can even less wish or consider possible their *practical realization*, will submit these ideas to thorough criticism', wrote Marx in the name of the editors of *Rheinische Zeitung*.<sup>6</sup> However, before that happened, the very criteria and principles on the basis of which Marx was going

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6 Marx 1967, p. 134.

to judge the communist ideals and ideas were overturned in his understanding. It turned out that these ideas could not be judged by the laws issued in the name of the World Spirit, for they were grounded in stubborn facts. It turned out that the 'world spirit' itself was to be judged in accordance with the laws of Reality and it was to be accused of unwillingness to correspond to it. Communism, on the other hand, was acquitted in the same court, regardless of its youthful immaturity and its logical-theoretical naïveté. It was precisely these communist ideas that were spreading at the time among the workers that turned the attention of young Marx to the problem of the role of the 'material interests' in the development of the historical process. These ideas demanded attention because in the coming events the working class promised to act as one of the most numerous and fight-ready units of the revolutionary-democratic army, and a revolutionary democrat was afraid that this unit would 'screw things up' if in the course of the revolution it would attempt to realise its 'utopian dreams' about the redistribution of property, that it would destroy by its efforts the unity of the forces of progress and thus would only play into the hands of reaction.

Communism set forth the problem of 'property', the problem of the distribution of the fruits of civilisation among the individuals; and the programme of political and legal changes it considered only as the means of the revolution in the property relations, as a secondary and derivative issue. Such interpretation could not be made consistent with the theoretical conscience of the idealist-Hegelian, even the most 'leftist' type, since, according to Hegel's understanding, the sphere of economic relations is built (or must be built) in relation to the interests of the Spirit. But communist theories turned this scheme inside out. It is here that we find the real problem that, when he encountered it, made young Marx feel the need to take a more careful and attentive look at the relationship between the spiritual (moral-theoretical) development of humanity and the development of material, property relations between human beings.

Marx later recalled:

My inquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term 'civil society'; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Marx 1970, p. 20.

This was materialism in understanding of the historical process. It is precisely following this path – the path of objective and soberly scientific analysis of the situation in the sphere of ‘civil society’ – that Marx arrived at the conclusion that in the form of communist ‘utopias’ found its expression in people’s consciousness the real need that emerged from within ‘civil society’; he was persuaded that he was dealing not with another crusade of the knights of the ideal, enamoured with the dreams of ‘universal happiness’, but with the real mass movement brought into existence by the conditions of the development of mechanised industry. ‘Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement that abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.’<sup>8</sup>

The ideals of utopian socialism and communism thus were not simply rejected but critically re-evaluated and their rational core was adopted, and therefore they entered history as theoretical sources of the scientific communism.

Thanks to Hegel, young Marx from the very beginning acquired a sober mistrust of any ‘ideal’ that could not withhold the criticism from the point of view of Logic (that is from the point of view of ‘reality’, for logic here was understood as the absolutely precise portrait of reality). Therefore he immediately initiated an analysis of the factual contradictions of the contemporary social development. True, at first these contradictions were expressed by Marx in abstract-philosophical categories of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity*, in the concepts of ‘alienation’ and ‘reverse appropriation’, ‘human essence’ and ‘essential forces’, ‘reification’ and ‘de-reification’, and so on and so forth. However, these complex terms were not at all (as some think) just part of some verbal game. These categories summarised the best experience of the study of the problem; and therefore the real facts, expressed in these categories, were immediately situated in the general historical and general theoretical context; they revealed the sides that would have otherwise remained in the shadow, in the fog of prejudices, inaccessible to simple ‘common sense’. This philosophical approach gave Marx an opportunity to grasp and identify, first and foremost, the universal, principally important contours of reality that was unfolding through its internal contradictions and thus to take a look from the correct angle on the details that were invisible to those without a philosophical perspective, those who cannot see the forest for the trees. Without a materialist re-evaluation of the categories of Hegel’s dialectics, communism could not be transformed from a utopia into a science.

<sup>8</sup> Marx and Engels 1976, p. 49.

It is philosophy that helped Marx to clearly formulate the idea that human being is the only 'subject' of the historical process, and that human labour (that is the sensuous-objective activity that changes nature in accordance with human needs) is the only 'substance' of all the 'modes', all the 'particular' images of human culture.

In light of this understanding it became clear that the so-called 'human essence' that appeared to any particular individual as an ideal, as a measure of his perfection or imperfection, was in fact the product of the cooperative collective labour activity of many generations, and not the creation of God, Spirit or nature. 'This sum of productive forces, capital funds and social forms of intercourse, which every individual and generation finds in existence as something given, is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as "substance" and "essence of man", and what they have deified and attacked'; we read in *The German Ideology*.<sup>9</sup> And in his 'Theses on Feuerbach', Marx wrote: 'But the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.'<sup>10</sup>

Thus the philosophical expression of the discrepancy between the 'human essence' and the 'existence' of separate individuals revealed in general form the contradictions that emerged in the system of the division of labour among people, within the 'totality of all social relations'. And when this 'human essence' was stripped of its religious and speculative-philosophical disguises, the thinking encountered its task on its real scale: to analyse this 'essence' in all of its nakedness, absolutely independently from any previously existing illusions. But this way the problem of the ideal presented itself in a completely new light – in the light of the analysis of the division of activity between individuals in the process of communal, social-human production of their material and spiritual life.

Philosophy, as we saw, clearly fixed in its own categories the fact that the historically established system of the division of labour (and therefore of property) between human beings (the 'human essence') with necessity transformed every separate individual into a professionally limited being, into a 'private person'. As a result, every person creates by his own labour only a very small piece, a fragment of human culture and only comes to own this very small piece. And the rest of the wealth of civilisation remains 'alien' for him, remains something that exists outside of him and stands against him as some 'alien' (and under some circumstances even 'hostile') force. Regarding the true nature

9 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 54.

10 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 4.

of this force, the pressure of which he experiences all the time, the human being has the most peculiar views, calling it 'God', or the 'absolute', or 'moral world order', or 'fate'.

At the same time – and this fact was established by political economy simultaneously with philosophy – the division of labour is becoming more and more subdivided, and a separate individual gets a smaller and smaller portion of the total wealth of culture, becomes more helpless in the face of the collective forces of humanity. It means that the spontaneous collective force of everyone grows at the expense of the active forces of an individual. Or, to use philosophical expression, the measure of human 'alienation' grows together with the growth of that world of wealth that he himself produces and reproduces with his own labour.

Hegel, having understood this perspective of the development of 'civil society', bowed his head before it as before a necessity dictated by the laws of the World Spirit, the Logic of creation. The entire preceding history of culture pointed toward this conclusion. And while philosophy adhered to an idealist understanding of history, it could not raise any objections against Hegel. The 'world spirit' was cut to the measure of real human culture, even though it took this culture to be its own – and therefore 'rational' – creation. It was impossible either to pose or to solve the issue on the basis of idealism.

On the basis of materialism this issue appeared in a different light. Here the thesis of 'alienation' turned into the formula about the presence of the ever-increasing contradiction of 'civil society' with itself. In this formula there was algebraically-generally expressed the fact that the conditions, in which every 'private individual' finds himself in the state of permanent 'war of all against all', are self-destructive, are split into warring spheres of the division of labour that fight each other but that are also connected with each other by the same rope, the same fateful link. Such 'civil society' does not have any resources to counter the present situation, and therefore the tension of the contradiction between the 'partial' and the collective-human character of the activity of each separate individual grows without any hindrance. Thus there followed a conclusion that one fine day this tension would reach a critical point and explode in the thunderous storm of a revolution. This is precisely the conclusion that Marx made.

The division of labour that causes this antagonistically contradictory situation is not going to last forever. It has its limit and will be blown up from within. For here the mechanism of the economic relations acts with inexorable force and is completely independent from 'reason' and 'morality'. Therefore neither moral limitations nor the most rational ideas, nor the police-bureaucratic measure will inhibit the process of the self-destruction of 'civil

society'. The only thing that 'spirit' can do in this situation is to help human beings, pressed by the contradiction, find the least painful, fast and rational way out of the situation, the way out of the limits of the division of labour (property) that is 'natural' for the given society. And it is precisely in the proletariat, in the class of workers for hire, that Marx saw those who were more than any other group pressed by 'alienation' – that side of the contradiction where the charge of revolutionary energy inevitably gathers its strength. And in the ideas of the utopians he discerned the awakening 'self-consciousness' of that same class; although it was still naïve and logically imprecise, it was deeply true in its general outline and it coincided in the most important things with the objective course of events. The resolution of all the collisions was thought to be possible only on the basis of communism.

But this communism was still in need of the proper theoretical justification; it was still to become scientific in the proper sense of that word. The path toward the solution of that problem was once again suggested by philosophy. As its concluding summary it showed that the answer to the question of where and how goes the development of the social relationships must be sought in political economy. Only the political-economic analysis is able to discern the contours of the future that are absolutely independent from any ideals, that are, in other words, invariant in relation to these ideals. That is why Marx immersed himself in political-economic studies, temporarily pushing aside the specifically philosophical problems. These problems were already clarified in their abstract-general form, but their full concretely presented solution could only be achieved after the political-economic analysis and only on its foundation.

One of these problems was the problem of the 'ideal'. It was not sublated. It was only put in its proper place and in its proper relation to other problems. On the basis of the research carried out in *Capital* there was accomplished concrete, materialist and also dialectical resolution of this problem.

By analysing the anarchy of the private property oriented organisation of the social production of the material and spiritual human life, Marx established that there is a correlation between this organisation and a certain type of human personality. And the dominating feature of that type is professional cretinism. And here is why.

On the one hand, the commodity-capitalist division of the spheres of activity (property) has a tendency toward a more and more fractional division of labour between people, and consequently between active capacities (that philosophy used to call 'essential powers of a human being'). And the issue is not limited to the stratification of society into two main classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The division of activity and the corresponding capacities goes



further, deeper and wider, splitting the human collective into more and more fragments: now not only is intellectual labour separated from manual labour, but each sphere of manual and intellectual labour is becoming more narrow, more specialised, more separate, more closed off.

On the other hand, the system of the division of labour as a whole relates to each concrete individual as a monstrous gigantic mechanism that sucks from him the maximum of his active energy. This mechanism insatiably sucks in living labour, turning it into 'dead' labour, into the 'objective body' of civilisation. The objective, 'reified' wealth appears here as a goal of the entire process, and the living human being (the subject of labour) – only as a 'tool', a peculiar 'pre-made product' and a 'means' of production and reproduction of this wealth. The system of production is organised this way; it was formed in such a way as to make all its organs and mechanisms adapted to the maximally 'effective' exploitation of the human being, its active capacities. One of the most powerful mechanisms of such exploitation is the infamous 'competition' (that which philosophy at some point used to call the 'war of all against all').

Thus, the 'large machine' of capitalist production adapts a living human being to its own requirements, transforms him into a 'particular detail of a particular machine', into a 'small cog', and then forces this 'cog' to work until it is completely worn out, until it loses all its strength. But this is not the only misery of the bourgeois reality. The gigantic machine of capitalistically organised production is in each of its separate junctions maximally rational. Some of its separate sections are made in the best possible way and very precisely fit with the neighbouring sections, but only with the neighbouring sections. In its entirety, sections, junctions and levels of this 'large machine' are connected with each other rather badly, rather approximately and not at all 'rationally'. That is because its general structure is not a result of purposeful and knowledgeable activity, but a result of actions of blind and elemental forces of the market. All the perfect details of the 'large machine' are connected by the unreliable and mystically entangled ropes and threads of the commodity-monetary relationships. And these threads are intertwined and pull in different directions, often breaking due to extreme pressure. That is why the machine works unevenly, spasmodically, by fits and starts. Some sections rotate feverishly while others rust from inaction. Some sections break down from pressure, others from rust. And often if some very large and important part breaks down, then with squeals and shrieks the entire 'large machine' stops.

As a result, a significant part of the entire wealth acquired by the exhausting exploitation of the living human being is wasted and turns out to be a penalty that the market extracts from those who are unable to organise the work of the entire productive mechanism on the basis of the rational plan.

This colossal squandering of human activity takes place in crises, in delays, in wars, in the creation of useless and often dangerous things – in the creation of machine guns and atomic bombs, idealist ‘sciences of knowledge’, cartoons and gas chambers, ‘abstract’ paintings and illegal drugs that harm both soul and body, reason and will of any living human being, that ruin human lives.

The two sides of the bourgeois reality – the transformation of human beings into professionally narrow ‘cogs’ and the extremely ineffective work of the entire productive machine – are inseparable. One cannot be eliminated without the elimination of the other. One cannot simply refashion the old details into a new rational scheme, because all the details, including the ‘living cogs’, are adapted only to their function within the ‘large machine’ of capitalism. Here we must redo the ‘cogs’ themselves. This was persuasively demonstrated by the founders of Marxism.

If the mechanism of the commodity-capitalist organisation of the production of material and spiritual life cannot guarantee the rational functioning of productive forces, then obviously it must be replaced with something else without having to wait until it breaks down for good. Such new mechanism can only be the communist production that works in accordance with rational plans, rhythmically and very efficiently. But in this case the requirements for human beings are also different. In the new system of production they cannot remain simple ‘cogs’ in the machine. If human beings remain ‘cogs’, then naturally there is immediately a need to have a tool that puts these cogs into place and tightens the screws and, ultimately, there is a need for a wise mechanic who knows how to apply the necessary tools to living human beings. Therefore any communist transformation of social relations is unthinkable without the decisive change of the old way of the division of labour between human beings, the old way of the division of active capacities, roles and functions in the process of social production, material as well as spiritual.

Indeed, professional cretinism is the consequence and the condition of the commodity-capitalist method of the division of labour, the division of property. A clown who amuses spectators at the circus is forced to hone his skills day and night without any rest, because otherwise he will not survive the competition with other clowns who are more hardworking and he will have to exchange his clown hat for the uniform of a circus cleaner. And if he manages to hold on to his role as a clown, he will *only* ever be a clown. He will have neither the time nor the strength for anything else. In the capitalist society, the same happens to a banker or a butler, an engineer or a mathematician. The capitalist method of the division of labour does not know and does not tolerate any exceptions. Therefore professional cretinism becomes not only a fact of life but also a virtue, a norm, even a peculiar ideal, a principle for individual formation

that people try to follow in order to avoid ending up at the bottom of society, in order to avoid becoming simple unskilled labour force. But the proletariat has nothing to lose in such society, except for its chains.

And that is why it emerges as the basic social power in the transformation of the property relations, of the system of the division of labour. Liberating itself (and the entire society) from the chains of the private property oriented method of the division of labour, the proletariat inevitably destroys the entire pyramid of the relationships between human beings, built by capitalism. Professional cretinism is the private property of specific capacities. As a kind of private property of social-human wealth, it must die and it dies only together with this very property.

But what is then created in its place? The fully and harmoniously developed individual. At first, before the revolutionary change, it appears as the new communist ideal; then, as the construction of communism commences, as a fact. And it happens not because a professional cretin is an aesthetically and morally unattractive thing. If that were the issue, then the full and harmonious human development would always risk remaining a mere dream, a moral-aesthetical 'ideal' in the sense that Kant and Fichte gave it, juxtaposed with the economic factor of the 'profitability and effectiveness' of concentrating all the forces and capacities of an individual in one narrow area. However, the issue here has nothing to do with aesthetics or morality. The issue is that the community of the professionally limited people is organically incapable of solving the task that economy forcefully poses to humanity – namely that of establishing immediate social, planned and centralised management of the productive forces on a large scale. It is precisely this that forces every human being to break out of the shell of his 'private' profession and actively participate in that area of activity that under the bourgeois division of labour also belonged to 'private property', i.e. a profession for a narrow circle of people – politics.

The first signal of such inclusion is the example of the socialist revolution that is accomplished by the masses for the masses. The liberation from the chains of private property is possible only as a result of conscious, historical, creative work of millions of workers and it cannot be otherwise. In the process of construction of socialism and communism, people change themselves in the same measure as they change the circumstances that surround them. And this change begins with the masses that were previously 'outside' of politics becoming those who make politics, and more so as the process continues.

We can add one more important circumstance to this description. The transformation of the productive forces into common (belonging to all the people) property is not at all a formal-judicial act, because 'property' is not just a judicial category. The socialisation of ownership of the means of production is

also the socialisation of activity, of labour of planning and management of the productive forces. The socialised production of contemporary scale and scope is such an 'object', such a 'subject matter', that cannot be fully grasped by one person, by an individual brain of one particular human being, even a genius; it cannot be grasped even by the collective reason of an entire institution, separated from everyone else by the dozens of bureaucratic offices and departments, even if it were equipped with the most perfect electronic calculating machines. That is why Marx, Engels and Lenin insisted that after the socialist revolution everyone must be involved in the management of social production. Every kitchen maid must learn to run the state, as Lenin aphoristically put it, thus causing ironic laughter of the bourgeois specialists, those very professional cretins who thought that politics was a special profession that required special abilities, 'inborn' talents and other such qualities. And still it was Lenin who pointed out the only possible course of action.

Of course, communism calls on every kitchen maid to manage the state not so that she can do it in her own ways, on the basis of those skills that she acquired among the kitchen utensils. A kitchen maid who actually and not just formally participates in the management of common tasks of the country ceases to be a kitchen maid. That is the crux of the matter. And if in the very beginning of the socialist revolution, politics ceases to be just a 'profession' and becomes the occupation of every active member of society, then this process affects larger and larger realms of activity. One cannot stop at politics since economic activity is connected with political economy thus demanding knowledge and understanding of Marx's *Capital* and Lenin's theoretical works. But these are impossible to grasp if one does not have a general level of culture. And here we must include mathematical culture, as well as philosophical-logical culture of the mind. For 'it is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*'.<sup>11</sup> And it is impossible to understand Hegel without the general historical education, the knowledge of literature, art, and history of art! Nothing would come out of it otherwise. All elements are connected in one chain. One either pulls all of the elements of it, or one loses everything entirely. On the one end of the chain there is politics, on the other – mathematics, science in general, philosophy, and art. And only someone who can grasp all of these can become a real and not just a nominal master of all contemporary productive forces.

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11 Lenin 1976, p. 180.

The communist ideal of Humanity emerged from this necessity and not from some aesthetical or ethical concerns. Either an individual turns into a master of all the culture that he created, or he remains its slave, chained to the wheelbarrow of his narrow profession. If human beings cannot solve this problem, they will not be able to solve the problem of the organisation of rational planning and control over the development of production and society in general. These are two sides of the same problem.

The complete solution to the problem does not at all assume, as the enemies of communism and Marxism sometimes claim, that every individual must turn into some universal genius that does a little bit of everything and nothing in particular. Not at all. It assumes something else: the creation, for everyone without exception, of the equally real conditions for the development of his or her abilities in any direction. Such conditions that would allow everyone to reach, without any obstacles in the process of his general education, the cutting edge of human culture, to reach the limit of what was already accomplished and not yet accomplished, already known and not yet known, and then freely choose what section of the front in the struggle against nature he wants to concentrate his personal efforts on: in physics or in technology, in poetry or in medicine.

As we can see, the 'concentration' of powers and capacities of an individual in a certain direction remains even under communism. But here the comprehensively developed individual who concentrates his powers on some narrow area also understands his neighbours on the left and on the right and consciously coordinates his efforts with theirs, while under capitalism a narrow-minded professional who is disabled from his childhood and who only sees reality from the perspective of his own subject area, has as his neighbours on the right and on the left the same kinds of half-blind specialists.

It is not difficult to guess which community will be more successful at moving farther during the same period of time. The community that resembles a conversation between a blind musician and a deaf artist about music and art, or the community where the conversation partners are equally good at seeing and hearing, even if one of them concentrates on music while the other dedicates more of his time to art and painting. Two such individuals will understand each other perfectly in any conversation and will mutually enrich one another. Two narrow specialists after long disputes and futile attempts at understanding will become enemies.

Additionally, the community that consists of, for example, a blind musician, a deaf artist and a blind and deaf mathematician will inevitably require the mediation of an interpreter who, while having no expertise in music, art or mathematics, will nonetheless 'mediate' their relationships, will manage their

interactions. Here we have something like the simplest 'model' of the commodity capitalist system of the division of labour. The role of the 'mediator' is played by the 'professional politician', who himself, like the rest of the professionally narrow cretins, is a slave and a tool of the blind and elemental forces of the Market. And they will need a worker who will feed all four of them.

Conversely, even the simplest model of the organised communist production may be built only from the comprehensively developed individuals. Such individuals are truly in possession of the entirety of the material and spiritual wealth created before them and therefore are able to concentrate the entire strength of their communal-human reason and will on this or that front of the struggle against nature, and not only their narrow-professional power, without any need of a special mediator. There is nothing supernatural or utopian in this ideal of humanity. It is simply an image of an individual that is persistently required by the conditions of the development of modern production and that corresponds to these conditions.

Communism, as Marx and Engels were saying in the early days of the communist movement, is not an 'ideal' to which the actual reality must correspond, but it is a real movement that solves the present contemporary contradictions of the development of production. And therefore the true communist ideal is not some alluring representation of a distant future, but a timely slogan for today's struggle, a potent principle for the transformation of the world in accordance with the interests of humanity. This thesis remains deeply true today. Communism attracted the minds and hearts of millions of people not by the alluring promises of a great future, but first and foremost by providing a practically achievable exit from the contradictions, based on the sober and ruthless analysis of these factual contradictions, the pressure of which is felt by every living human being. The power and attraction of communism consist in the fact that its ideals are reduced to facts, or, in other words, that they are deduced from facts. 'If ideals are not based on facts ... they will only remain pious wishes, with no chance of being accepted by the masses and, hence, of being realised', emphasised Lenin.<sup>12</sup>

The ideal, if it appears in this precise form, is a great power. It helps people choose among a great number of confusing paths into the future the straightest and the shortest path, even if this path is not always the easiest. But such is 'human nature', created by the thousands of years of labour, that individuals acquire happiness and freedom only in the course of the struggle, in the course of the overcoming of obstacles.

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<sup>12</sup> Lenin 1960, p. 417.

‘What is your idea of happiness?’ – someone asked Marx once. ‘Struggle’, he answered concisely. Of course, it is not a struggle for struggle’s sake. The struggle is first and foremost labour that overcomes the stubborn resistance of natural material. The struggle is the revolutionary activity that sweeps away all the ‘artificial’, that is, erected by society, obstacles. ‘... Overcoming obstacles is in itself an active expression of freedom’, wrote Marx in one of the drafts of *Capital*, ‘self-realisation, objectification of the subject, and therefore real freedom that acts in labour’.<sup>13</sup>

Labour, as Marx demonstrated, belongs to any living human being’s most ‘natural’ needs. An individual in a normal state of health, strength and ability has the most natural desire for their active realisation. Everyone at some point experiences this feeling of ‘itching for something to do’. Everyone knows how tiring idleness really is.

But only a normal portion of labour can bring humans happiness and this portion is always individually specific. For health, strength, ability and need are individually specific in their realisation. Capitalism transformed labour into misery in that it defaced it; it forced human beings to work more than their individual share, now they are no longer ‘itching’ to work but are in a state of misery. The only way of transforming labour activity into primary and highest need, and therefore into happiness, is to allow for the comprehensive development of an individual and for reduction of all necessary labour to a minimum. This will free an individual and give him time to do whatever is in line with his abilities. The ideal of communism gives us the most direct and correct path.

It is not accidental that in the Programme for building communism the words ‘Labour’ and ‘Happiness’ are found next to the old formula of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’, complementing it: ‘Communism fulfils a historical mission of freeing all human beings from social inequality, from all forms of oppression and exploitation, from the horrors of war; it establishes on earth Peace, Labour, Freedom, Equality, Fraternity and Happiness for all nations’.<sup>14</sup>

These words describe in short form the ideal of communism. And this ideal is accessible to every person because in it there is found all that is excellent in what humanity discovered as a result of the thousands of years of labour, struggle and thinking ... It requires the presence of a human being that ‘combines in himself the spiritual wealth, the moral purity and the physical perfection’, for only such a human being is capable of finally and forever establish on

13 [Translator’s Note] Ilyenkov does not provide a reference for this citation.

14 *XXII S’ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* [Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] 1961, p. 231.

earth peace, happiness and freedom.<sup>15</sup> And such a human being is being born. In labour, in struggle, in overcoming all and any obstacle ...

Of course all that was said so far does not exhaust the solution of the problem of the ideal in Marxist philosophy. And it is impossible to exhaust this theme in one essay. But we wanted to show the foundation and course of thought that allowed Marx, for the first time in history, not only to pose the old philosophical problem of the ideal in a completely new way, but also to solve it in its very essence. And it is only by relying on Marxian principles that his disciples and followers could elaborate and are still elaborating the issue from various sides (and there are many such sides), in all the subtleties – moral, aesthetic, and so forth. So if there were no foundation, created by Marx, then we could not speak of building anything on it. But this is already a topic for another essay.

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15 *XXII Sezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* [Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] 1961, p. 318.



## Understanding of the Abstract and the Concrete in Dialectics and Formal Logic

The terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' are used in everyday speech and in special literature very differently. Thus we talk about 'concrete facts' and about 'concrete music', about 'abstract thinking' and about 'abstract painting', about 'concrete truth' and about 'abstract labour'. In each case such use of words seems to have its justification in this or that connotation of these words and to demand full unification of the use of these words will be to exhibit laughable pedantry.

But if we are talking not simply about the words, not only about the terms, but also about the content of scientific categories, historically connected with the terms, then the matter is quite different. The definitions of the abstract and the concrete as the categories of logic must be stable and univocal within the limits of this science, since with their help there are discovered the most important principles of scientific thinking. Dialectical logic expresses in these terms a number of its fundamental principles ('there is no abstract truth, truth is always concrete', thesis about the 'ascent from the abstract to the concrete', and so on). Therefore in dialectical logic the categories of the abstract and the concrete have entirely determinate meaning that is inextricably connected with the dialectical-materialist understanding of truth, the relationship of thinking and reality, the method of the theoretical reproduction of reality in thinking, and so on. And if we are talking not about the words, but about the categories of dialectics that are connected with these words, then any frivolity, lack of clarity and instability (and therefore incorrectness) in their definitions would necessarily lead to the distorted understanding of the essence of the matter. For that reason it is important to purify the categories of the abstract and the concrete of all the extraneous material that is traditionally, either habitually or by mistake, associated with it for centuries in many books, often interfering with the correct understanding of the principles of dialectical logic.

### 1 The Categories of the Abstract and the Concrete in Formal Logic

The question of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete in its general form is not posed and is not solved within the limits of formal logic, since it is a purely philosophical, epistemological question that is loc-

ated outside of the limits of its competence. However, where there is talk of the classification of concepts, or more precisely, of the division of concepts into 'abstract' and 'concrete', there formal logic necessarily assumes a perfectly definitive understanding of the corresponding categories. This understanding is the basis for the division and therefore may be revealed in an analysis.

Since our educational-pedagogical literature on formal logic orients itself in its epistemological basics on the philosophy of dialectical materialism, it will not be useless to critically assess the traditional division of the concepts into abstract and concrete and see how justified it is from the dialectical-materialist point of view on thinking and concept, and to ask whether it needs to be 'corrected', whether there remain in it the traces of tradition that is incompatible with the philosophy of dialectical materialism. Otherwise it might so happen that together with the division of concepts into abstract and concrete the student will acquire an incorrect understanding of the philosophical categories of the abstract and the concrete, and this incorrect understanding will later – when he is dealing with dialectical logic – become an obstacle and lead to misunderstanding and confusion, or even to distorted understanding of the most important principles of the latter.

The analysis of the educational-pedagogical literature, published in the last 10 or 15 years, shows that the majority of the authors express the traditional understanding of the matter, although with some qualifications and 'corrections'. According to this traditional view, concepts (or thoughts) are divided into abstract and concrete in the following manner:

We call concrete that concept in which there is reflected a really existing determinate object or class of objects. We call abstract that concept in which there is reflected some quality of objects, mentally abstracted from the objects themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The concrete concept is such a concept that is attributed to the groups, classes of things, objects, phenomena ... The abstract concept is a concept of the qualities of objects and phenomena, when such qualities are taken as an independent subject matter of thought.<sup>2</sup>

We call concrete such concepts the objects of which really exist as qualities of things of the material world ... Abstract, or abstracted, concepts

1 Kondakov 1954, p. 300.

2 Strogovich 1949, p. 87.

are such that a thing is considered not as a whole, but only in some of its aspects, taken as separate from the thing as such.<sup>3</sup>

The examples used here as illustrations are in their majority of the same type. Under the rubric of concrete concepts we usually find such concepts as 'book', 'Fido the dog', 'tree', 'airplane', 'commodity', and under the rubric of abstract we find concepts like 'whiteness', 'bravery', 'virtue', 'speed', 'value', and so on.

In fact (judging by these examples) the division remains the same as in the textbook by G.I. Chelpanov. Any corrections made in accordance with Chelpanov's interpretation touch, as a rule, not the division itself but its philosophical-epistemological foundation since philosophically Chelpanov was a typical subjective idealist. Here is his version of the division of concepts into abstract and concrete:

Abstract terms are such terms that serve to indicate *qualities or properties, states, actions* of things. They indicate qualities that are considered in themselves, without things ... Concrete terms are concepts of *things, objects, persons, facts, events, states of consciousness*, if we consider them as having determinate existence ...<sup>4</sup>

Chelpanov does not care whether he talks about a term or a concept. The 'states of consciousness' are found on his list in the same category as facts, things and events. 'To have determinate existence' is for him the same as to have determinate existence in the immediate consciousness of an individual, i.e. in his intuition, representation or at the very least in his imagination.

Therefore Chelpanov calls concrete everything that may be represented (imagined) in the form of a separately existing singular thing, image, and abstract – that which cannot be imagined in this form, that which can only be thought.

The true criterion of the division into abstract and concrete in Chelpanov thus turns out to be an ability or inability of an individual to vividly represent something for himself. Such division is very shaky from a philosophical point of view but is nonetheless sufficiently determinate.

Therefore our authors attempted to correct the philosophical-epistemological interpretation of this classification but without touching the factual content of the examples thus leaving the classification vulnerable.

3 Asmus 1947, p. 36.

4 Chelpanov 1946, pp. 10–11.

If by concrete concepts we understand only those that correspond to the things of material world, then obviously centaur or Athena Pallada fall under the rubric of abstract concepts together with bravery and virtue, but Fido the dog and Martha the Mayoress are found among the concrete together with value, this 'sensuous-supersensuous' thing of the material world.<sup>5</sup>

What is the significance of such classification for logical analysis? The traditional classification is destroyed and made confusing by this correction, since a completely foreign element is introduced into it. But no new classification results from this correction. It is impossible to consider successful attempts by some authors to oppose to Chelpanov's notion a new principle (foundation) for the division.

N.I. Kondakov, for example, thinks that the division of the concepts into abstract and concrete must express the 'distinction of concepts in accordance with their content'.<sup>6</sup>

This means concrete concepts must reflect things, and abstract – qualities and relations of these things. If the division is to be complete, then, according to Kondakov, neither quality nor relation of things must be thought in a concrete concept. However, how one must think a thing or a class in some other way than by thinking about their qualities and relations remains unclear. Any thought about a thing inevitably turns out to be a thought about this or that of its qualities, because to think a thing means to think the entirety of its qualities and relations.

If we purify the thought of a thing from all the thoughts of its qualities, then there is nothing that remains from this thought, except for a name. In other words, the division in accordance with content means the following: a concrete concept is a concept without content; an abstract concept is a concept with some content, but a very poor one. Otherwise the division would be incomplete, and therefore, incorrect.

V.F. Asmus offers another justification for the division – 'the *real existence of the objects* of these concepts' – but it is no more successful than the previous ones.<sup>7</sup>

How are we supposed to understand this justification? Does it mean that the objects of concrete concepts really exist while the objects of abstract concepts do not? But in the category of the abstract concepts are included not only

5 [Translator's Note] Martha the Mayoress is the titular character of the 1802 novel by Nikolai Karamzin.

6 Cf. Kondakov 1954, pp. 300–1.

7 Asmus 1947, p. 36.

such concepts as virtue, but also value, weight, speed, i.e. things that exist in a manner that is no less real than such things as an airplane or a house. If one wants to say that extension, value or speed in reality do not exist without house, tree, airplane and other singular things, then we might say that these singular things exist without extension, without weight and all the other attributes of the material world only in one's head, only in a subjective abstraction.

Consequently the real existence is here beside the point since it cannot be made a criterion of the division of concepts into abstract and concrete. It only creates a false impression that singular things are more real than the general laws and forms of existence of such things. This view has nothing in common with reality.

All of this means that the corrections to Chelpanov's distinction made by our authors are extremely insufficient and formal; these authors of logic textbooks did not provide a critical-materialist analysis of this distinction, but stopped at partial corrections that only confused the traditional classification, but did not correct it.

Therefore, we must make a small detour into the history of the concepts of the abstract and the concrete in order to clarify the situation.

## 2 The History of the Concepts of the Abstract and the Concrete

The definition of the abstract concept used by Chelpanov in its strict form is found in Christian Wolff. According to Wolff, 'the abstract concept is such a concept that has as its content the qualities, the relations and the states of things, separated (in one's mind) from the things' and 'represented as an independent object'.<sup>8</sup>

But Wolff is not the original source. He simply reproduces the view that was formed in the logical treatises of medieval scholastics. Scholastics called abstract all the names-concepts (they did not distinguish between names and concepts) that indicated qualities and relations, while the names of things they called concrete.<sup>9</sup>

This use of the word was originally connected with a simple etymology. 'Concrete' in Latin means simply that which is mixed, spliced, put together, compiled; 'abstract' in Latin means something withdrawn, extracted, taken out

<sup>8</sup> Wolff's definition is cited from Rudolf Eisler's dictionary. [Translator's Note] Ilyenkov means Eisler's three-volume *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Prantl 1867, p. 363.

(or abstracted), detached. There is nothing else to these words in their original etymological meaning. Everything else belongs to that philosophical conception that was expressed with their help.

The opposition between medieval realism and nominalism does not have anything to do with the immediate etymological meaning of the words 'abstract' and 'concrete'. Both nominalists and realists equally labelled separate, sensuously perceived vividly represented 'things', individual objects as concrete, and all concepts and names that designate or express their common 'forms' as abstract. The difference consisted only in that nominalists regarded 'names' only as subjective designations of singular concrete things. While realists regarded abstract names as expressing eternal and immutable 'forms', as prototypes that exist in the mind of God and in correspondence with which the divine power creates singular things.

The contempt for the world of sensuously perceived things, for the 'flesh', characteristic of the Christian worldview in general, was especially clear among realists and was connected to the fact that the abstract – withdrawn from flesh and sensuousness, purely thought – was regarded as something more valuable (both in moral and theoretical-cognitive sense) than the concrete.

The concrete here was completely synonymous with sensuously perceived, singular, carnal, worldly, and finite ('composite' and therefore doomed to fall apart and disappear). The abstract, on the other hand, was synonymous with eternal, imperishable, undivided, divinely constituted, universal, absolute, and so on. A separate 'round body' disappears, but the 'roundness as such' exists eternally, as a form, as an entelechy that creates new round bodies. The concrete is finite, elusive, fleeting. The abstract remains, does not change, it constitutes the essence, the invisible scheme in accordance with which the world is made.

It is precisely this scholastic understanding of the abstract and the concrete that is connected to the antiquarian respect for the abstract that Hegel ridiculed so bitingly. The materialist philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that began, together with natural science, to destroy the ways of the religious-scholastic worldview, in essence also rethought the categories of the abstract and the concrete.

The immediate meaning of the terms remained the same: the concrete were, as in the scholastic doctrine, primarily singular, sensuously perceived things and their vivid images, while the abstract were the general forms of these things, reoccurring qualities and regular relations between these things, expressed in terms, names and numbers. But the philosophical-theoretical content of these categories turned out to be the exact opposite of the scholastic content. The concrete, given to a human being in sensuous experience, became the only reality worthy of attention and study, while the abstract

became only the subjective-psychological shadow of that reality, its impoverished mental scheme. The abstract became synonymous with the verbal-numerical expression of the sensuous-empirical data, the sign description of the concrete.

This understanding of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete, characteristic of the first steps in natural science and materialist philosophy, very quickly found itself at odds with the practice of natural scientific research. The natural science and materialist philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were acquiring, more and more distinctly, a one-sided mechanistic form. And that meant only the spatio-temporal characteristics, only the abstract geometrical forms, were regarded as the objective qualities and relations of things and phenomena. Everything else was beginning to appear as simple subjective illusion, created by the sense organs of human beings.

In other words, everything 'concrete' began to be understood as the product of the activity of the sense organs, as the known psycho-physical state of the subject, as the subjectively coloured copy of the colourless, abstract geometrical original. So the task of cognition was also adjusted: in order to obtain the truth, it was necessary to erase, to eliminate from the sensuous-present image of things all the colours added by the sensuousness and to reveal the abstract geometrical skeleton, scheme.

Now the concrete was understood to be a subjective illusion, a state of the sense organs, and the thing outside consciousness was transformed into something completely abstract.

So here was the picture: outside human consciousness there exist only eternally immutable abstract-geometrical units, combined in accordance with the same eternal and immutable abstract-mathematical schemes, and the concrete was only found in the subject, as a form of sensuous perception of the abstract-geometrical bodies. Thus we have a formula: the only correct way to the truth is the ascent from the concrete (as something untrue, false, subjective) up to the abstract (as something that expresses eternal and changeless schemes for the constructions of bodies).

Therefore there was a strong nominalist tendency in philosophy of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. All concepts, except for mathematical concepts, were interpreted simply as artificially created signs, as names that served the need to remember and to organise the multitude of the experience data, to aid communication with other human beings, and so on.

The subjective idealists of that epoch, Berkeley and Hume, reduced concept to a name, a label, a conditional sign-symbol, behind which it was silly to look for any content except for the known similarity between the orders of sensuous

impressions, except for the 'common in experience'. This tendency took especially deep roots on English soil and it is still living out its days there today in the form of neopositivist conceptions. The weakness of this approach, in its final form characteristic of subjective idealism, was also typical of many materialists. In this sense the works of John Locke were good examples. And so were the works of Hobbes and Helvetius. Here this approach was present as a tendency that dulled the basic materialist position.

In its final form this view led to the dissolution of logical categories into psychological and even linguistic-grammatical categories. Thus, according to Helvetius, the method of abstraction was directly defined as the method of making it easy to 'fix a great number of objects in our memory'.<sup>10</sup> In the 'incorrect use of names' Helvetius saw one of the most important sources of error. Hobbes thought in an analogous manner: 'Wherefore, as men owe all their true ratiocination to the right understanding of speech; so also they owe their errors to the misunderstanding of the same'.<sup>11</sup>

As a result, if the rational cognition of the external world is reduced to the purely quantitative, mathematical processing of data, to the ordering and verbal fixation of sensuous images, then, naturally, the place of logic is occupied, on the one hand, by mathematics and, on the other hand, by the science of the rules of combination and differentiation of terms and propositions, by the 'legitimate use of such words as we ourselves constitute', as Hobbes puts it when he defines the task of logic.<sup>12</sup>

This nominalist reduction of a concept to a word, to a term, and of thinking to a capacity for 'legitimate use of such words as we ourselves constitute' was putting the materialist principle itself in danger. Already Locke, the classic representative and the originator of this view, understood that the concept of substance was impossible to explain or to justify as something that was simply 'common in experience', as something that was an inclusive 'universal', an abstraction from singular things. And Berkeley did not accidentally strike at this weakness by turning the Lockean theory of concept formation against materialism, against the very concept of substance. He declared that it was simply a name without content. Hume continued Berkeley's analysis of the basic concepts of philosophy and demonstrated that even the objectivity of such a concept as causality could not be proven and could not be verified by a reference to the fact that this concept expressed something 'common in exper-

10 Helvetius 1807, p. 6.

11 Hobbes 1839, p. 36.

12 Hobbes 1839, p. 531.



ience'. The abstraction from sensuously-given singular things and phenomena, from concrete could with equal success express the consistency of the psychophysical structure of the subject who perceived things, and not the consistency of the things themselves.

The narrow empirical theory of concept that reduced it to the simple abstraction from the singular phenomena and perceptions fixed only the psychological surface of the process of rational cognition. On this surface, thinking appeared as the process of abstraction of the 'same' from the singular things, as the process of ascent to more and more general and universal abstractions. This theory can serve with equal success to directly opposite philosophical conceptions, since it leaves in the shadow the most important point – the issue of the objective truthfulness of universal concepts.

Consistent materialists understood perfectly well the weakness of the nominalist view of the concept, its complete inability to oppose the idealist speculations and mistakes. Spinoza repeatedly pointed out that the concept of substance that expressed the 'origin of Nature' 'can neither be conceived in an abstract or universal way, nor can it have a wider extension in the intellect than in reality ...'.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the entirety of Spinoza's treatise we find the notion that simple 'universals', simple abstractions from a sensuously given multiplicity, fixed in names and terms, give us only the forms of confused cognition that depends on imagination. Genuinely scientific 'true ideas' do not emerge this way. The process of establishing 'similarities, differences and oppositions of things' is, according to Spinoza, the method of 'disorderly experience', that is in no way guided by reason. 'Besides its considerable uncertainty and indefiniteness, no one will in this way perceive anything in natural things except their accidents, which are never clearly understood unless their essences are first known'.<sup>14</sup>

The 'disorderly experience' that forms universals is, firstly, never finalised. Thus, any new fact that one happens upon may overturn the abstraction. Secondly, it does not contain within itself any guarantee that in the universal there is expressed the really true universal form of things and not simply some subjective fiction.

To this 'disorderly experience' and its philosophical justification in the conceptions of empiricists Spinoza opposes the highest method of cognition that relies on strictly verified principles, on concepts that express the 'real essence

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13 Spinoza 2010, p. 21.

14 Spinoza 2010, p. 9.

of things'. These are no longer 'universals', no longer abstractions from sensuously given multiplicity. So how do they come about and where do they come from?

Often Spinoza is interpreted in the following way: these ideas (principles, universal concepts) are found in human intellect a priori and are revealed in the act of intuition and self-reflection. Spinoza's position in this interpretation becomes very similar to the positions of Leibniz and Kant, and it resembles materialism very little. However, it is not so, even not at all so. The thinking that Spinoza is talking about is not the thinking of a separate human individual. This concept is constructed not in accordance with the standards of an individual self-consciousness, but orients toward the self-consciousness of humanity, toward the spiritual-theoretical culture as a whole. Individual consciousness is considered here only in that measure in which it turns out to be the incarnation of this thinking, i.e. of thinking that corresponds to the nature of things. In the intellect of a separate individual the ideas of reason are not found with necessity and not even the most intense self-reflection can locate them there.

They mature and crystallise in the human intellect gradually, as a result of the tireless work of reason on its own improvement to perfection. These concepts are not at all evident to the intellect that is not developed by such labour. It simply does not have them. Only the development of rational cognition, taken in its entirety, produces these concepts. Spinoza states categorically that this view can be established through an analogy with the process of improvement of the tools of material labour.

The case is analogous to that of material tools, where the same kind of argument could be employed. To work iron, a hammer is needed, and to have a hammer, it must be made. For this purpose there is need of another hammer and other tools, and again to get these there is need of other tools, and so on to infinity. In this way one might try to prove, in vain, that men have no power to work iron.<sup>15</sup>

But the fact is that at first, with the tools they were born with, men succeeded, however laboriously and imperfectly, in making some very simple things; and when these were made they made other more complex things with less labour and greater perfection; and thus advancing gradually

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15 Spinoza 2010, p. 9.

from the simplest works to the making of tools, and from tools to other works and other tools, they have reached a point where they can make very many complex things with little labour. In just the same way the intellect by its inborn power makes intellectual tools for itself by which it acquires other powers for other intellectual works, and from these works still other tools – or capacity for further investigation – and thus makes steady progress until it reaches the summit of wisdom.<sup>16</sup>

It is obviously very difficult to liken this view to that of Descartes according to which the higher ideas of intuition are found immediately in the intellect, or to that of Leibniz according to which these ideas can be compared to something like a vein in the marble. These ideas are innate, according to Spinoza, in a completely different manner, in the form of natural, i.e. given to humans by nature, intellectual gifts, in a perfect analogy to the way a hand is the original 'natural tool'.

The innateness of 'intellectual tools' is interpreted by Spinoza in a principally materialist way by being deduced from the natural organisation of human being, and not from 'God' in the sense of Descartes or Leibniz.

What Spinoza did not understand was that these original imperfect 'intellectual tools' were the products of material labour and not the products of nature. He considered them to be the products of nature. And it is in this, and not in something else, that we find the weakness of his position. But he shares this weakness even with such thinkers as Feuerbach. This flaw cannot be under any circumstances thought of as an idealist deviation. It is simply an organic flaw of the entire old materialism.

Therefore Spinoza's rationalism must be clearly distinguished from the rationalism of both Descartes and Leibniz. His rationalism consists in affirming that the ability to think is given to human beings by nature, and is explained on the basis of the notion of substance, understood in an obviously materialist manner.

When Spinoza calls thinking an attribute, he means only the following: the essence of substance cannot be reduced to extension, thinking belongs to the same nature as extension; it has the same inseparable from nature (from substance) quality as extension, as embodiment. We cannot imagine one separately from another.

It is with this view that Spinoza connects his critique of the 'abstract universals' and those methods that are used for the explanation of the substance

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16 Spinoza 2010, pp. 9–10.

by scholastics, occasionalists and empiricists-nominalists. The move from the concrete existence to the abstract universal is not esteemed very highly by Spinoza. This approach is unable to explain the problem of substance and always serves as the foundation for scholastic, religious constructions.

This path, leading from the concrete existence to the empty universal, a path that explains the concrete through reduction to an empty abstraction, Spinoza rightfully considers to be of little value in the scientific sense.

Thus the more generally existence is conceived, the more confusedly it is conceived and the more readily it can be ascribed to any one thing. Conversely, the more singularly existence is conceived, the more clearly it is then understood, and the less likely we are to ascribe it (when we are not attending to the order of Nature) to anything other than the thing itself.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear without additional commentaries how much closer this view is to the truth than the position of narrow empiricism according to which the essence of rational cognition of things consists in the systematic ascent to more and more general and empty abstractions, in withdrawal from the concrete and specific essence of the things under investigation. According to Spinoza, this path leads not from confused to clear, but in the exact opposite direction; it leads us away from the goal of cognition.

The path of rational cognition is the exact opposite. It begins with the clearly established universal principle (and in no case from an abstract universal) and proceeds as a process of gradual thoughtful reconstruction of the thing, as a judgement by means of which particular qualities of the thing are deduced from its universal cause (and ultimately from the substance). In the true idea, unlike in the simple abstract universal, there must be found a necessity in accordance with which it must be possible to explain all the given qualities of a thing. The 'universal', however, fixes one of the more or less accidental qualities from which other qualities are not derived.

Spinoza explains his understanding using an example from geometry concerning the definition of the essence of a circle. If we say that it is a figure 'in which the lines drawn from the centre to the circumference are equal', then it is obvious for everyone that such a definition does not really express the essence of the circle, but only one of its qualities. While in accordance with the correct method of definition, it is 'a figure described by any line of which one end

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17 Spinoza 2010, p. 15.

is fixed and the other movable'.<sup>18</sup> This definition describes the method of creation of the thing and thus gives us the understanding of its immediate 'cause' and thus gives us the method for its mental reconstruction, gives us the opportunity to understand its remaining qualities, in addition to the ones already mentioned.

Thus we must start not from the 'universal', but from the concept that expresses the real actual cause of the thing, its concrete essence. This is the very core of Spinoza's method.

Therefore, as long as we are engaged in an enquiry into real things, it will never be permissible for us to draw a conclusion from what is abstract, and we shall take great care not to mix the things that are merely in the intellect with those things that are in reality.<sup>19</sup>

Not 'reduction of the concrete to the abstract', not explanation of the concrete by bringing it under the universal, but, conversely, deduction of particular qualities from the real-universal cause – this is the only path that leads to truth. In this connection Spinoza distinguishes two types of general ideas: *notiones communes* – concepts that express the real universal cause of the origin of a thing, and the simple abstract universals that express simple similarities or differences of many singular things, *notiones generales, universales*. Substance belongs to the first type of concepts, and such ideas as, for example, 'existence in general' – to the second type.

To bring any thing under the general 'universal' of existence means to explain absolutely nothing about it. Scholastics were preoccupied with this sort of fruitless enterprise. It is even worse when the properties of things are deduced in accordance with the formal rules of syllogistics *ex abstractis*, 'from the universal'.

It is difficult to study and reconstruct in thought the entire path of the emergence of all the particular, specific properties of the thing from one and the same actually universal real cause that is expressed in the intellect with the help of *notiones communes*. Such 'deduction' is but a form of reconstruction in the intellect of the actual process of emergence of the thing from nature, from 'substance'. Such deduction is accomplished not in accordance with the rules of syllogistics, but in accordance with the 'norm of the truth', norm of agreement, unity of thinking and extension, intellect and external world.

18 Spinoza 2010, pp. 25, 26.

19 Spinoza 2010, p. 25.

It is not necessary to mention the shortcomings of Spinoza's interpretation, as they are well-known: it is first and foremost the lack of understanding of the connection between thinking and objective-practical activity, theory and practice, misunderstanding of practice as the only objective criterion of truthfulness of the concrete concept. But from the formal side of the matter, Spinoza's view is, of course, deeper and closer to the truth than that of Locke.

We can easily go from Locke's theory to that of Berkeley and Hume without making any substantial changes but only changing the interpretation of its positions. Spinoza's position cannot principally be interpreted from this point of view. It is not accidental that modern positivists stigmatise it as 'turgid metaphysics', while they are only politely bowing from time to time in the direction of Locke.

In his understanding of nature and formal content of concretely universal concepts (as we may perhaps render his term *notiones communes*), as opposed to the simple abstract universal, Spinoza once in a while gives us brilliant dialectical hints. For example, the concept of 'substance' – the typical and basic example of such a concept – is presented in Spinoza as a unity of the two mutually exclusive and simultaneously mutually positing determinations. Between thinking and extension – two attributes, two methods of realisation of the substance – there is not (and cannot be) anything *abstractly general*. In other words, there is no such abstract attribute that would be included at the same time in the determination of thinking and the determination of the external world ('extended world').

Such attribute would then be a 'universal' that is wider than the determination of the external world and the determination of thinking. Such a characteristic would contain neither the nature of thinking nor the nature of extension. Nothing real would correspond to it outside of the intellect. The idea of 'God', characteristic for scholastics, is exactly the kind of idea that is constructed from such 'attributes'.

Both extended things and thinking things, according to Malebranche, are being 'intuited in God' as that common middle link, the attribute common to extension and thought that mediates ideas and things. But such a common link (in the sense of the abstract universal) between thought and extension does not exist. The only common property between them is their original unity. God of Spinoza therefore is nature plus thought, the unity of opposites, the unity of two attributes. But then nothing is left from the traditional notion of God. God here is only the entire extended nature as a whole, nature that has thinking as an aspect of its essence. Only the entire nature as a whole has thinking as its attribute, as its absolutely necessary property. The separate, limited part of the extended world does not have this property as necessary. For example, a stone,

as a mode of substance, does not 'think'. But it is included in the 'substance' that thinks, it is its mode, its part and therefore it is capable of thought if it is included into some organisation that is fit to think, such as, for example, if it becomes the organic part of the human body. (Diderot decoded the main idea of Spinoza in the following manner: Can a stone feel? It can. We need to grind it up and grow a plant in it, eat the plant and thus change the matter of the stone into the matter of a body that feels).

But Spinoza's brilliant hints that were consistent with a principal materialist view of human intellect were buried in the general stream of metaphysical thinking of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Locke's theory of abstraction leaned toward nominalism and for a number of reasons turned out to be more acceptable for the natural and social sciences of that era. The rational kernels of Spinoza's dialectics only re-emerged at the end of eighteenth and the beginning of nineteenth centuries in classical German philosophy and later developed on a materialist basis by Marx and Engels.

Kant, who attempted to reconcile the principles of rationalism and empiricism on the basis of subjective-idealist approach to cognition, was forced to conclude that the concepts could not at all be once and for all classified into two classes – abstract and concrete. Concerning a particular concept, considered outside of its connection with other concepts, outside of its use, as Kant puts it, it is ridiculous to ask whether it is abstract or concrete.

Kant writes in his *Logic*:

Thus the expressions abstract and concrete relate not to concepts in themselves – for every concept is an abstract concept – but rather only to their use. And this use can in turn have various degrees, accordingly as one treats a concept more or less abstractly or concretely, i.e., as one either leaves aside or adds more or fewer determinations.<sup>20</sup>

A concept, if it is a real concept and not simply an empty label, a name for a singular thing, always expresses something common, some genus or species determination of a thing and, therefore, it is always abstract, whether it is a substance or a piece of chalk, a colour white or a virtue. On the other hand, any such concept is always, in one way or another, determined 'within itself', through a number of its own characteristics. The more of such characteristics-determinations are attached to a concept, the more concrete the concept,

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20 Kant 1992, p. 597.

according to Kant, i.e. the more determinate, the richer in determinations. And the more concrete it is, the fuller it characterises the empirically given singular things. However, if a concept is determined by being brought under a 'higher genus', by the 'logical abstraction', then it is used *in abstracto* and the larger number of singular things and types to which it is related, the smaller the number of determinations that are preserved in its composition.

Through abstract use a concept comes closer to the highest genus, through concrete use, on the other hand, to the individual ... Through very abstract concepts we cognize little in many things, through very concrete concepts we cognize much in few things; what we win on the one side, then, we lose again on the other.<sup>21</sup>

The limit of concreteness thus is the sensuously perceived singular thing, separate phenomenon. But a concept never reaches this limit. On the other hand, the highest and most abstract concept always preserves in its composition some unity, some synthesis of various determinations that cannot be dissolved (by the way of mentally peeling off the last determination) without it losing meaning, without annihilating this concept as such. Therefore a certain degree of concreteness belongs even to the highest genus concept.

Here we clearly see the tendency of empiricism, of Lockean tradition. However, Kant is connected to this tradition through an extremely rationalistic view of the nature of the 'synthesis of the determinations of the concept'. This synthesis – the connection of determinations in the composition of the concept (i.e. the concreteness of the concept) – cannot, naturally, be oriented simply toward the sensuously given empirical manifold diversity of phenomena. In order to have theoretical significance this synthesis must rely on another principle – on the ability to combine the determinations a priori, independently of any empirical experience. Thus the 'concreteness' of the concept (i.e. that unity in diversity, unity of different determinations that has a universal and necessary significance) is explained and deduced by Kant from the nature of human consciousness that allegedly possesses the original unity – the transcendental unity of apperception. This latter is the genuine foundation of the concreteness of the concept. The concreteness of the concept has no real firm relation to the things 'in themselves', to the sensuously given concreteness.

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21 Ibid.



Hegel also started with the assumption that every concept is abstract, if by abstractness we understand that the concept never expresses in its determinations the entire fullness of sensuously intuited reality. In this sense Hegel was closer to Locke than to Mill and medieval nominalism. He understood perfectly well that determinations of the concept always contain in themselves the expression of something general – even if only because the concept always realises itself in the word, and the word is always abstract, always expresses something general and cannot express something absolutely singular and unique.

Therefore everyone thinks abstractly, and the more abstractly one thinks, the weaker in determinations are the concepts that one uses. To think abstractly is not at all a virtue, but, conversely, a deficiency. The trick is that to think concretely, to express through abstraction some concrete, specific nature of things, and not a simple similarity, not a simple commonality between different things.

Hegel understood by concrete a unity in diversity, a unity of different and opposite determinations, a mental expression of an organic connection, and a coherence of separate abstract determinations of the thing as part of a given specific thing.

Hegel understood by abstract (the same way as Locke, but not Mill and scholastics) any generality, a similarity expressed in the word and in the concept, a simple identity of some things to other things – whether it is a house or a colour white, a human being or a value, a dog or a virtue.

The concept of a 'house' here does not differ in any sense from the concept of 'kindness'. Both fix in their determinations something common to an entire class, order, genus or species of singular things, events, spiritual states, and so on. And if in a word, a term, a symbol, or a label there is expressed only that, only the abstract similarity of the number of singular things, events or forms of consciousness, then this does not yet, according to Hegel, constitute a concept. This is just an abstract-general representation, a form of empirical knowledge, of sensuous stage of consciousness. The meaning or significance of such a pseudo-concept always turns out to be this or that sensuous-descriptive representation.

The concept expresses not simply something general, but 'such general that contains in itself the wealth of particularities', grasped in their unity. In other words, the true concept is not only abstract (and Hegel, of course, does not deny this), but is also concrete in that sense that its determinations (or what the old logic calls its attributes) are not simply put together in accordance with the rules of grammar and are joined together into a unified complex that expresses the unity of things.

The unity of determinations, their meaningful connection, in which the content of the concept is truly revealed – this is what concreteness means for Hegel. A separate verbal determination, taken out of context, is abstract and only abstract. But in the context of the scientific-theoretical reflection, any abstract determination becomes a concrete determination.

The true meaning, the true content of any abstract determination is revealed in its connection with other such determinations, in the concrete unity of abstract determinations. Therefore the concrete essence of the matter is always expressed not in the abstract 'definition', but in the explication of all the necessary determinations of the thing in its unity.

That is why, according to Hegel, the concept does not exist in the form of a specific word, a specific term or a symbol. It exists only in the process of its own disclosure in a judgement, an inference that expresses the unity of separate determinations, and finally, it exists only in a system of judgements and inferences, only in a complete extended theory. If the concept is taken out of such unity, then all that remains is its verbal shell, its linguistic symbol. The content of the concept, its meaning, thus remains outside of it – in a series of other determinations, since taken by itself a word is only capable of *pointing toward* the thing, of designating it; it can only serve as a sign, a symbol, a mark, or a characteristic.

Thus the concrete meaning of a particular verbal determination is always found in something else – either in the sensuous-present image or in the developed system of theoretical determinations that expresses the essence of the matter, the essence of the thing or the event.

If the determination exists only in one's head, separated from the sensuously intuited image, without any connection to this image or to the system of other determinations, then it is thought abstractly. Obviously, there is nothing good about this sort of thinking. To think abstractly means simply to think without considering connections, to think some particular quality of a thing without understanding its connection with other qualities, without understanding the place and the role of that quality in reality.

'Who thinks abstractly?' – asks Hegel, before answering: 'An uneducated rather than an educated person'. The old haggler at the market who considers everyone exclusively from his own narrowly pragmatic point of view and who only sees in people a possible victim for his cheating, he thinks abstractly; the officer-martinet who sees in his soldiers only the possible objects of his punishment, he thinks abstractly; the gaper who sees in the condemned man on the way to execution only the murderer and who does not see any other qualities, does not ask about the history of his life and the reasons for his crimes, he thinks abstractly.

And, conversely, any 'expert of human nature' who thinks concretely is not satisfied with any abstract labelling of an event – murderer, soldier, or customer. Such an 'expert' does not see in these abstract-general terms the expression of the essence of the matter, phenomenon, human being or event.

The concept that reveals the essence of the matter opens up only in a system, in a group of determinations that express particular moments, sides, features, qualities, relations of an individual thing; and all of these separate sides are connected into some formal complex in the concept logically and not simply grammatically (with the help of words 'and', 'or', 'if, then', and so on).

The idealism of Hegelian conception of the abstract and the concrete is found in that in it the synthesis of abstract determinations is understood as some original quality of thinking, as some gift from God, and not as expressed in consciousness universal connection of real, objective, independent of any thinking sensuous objective reality. The concrete is understood as the product of thinking.

This is, of course, still idealism, but a much more 'intelligent' idealism than the subjective idealism of Kant.

The bourgeois philosophy of the nineteenth century that was slowly creeping toward positivism turned out to be incapable of remembering not only the views of Spinoza and Hegel, but even those of Kant and Locke. John Stuart Mill is the best example of this. Mill considered even Locke's theory of abstraction and its relation to concreteness to be an 'abuse' of the concepts that were ultimately and irrevocably, in his opinion, established by the medieval scholasticism.

I have used the words 'concrete' and 'abstract' in the sense annexed to them by the schoolmen, who, notwithstanding the imperfections of their philosophy, were unrivalled in the construction of technical language, and whose definitions, in logic at least ... have seldom, I think, been altered but to be spoiled.

The school of Locke, in Mill's opinion, committed the unforgiveable sin in that it transferred the term 'abstract' to all 'general names', i.e. to all 'concepts' that emerge 'as a result of abstraction and generalization'.<sup>22</sup> Thus Mill writes: 'By *abstract*, then, I shall always, in Logic proper, mean the opposite of *concrete*; by an abstract name, the name of an attribute; by a concrete name, the name of an object'.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Mill 1904, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Such 'use of words' is closely connected in Mill with the subjective-idealist understanding of the relationship between thinking and objective reality of things. Mill is unhappy with Locke because the latter considers all the concepts (with the exception of individual names) as abstract on the basis that they are all products of abstraction of one similar feature, one common form of many particular things.

According to Mill, such use of words 'leaves the important class of words, the names of attributes, without any compact distinctive appellation'.<sup>24</sup> And by attributes or features Mill understands such general characteristics, qualities or relations between particular things that not only may be but also must be thought abstractly, i.e. separately from individual things, as special objects.

Thus, the concepts such as 'house' or 'fire', 'person' or 'chair' cannot be thought in any other way but as general qualities of individual things. The words 'house', 'fire', 'white', or 'round' always describe this or that individual thing as its characteristics. It is impossible to think 'fire' as something that exists apart from individual fires. It is impossible to think 'white' as something that exists outside and independent of individual things. All these general qualities exist only as general forms of individual things, only in individual and through individual things. Therefore to think them abstractly means to think them incorrectly.

It is a different story with abstract names, designations of 'attributes'. Abstract names (or concepts, which is the same for Mill) express such general characteristics, qualities or relations that not only may but also must be thought independently from individual things as special objects even though in immediate intuition they appear to be as general as such qualities of individual things as 'white', 'wooden', as 'fire' or 'gentlemen'.

For Mill such concepts are 'whiteness', 'bravery', 'equality', 'similarity', 'squareness', 'appearance', 'value', and so on. These are also general names. But the things that correspond to these names (or, as they say in formal logic, the content of these concepts) should not be thought as general qualities of particular things. All these characteristics, qualities or relations are allegedly only mistakenly taken for the 'general qualities of the (individual) things themselves'. In reality these 'objects' are found not in things, but outside of them; they exist independently of individual things, even though in the act of perception they are fused with the things and thus appear as common features of individual things.

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24 Ibid.

But where do these objects exist if not in individual things?

In our mind, answers Mill. These are either 'methods of perception', or 'feelings, or states of consciousness', or 'the minds that experience those feelings', or 'the successions and co-existences, the likenesses and unlikenesses, between feelings or states of consciousness'.<sup>25</sup>

All these objects must be thought abstractly, i.e. separately from things, precisely because they are not characteristics, qualities or relations of these things. To think them separately from the things means to think them correctly.

The principal flaw of this distinction is found in its requirement that some concepts are thought in connection with individual things (phenomena), given in intuition, but other concepts – outside of this connection, as special objects thought independently of any individual phenomena.

According to Mill, for example, value in general, value as such, may be thought abstractly, i.e. without analysing any of its forms of existence outside one's head. This may be and must be done exactly because outside one's head it does not exist as a real quality of things. It exists only as an artificial method of evaluation or measurement, as some general principle of the subjective relationship between human beings and the world of things, i.e. as a known moral setting. Therefore it cannot be considered a feature that belongs to the things themselves, outside of one's head or one's consciousness.

According to such logic, and Mill is its classical representative, value as such must therefore be considered only as an idea, only as an a priori moral phenomenon that does not depend on the objective characteristics of things outside one's head, a phenomenon that is contrasted with the things. As such, value exists only in self-consciousness and abstract thinking. Therefore it can be thought 'abstractly', which would be the correct way of looking at value.

We paused to consider Mill's views in detail only because they represents in a clearer and more consistent manner the anti-dialectical tradition in understanding the abstract and the concrete as logical categories. This tradition is not only anti-dialectical, but also in general anti-philosophical. Mill consciously does not wish to consider the ideas that were developed by the world philosophy during the last several centuries. For him not only do Hegel and Kant not exist, but even Locke's studies appear as something like unnecessary sophisms about things that were absolutely and permanently established by medieval scholasticism. Therefore everything is fairly simple for Mill. The concrete is that which is immediately given in personal experience in the form of an 'individual

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25 Mill 1904, p. 65.

thing', in the form of an individual living experience; and the concrete concept is a verbal symbol that can be used as a name for an individual object. That symbol which cannot be used as an immediate name for an individual thing is then called 'abstract'. One can say: 'This is a red stain'. One cannot say: 'This is redness'. Therefore the first is concrete, the second abstract. That's all there is to it.

The same distinction is preserved in neopositivism with only one difference: the abstract and the concrete are transformed here (together with all the other philosophical categories) into linguistic categories and into the question of whether certain turns of phrase that express the so-called 'abstract objects' are allowed or disallowed; everything is reduced to the question of usefulness and appropriateness of the use these turns of phrases in the construction of 'linguistic structures'. By 'abstract' here is consistently understood everything that is not given in an individual experience in the form of an individual thing and cannot be defined 'in terms of those types of objects that are given in experience', that cannot be a direct naming of individual objects, here understood subjectively-idealistically.

Such use of the terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' has nothing in common with the philosophical terminology, with the world philosophy that developed over thousands of years and that is considered here (since it lays claim to philosophical significance) only as an antiquarian curiosity.

### 3 Interpretation of the Concepts of the Abstract and the Concrete in Dialectical Logic

Marxist-Leninist philosophy, developing the best and most progressive traditions of world philosophical thought on the basis of consistent materialism, revealed complex and rich dialectics in the relation between the abstract and the concrete in the process of theoretical cognition.

It is, of course, impossible to disclose and explain in one essay the entire content of this dialectics, because the dialectical-materialistic solution of the problem of the abstract and the concrete is organically connected to many other logical problems: the question about the concrete nature of truth, the question of the relationship between general, particular and singular, the problem of the relationship between thinking, reflection and practice, and so on.<sup>26</sup>

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26 An attempt to present the dialectical-materialist solution of these issues in their relation-

Here we will touch upon only one aspect of the problem: the question of how these categories appear in their application to the analysis of the concept, i.e. the point where the interests of dialectical logic directly intersect with the interests of formal logic. Here a researcher encounters a situation of conflict. It turns out that in a number of cases the designation of this or that concept as abstract or as concrete from the point of view of dialectics will be the exact opposite to the designation accepted in our pedagogical literature on formal logic.

We must, of course, discuss this fact. Without claiming to have arrived at the final conclusion, we nonetheless consider it necessary to express our evaluation of this situation and offer a definitive solution that would eliminate the possibility of conflict between dialectics and formal logic over this particular point.

The concrete, if we accept Marx's definition, is in no case a synonym of a singular thing given to immediate intuition. It is first and foremost a unity in diversity, i.e. an objectively real multiplicity of interacting 'things'. And under this universal (logical) definition of concreteness we subsume, as is evident in and of itself, also that which is perceived by an individual to be in the form of a 'separate thing', for every seemingly non-complex, singular thing always turns out to be a rather complex formation. If not biological, then chemical, if not chemical, then physical analysis will reveal in it the presence of composite parts, the method of their unification into one whole, the regularities that govern its emergence and disappearance, and so on.

Naturally, any concreteness understood in this manner cannot be expressed in thought with the help of only one determination or one definition. In 'thinking' (in concept) concrete can be expressed only in a complex system of logically connected determinations, in the form of a unity of diverse determinations, each of which, of course, expresses only a side, a fragment, a 'piece' of the concrete whole and is in this sense abstract. Concreteness, in other words, belongs not to a separate determination, but to a determination as a part of a theory, a part of a complex synthesis of abstract determinations. A separate determination, taken out of this connection, is abstract in the strictest and most precise sense of the word, even if it is connected with vividly represented detail or side of the concrete whole. Strictly speaking, determination taken out of context loses its quality of theoretical (logical) determination; it is transformed into a simple verbal naming of a corresponding sensuous image,

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ship was undertaken in my monograph *Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's Capital* (Dialektika abstraktnogo i konkretnogo v 'Kapitale' Marksa).

representation; it becomes the verbal form of expression of representation, and not of concept – if, of course, by concept we do not just mean any word that has more or less agreed upon meaning.

If we then proceed from that understanding of the concrete and the abstract that is adopted (and not coincidentally) in materialist dialectics, then the logical characteristics of concepts will turn out to be the opposite in comparison with that point of view of definitions that are present in the literature on formal logic. We will call abstract all the concepts in determinations of which there is expressed only the abstract identity of many singular 'things', whether they are 'dogs' or 'bravery', 'books' or 'usefulness'.

On the other hand, that concept which the authors of guides on formal logic collectively describe as abstract – concept of value – will be the most characteristic example of the concrete concept since in its determinations there is expressed not a simple abstract identity, but concretely universal unity, law that organises the production of commodities.<sup>27</sup>

In the same manner it would be unwise to declare, once and for all, that 'bravery' is an abstract concept: if ethics or psychology present us with a scientific, materialist understanding of the subject matter designated with this word, then the determinations of this concept will become perfectly concrete. In general, concreteness of a concept is a synonym of its truthfulness, of the correspondence of its determinations with the concrete determinateness of the subject matter.

To define a concept does not at all mean to show what meaning people give to a corresponding term. To define a concept is to define its subject matter. From the point of view of materialism it is one and the same thing. Therefore the only correct definition is the disclosure of the essence of the matter.

We can always conditionally agree on the sense or the meaning of a term, but the content of a concept is an entirely different matter. Even though the content of a concept is always immediately disclosed as the 'meaning of a term', it is not at all one and the same thing.

This is an extremely important point closely connected with the problem of the concreteness of a concept as understood in materialist dialectics (dialectical logic). The neopositivists, for whom the problem of the definition of a concept is reduced to establishing the meaning of a term in a system of terms, built in accordance with the formal rules, do not at all concern themselves with the issue of the correspondence between the definition and its subject matter

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27 On the distinction between an abstract and a concrete identity, see the essay by N. Karabanov and V. Lektorsky in Kedrov (ed.) 1962.



that exists outside and independently of consciousness, i.e. from its definition. As a result they have an absolutely insoluble problem of the so-called 'abstract subject matter'. Under this designation we have here the meaning of such a term that cannot be taken as a name for a particular thing given in the immediate sensuous experience of an individual. Let us note that the latter, i.e. the sensuous image of a particular thing in the consciousness of an individual, is again called 'concrete subject matter' in accordance with the long tradition of extreme empiricism.

Since the real science consists entirely of the sorts of definitions that do not have the immediate equivalent in the sensuous experience of an individual (i.e. have as its meaning an 'abstract subject matter'), the question of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete changes into the question of the relationship between the general term and the singular image in consciousness. Thus it is eliminated as a question of logic and replaced with a question of partially psychological, partially linguistic order. But from this perspective the issue of the objective truthfulness of any general concept is impossible to solve, because the very posing of the question in advance excludes the possibility of answering it. The neopositivist 'logic' limits itself to the study of the connection and the transition from one concept to another concept (in reality, from one term to another term) and in advance assumes that such transition from concept to the thing does not and cannot exist outside of consciousness (i.e. outside of definition and outside of sensuous living experience). Moving from term to term, this logic can nowhere find the bridge that takes it not from one term to another term, but from a term to a thing, to the 'concreteness' in its genuine sense, and not to the singular thing, given to an individual in its immediate living experience.

The only bridge that we can take from the term to the thing, from the abstract to the concrete and back, in order to establish a strict univocal connection between these two elements, is described by Marx and Engels already in *The German Ideology* – it is the objective practical activity, objective being of things and people. Any purely theoretical act will not do here.

One of the most difficult tasks confronting philosophers is to descend from the world of thought to the actual world. *Language* is the immediate actuality of thought. Just as philosophers have given thought an independent existence, so they were bound to make language into an independent realm. This is the secret of philosophical language, in which thoughts in the form of words have their own content.<sup>28</sup>

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28 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 446.

Marx wrote this in 1845, almost a hundred years before the newest neopositivist discoveries in the realm of logic.

As a result of this operation, 'the problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language to life', and is taken by the philosophers in question as a problem that requires a verbal solution, as a problem of invention of special magical words that would remain words and yet would be more than just words.<sup>29</sup>

Marx and Engels brilliantly demonstrated in *The German Ideology* that this very problem is imaginary as it is based on the idea that thought and language dwell in two separate realms, organised in accordance with their own immanent rules and laws, and are not the forms of expression of actual life, objective being of humans and things.

We have seen that the whole problem of the transition from thought to reality, hence from language to life, exists only in philosophical illusion ... This great problem ... was bound, of course, to result finally in one of these knights-errant setting out in search of a word which, as a word, formed the transition in question, which, as a word, ceases to be simply a word, and which, as a word, in a mysterious superlinguistic manner, points from within language to the actual object it denotes ...<sup>30</sup>

Many philosophers even today try to find the transition from the sign to the signified in the same manner as the 'Unique' wandering knight of the Left Hegelians without realising that the very problem that they are trying to solve is a pseudo-problem that emerges on the basis of the idea that the entire grandiose system of 'abstract concepts' allegedly stands on such a weak and elusive foundation as a singular image in the perception of an individual, as a 'singular individual' that is also called a 'concrete' thing.<sup>31</sup> All of this is still a search for the absolute. But if Hegel was looking for the absolute in the concept, the neopositivists are looking for it in the realm of words, signs, connected in accordance with equally absolute rules.

Marx and Engels, having decisively rejected idealism in philosophy, saw in thinking and language 'only *manifestations* of actual life', and in definitions

29 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 446.

30 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 449.

31 [Translator's Note] The 'Unique' is a reference to *The German Ideology's* chapter 'Saint Max' and its opening section 'The Unique and His Property'. See Marx and Engels 1976, pp. 119 ff.

of concepts – verbally fixed determinations of reality.<sup>32</sup> But reality here is no longer simply a sea of ‘singular’ things from which equally singular individuals fish out with the nets of abstractions this or that abstractly general determination; it is an organised within itself concreteness, i.e. the system of the relations between human beings and nature organised in accordance with certain laws. Both language and thought are the immediate expression (the form of manifestation) of this system of humans and things.

It is on this basis that Marx and Engels solved the problem of the objective meaning of all those ‘abstractions’ that until now appear to idealist philosophy (including neopositivist kind) to be special ‘abstract objects’ that independently exist in language.

All those mysterious abstractions that, according to idealist philosophy, exist only in consciousness, in thinking and in language, Marx and Engels interpreted materialistically, having found their objective factual equivalents in the concrete reality. The problem of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete thus ceased to be a problem of the relationship between the verbally expressed abstraction and the singular sensuously given thing. It emerged directly as a problem of the internal division of the concrete reality within itself, as a problem of the relationship between various discrete moments of this reality.

The solution found by Marx and Engels was seemingly simple: the determination of concepts is nothing but the determination of various moments of actual concreteness, i.e. the system of relations between humans themselves and between humans and things organised in accordance with certain laws. The scientific study of this concrete reality must give us the ‘abstract’ determinations of concepts that express its structure, its organisation. Every abstract determination of the concept must express its discrete moment as an actually (objectively) identifiable part of the concrete reality. This solution is at first glance very simple, but it cuts the Gordian knot of the problems that idealist philosophy so far has not been able to untie.

The abstract, from this point of view, is no longer synonymous with pure thought that lives only in consciousness, under the skullcap, in the form of sense or meaning of a word-sign. Marx uses the term rightfully also as a characterisation of the reality outside of consciousness, for example, to refer to abstract human labour<sup>33</sup> or abstract – *isolated* – human individual,<sup>34</sup> or when he writes that ‘gold is *the material aspect of abstract wealth*,’<sup>35</sup> and so on.

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32 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 447.

33 Marx 1977, p. 150.

34 Marx and Engels 1976, p. 5.

35 Marx 1970, p. 124.

For logic and philosophy that take the abstract to be synonymous with pure thought and the concrete to be synonymous with singular and sensuously perceived, all these expressions will appear awkward and unclear. But that is only because with the help of such logic it is impossible to solve the dialectical problem that is given to thinking by the concrete reality of the commodity capitalist relations. For textbook logic such a reality will appear as completely mysterious. Here, for example, not the 'abstract' has the meaning of an aspect or a quality of the 'concrete', but conversely the sensuous-concrete has the meaning of only a form of manifestation of the abstract-general. In this inversion, the essence of which could be identified only by Marx, is found the entire difficulty of understanding the form of value:

This inversion by which the sensibly-concrete counts only as the form of appearance of the abstractly general and not, on the contrary, the abstractly general as property of the concrete, characterises the expression of value. At the same time, it makes understanding it difficult. If I say: Roman Law and German Law are both laws, that is obvious. But if I say: Law (*Das Recht*), this abstraction (*Abstraktum*) realises itself in Roman Law and in German Law, in these concrete laws, the interconnection becoming mystical.<sup>36</sup>

And this is not simply a mystifying form of expression of facts in speech, in language, and it is not a speculative Hegelian turn of phrase, but a perfectly precise verbal expression of the actual 'inversion' of the connected with one another moments of reality. In this there is expressed nothing but a real fact of universal dependency of distinct separate elements of social production on one another, a fact that is completely independent of both consciousness and human will. But to human beings this fact inevitably appears as some mystical power of the 'abstract' over the 'concrete', i.e. the power of universal law that guides the movement of separate (singular) things and human beings over each individual human being and over each singular thing.

In this 'mystical' turn of phrase, reminiscent of Hegel's form of expression, there is reflected the real dialectics of the 'thing' and the 'relations' within which this thing exists. But, and this is the most interesting part, the mystical character of this expression arises as a result of the use of the terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' in the way that textbook logic uses them.

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<sup>36</sup> Marx 1978, p. 140.

Indeed, if we call 'concrete' a determination of a thing, and 'abstract' a determination of the relationship between things taken as a special independent subject matter of thought and definition, then such a fact as money immediately begins to appear as something extremely mysterious. For, objectively, without any illusions regarding it, money, 'though a physical *object* with distinct properties, represents a social *relation* of production'.<sup>37</sup> This is why the bourgeois economists, as Marx notes, are continuously astonished 'when the phenomenon that they have just ponderously described as a thing reappears as a social relation and, a moment later, having been defined as a social relation, teases them once more as a thing'.<sup>38</sup>

Let us note that this 'mysticism' is not at all something that belongs only to commodity capitalist production. The dialectics of the relation between a particular 'thing' (i.e. an object of the 'concrete concept') and that 'relation' within which this thing is what it is (i.e. an object of the 'abstract concept') is a universal relation. Here we find that objective universal fact that in this world there are no isolated 'things' that exist outside of the universal connection, but there are only things that exist in the system of mutual relations. And this system of things that interact with one another (that is what Marx defines as concreteness) is always something that determines, and therefore is logically prior to, any particular sensuously perceived thing. Thanks to this dialectics there constantly emerges that original situation when a 'relation' is taken to be a 'thing', and a 'thing' – a 'relation'.

In the form of a particular sensuously perceived thing before us there always exists some system of interacting things, some regular system of their relations (i.e. the 'concrete'), but it exists only in its fragmentary singular manifestation, i.e. abstractly. The entire difficulty of the theoretical analysis is found in the challenge of not considering the 'relation' between things abstractly as a special independent object and, conversely, not considering the 'thing' as a special object that exists outside of a system of relations to other things; the challenge is to understand every thing as an element, as a moment of some concrete system of interacting things, as concretely singular manifestation of the known system of 'relations'.

The turn of phrase that presents the 'concrete' as something subordinate to the 'abstract' and even as its product (and it is here that we find the root of the entire Hegelian mystification of the problem of universal, particular

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37 Marx 1970, p. 35.

38 Ibid.

and singular) in reality expresses nothing but that real fact that every singular phenomenon (thing, event, and so on) is always born, exists in its own determinateness, and then dies in the midst of some or other concrete whole, inside this or that regularly developing system of singular things. The 'power' or the determining action of the law (and reality of the universal in nature and in society is the law) in relation to each singular thing, the determining meaning of the whole in relation to its parts – that is what is perceived as the power of the 'abstract' over the 'concrete'. As a result we have a mystifying expression.

Marx unmasked this mystification by showing that the reality of the 'concrete' is not found in the form of a singular isolated thing, but in the form of the whole developed and developing system of interacting things, regularly organised whole, 'totality'. There is no longer any mystification in this understanding of the issue.

The concrete (and not the abstract), as reality taken in its entirety, in its development and its regular organisation, is always something primary in relation to the abstract (whether the abstract is understood as a separate relatively isolated moment of reality or as its mental verbally fixed reflection). At the same time any concreteness exists only through its own discrete moments (things, relations) as their peculiar combination, synthesis, unity.

That is why in thinking the concrete is reflected only in the form of the unity of diverse determinations each of which precisely fixes one of the moments contained in this unity. The consistent reproduction of the concrete in thinking therefore is accomplished as the process of the 'ascent from the abstract to the concrete', i.e. as the process of logical conjunction (synthesis) of particular determinations into unified common theoretical picture of reality, as the movement of thought from particular to universal.

And the process of identifying separate (particular) determinations and the connection of the identified determinations with one another is not at all arbitrary in its sequence. The general determination of this sequence, as demonstrated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism, is given by the historical process of emergence, formation and complication of that concrete sphere of activity that in a given case is reproduced in thinking. The fundamental, original, general-abstract determinations of the whole from which any theoretical construction must always proceed are formed here not at all by a simple formal abstraction from all 'particularities' without exception, particularities that are found in the whole.

Thus the original universal category of *Capital* – value – is defined not at all through abstractions in which one finds something common and equally characteristic of commodity, money, capital, profit, and rent, but through the

subtlest theoretical determinations of one 'particularity', that is of the commodity. (And with a strict abstraction from all other particularities).

The analysis of the commodity – this simplest economic concreteness – gives us universal (and in this sense abstract) determinations related to any other 'particular' form of economic relationships. This is because the commodity is that sort of particularity that is at the same time the universal condition of existence of all other particularities fixed in other categories. It is such a peculiarity that its peculiar nature is found in that it is a universal, abstract, i.e. undeveloped, simple, 'cellular' formation that develops – due to forces of the contradictions immanent to it – into other more complex and developed formations.

The dialectics of the abstract and the concrete in the concept here perfectly and exactly expresses the objective dialectics of the development of some factual (historically determined) relations between human beings into other factual relations mediated by things. Therefore the entire movement of thought from the abstract to the concrete is at the same time the perfectly exact movement of thought in facts, it is the transition from the consideration of one fact to the consideration of another fact, not the movement 'from concept to concept'.

The classics of Marxism were constantly forced to underscore this peculiarity of Marx's method in their disputes with Kantian interpretations of the logic of *Capital*.

This peculiarity is found in the fact that in this method 'we are dealing not only with a purely logical process, but with a historical process and its explanatory reflection in thought, the logical pursuance of its inner connections'.<sup>39</sup>

Only on the basis of this approach can one correctly solve the problem of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete in the concept. Every concept is abstract in the sense that it does not grasp the entirety of the concrete reality, but only one of its particular moments. But every concept is also concrete as it fixes not the formal-general 'features' of diverse facts, but precisely expresses the concrete determinateness of the fact to which it is related, its singularity thanks to which it performs in the overall constitution of reality this and not some other function and role, has this and not some other 'meaning'.

Therefore every concept (if it is an actually elaborated concept and not simply a verbally fixed general representation) is a concrete abstraction, no matter how 'contradictory' this sounds from the point of view of the old logic.

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39 Engels 1959, p. 895.

In it there always finds expression a 'thing' (i.e. a sensuously empirically constituted fact), but a thing from the side of its 'quality' that specifically belongs to it as an element of the given concrete system of interacting things (facts), and not simply as abstract 'thing' that does not belong to any concrete sphere of reality.

The thing considered outside any concrete system of relationships with other things is also an abstraction – it is no better than a 'relation' or a 'quality' considered as a special subject matter, separate from things, from their material carriers. The further elaboration of Marxist understanding of the categories of the abstract and the concrete as logical (universal) categories we find in Lenin's numerous philosophical works and fragments, as well as in those excursions into logic that he undertook in the course of analysis of social, political-economic and political problems. But this is a topic for a separate essay, a separate study. Here it is important to state only one thing. Wherever these categories appeared, Lenin categorically defended the view developed by Marx and Engels, underlining the objective significance of theoretical abstractions, sharply arguing against empty, formal abstractions that fix in verbal form arbitrarily selected formal similarities, 'analogous features' of different and in reality not at all connected events. In this sense for Lenin the 'abstract' was always synonymous with the phrase that was divorced from life, synonymous with formal creation of words, empty and untrue determination that corresponded to no definite fact in reality.

And, conversely, Lenin always insisted on the thesis of the concreteness of truth, concreteness of concepts in which reality expresses itself, on the continuous link between words and deeds, for only this link could facilitate the real reasonable synthesis of the abstract with the concrete, of the universal with the particular and the singular.

Lenin's views on this issue are of great importance to logic and require careful study, generalisation, and systematisation. It is not difficult to notice that these views have nothing in common with the metaphysical, once and for all drawn out division of concepts into 'abstract' (as concepts of separate things or facts) and 'concrete' (as related to relations and qualities, considered 'separately from things', as 'special subject matters').

Lenin considered both concepts as equally abstract, i.e. he did not hold them in high regard and always demanded that we understand facts and things in their mutual interlinking, in their concrete interaction (i.e. 'in relation'); and he demanded that every consideration of social relations be done on the basis of the most thorough and careful treatment of 'things', strictly verified facts, and not as a 'special subject matter', considered separately from things and facts. In other words, Lenin in each case insisted on thinking concretely, because



concreteness for him, as for Marx, was always synonymous with objective significance, truthfulness of concepts, and abstractness was synonymous with their emptiness.



On the basis of everything that was said so far we can make the following conclusion: neither in dialectical nor in formal logic can we once and for all divide the concepts into two classes – the abstract and the concrete. This division is connected with some traditions of philosophy that are far from the best, those traditions against which were fighting not only Lenin and Marx, but also Hegel and Spinoza, and in general all those thinkers who understood that a concept (as a form of thinking) and a term (verbal symbol) are two essentially different things. If terms could be justifiably divided into the names of separate things that are sensuously perceived by an individual and the names of their 'general' qualities and relations, then such a division has no meaning in relation to concepts. It is not a logical division. There is no foundation for it in logic.

This conclusion is confirmed by an analysis of the educational literature on formal logic that we already referenced. This division, given in the section on the classification of concepts, does not play any role in the further presentation of the apparatus of formal logic. It turns out to be of no use to the authors themselves. So why should we even bother making it, especially since it is simply incorrect from the philosophical point of view?

## The Logical and the Historical

The problem of the relationship between the logical and the historical or, as Marx formulated it, the relationship between the scientific development and the actual development, is one of the comparatively new philosophical problems. In the history of philosophy there are two known methods of posing and solving the problem of the historical and the logical. In this case we mean German idealist dialectics that is most fully represented by the system of Hegel, and Marxist materialist dialectics.

The German classical philosophy posed the problem from the very start rather narrowly (in comparison with genuine scope of the problem). It saw the real development and the real history as belonging only to the sphere of spiritual phenomena. Only spirit, and not nature in and of itself, was considered by the representatives of the German classical philosophy to be the reality that experienced history in the strict sense of the term. Nature develops only insofar as it is involved in the process of the development of the spirit, as it is transformed into the spirit's external form, into the material for embodiment of historical development of the spirit. The development of spiritual culture of humanity is presented against the background of the immovable, frozen in time, eternally equal to itself, material nature.

Consistent and persistent emphasis on this point of view was fully realised in Hegel's conception. The scientific systems, the forms of legal and political arrangement, the systems of norms of morality and ethics, the stages of the development of art and industry – all this is presented as the products of the activity of logical reason that constitutes the centre, the nucleus, the 'essence' of human existence.

The 'logical', i.e. the laws and the forms of the activity of thinking, is transformed in the eyes of an idealist into the first cause, the highest law that rules the historical development of humanity. The 'historical' as such is presented as something secondary, derivative from the 'logical'; it is painted as the external expression, manifestation, appearance of the 'logical'.

In addition to that, Hegel's conception also pulls into the orbit of its interpretation all nature outside of human beings. It is true that the development of nature taken as such is not considered by his conception as it remains outside of Hegel's field of vision. But, taking into consideration human activity directed at the transformation of nature, Hegel idealistically introduces the idea of development into his understanding of nature, i.e. he takes into consideration

the development of knowledge about nature. Here as everywhere else he discovers a logical law that serves as an internal law of nature.

No matter what Hegel is talking about, he in essence always discusses the relationship between the logic of the developed thinking and the history of the formation of that logic. Naturally, the real history is thus understood extremely one-sidedly and abstractly as the series of stages that the human consciousness passes through in its ascent to the understanding of the law of its own development, of its own activity.

The system of forms and categories of logic is transformed by this into the objective cause of the real historical process. The entire wealth of real historical events is reduced to the role of the means of manifestation of the logical nature of the absolute spirit embodied in the self-consciousness of a human being. The logical reason 'alienates' itself outwardly in the form of historical events and then contemplates itself through them thus achieving self-cognition. In the course of this self-cognition it unconsciously and automatically creates the empirical history as some secondary product, as a tool with the help of which its self-cognition is accomplished. The objective empirical reality begins to appear as a mere passive mirror in which the evolution of the developing logical reason is reflected.

The 'historical' turns out to be a reflection of the 'logical', i.e. their real relationships is reversed.

But, no matter how mystical this understanding was, there was posed in it for the first time the question of the dialectical coincidence of the logical development and the real historical process – the question never before posed by anyone.

In Hegel's solution to the problem of the historical and the logical, based on what seemed to be a completely erroneous foundation, there was a rational kernel noticed by Lenin.

The logic of the developed thinking (and, consequently, logic as theory) is in reality the result, the summary and the conclusion of the entire history of practical and spiritual development of humanity; it is the generalised expression of the real laws that govern the development of the human culture in general.

But if the development of material and spiritual culture of humanity is generally and entirely governed by the same universal laws as any other process, since it is also realised on the basis of the laws of nature and cannot ever transcend their limits, then, having found the most general expression for the law of the development of human culture, philosophy found the very laws that govern the development of any process – natural, social or spiritual.

Thus in logic that coincides with the objective dialectics philosophy finds the expression of that universal form in which there is accomplished the historical development of nature, of the social organism and of the very capacity for thought.

But this form due to its absolute universality turns out, in relation to any particular process of development taken in its separate existence, to be, essentially and 'naturally', something primary.

Of course, the rational form of meaning and significance of Hegel's formulation of the question of the logical and the historical only emerged as a result of the critique of Hegel's view from the position of dialectical materialism.

At the same time as the rational kernel of Hegel's presentation of the problem was identified, its extreme limitation was also made evident.

Marx and Engels pose the problem in a completely different manner. First and foremost, the very problem of the relationship between the historical and the logical appears, from the point of view of materialist dialectics, as something more complex and more multi-dimensional than from Hegel's point of view. Among the conditions of the problem that Hegel essentially missed in his research we find one important and complex factor. It is the historical development of the very objective reality of things that is accomplished completely independently of human consciousness and will.

Hegel abstractly identified the history of a thing with the history of human knowledge about this thing. Therefore for him the entire problem was in essence reduced to the investigation of the regular connection that existed between theoretical knowledge and the history of emergence of that knowledge.

From the point of view of dialectical materialism the problem is much more complex. The thing itself develops and experiences the actual history, and only then does the knowledge about that thing develop.

Thus, the task is to understand this regular connection, firstly, between theory and history of the thing, and, secondly, between theory and history of human knowledge, history of theory.

Here we immediately encounter a rather specific difficulty. Scientific development, scientific analysis of the objective forms of the existence of things, as a rule, generally 'takes a course directly opposite to their real development'.<sup>1</sup>

Science only appears when the historical process already produced some results.

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1 Marx 1977, p. 168.

Based on those results, science only gradually arrives at their real starting point. It retrospectively reproduces the actual development, but now in thinking, in concept. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that ‘the historical progress of all sciences leads only through a multitude of contradictory moves to the real point of departure. Science, unlike other architects, builds not only castles in the air, but may construct separate habitable stories of the building before laying the foundation stone.’<sup>2</sup>

Naturally a question arises: if the task of scientific theory is the cognition of the thing in its historical development, then would it not be better in this case to leave aside the history of what is already accomplished, i.e. the history of human knowledge regarding this thing? Is it not better to turn directly to the facts and to solve the problem by looking at them?

Such a conclusion may appear as natural, commonsensical and materialist.

But it only appears as such at first sight. The problem is that the consideration of facts related to the history of the origin and development of the thing turns out to be impossible without some distinct idea of what the thing whose history we are to investigate is. Otherwise it is impossible to decide whether a given fact is related to the history of the thing under investigation or not, whether we must include it in our study or leave it alone. The analysis of theoretical ideas about the thing therefore turns out to be closely connected with the analysis of the historical facts and to a significant degree determines its character.

The problem of the relationship between the logical development of theory and the real historical development directly presented itself to Marx because ‘even after the determination of the method, the critique of political economy could still be arranged in two ways – historically or logically.’<sup>3</sup>

The issue was that the settling of the critical scores with the previous theories was, for Marx, not at all an exercise of secondary importance, but first and foremost the only possible form of carrying out the theoretical analysis of the empirical facts. *Capital* was not subtitled ‘A Critique of Political Economy’ by accident.

Marx always rejected that vulgar-empirical point of view in accordance with which science can be developed ‘directly from the facts’, ignoring all previous development of theory, concepts and categories that express the essence of these facts. Against this view Marx always proposed his own take on the development of theory as a historical process in the course of which a new theory –

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<sup>2</sup> Marx 1970, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Marx 1977, p. 225.

a new 'logical' interpretation of the facts – could emerge only in the process of assimilation and critique of the previous theories.

Even the most revolutionary theory emerges from the entire preceding theoretical development and maximally incorporates by way of creative-constructive critique all the real achievements of this development by testing them in practice. Lenin emphasised this characteristic of Marxism many times in his struggle against the Proletkult nihilism vis-à-vis previously existing culture.

In other words, theoretical analysis of the facts and the settling of critical scores with previous theories are two inseparably connected sides of any research, and one is absolutely impossible without the other. Therefore the question about the method of critique of previous theories was simultaneously the question about the method of analysis of the empirical facts, about the method of developing the theory.

In both cases the categories that were previously proposed by science underwent critical comparison with the real facts, given in intuition and representation, with empirical facts, with new practice. In this sense there is not and there cannot be any difference between the 'logical' and the 'historical' method of analysis of the categories and the facts.

The difference is found in the following. The so-called 'historical method' takes a current theory and critically compares it with the historical facts on which it is based. For example, if Marx chose that method, then he would have compared Smith and Ricardo's theory of value with the facts that they relied on. The 'logical method' of critique of the same theory, the method chosen by Marx, would compare the categories of labour theory of value with the facts that were observed by Marx himself, with the economic reality that was contemporary to him, i.e. in this approach the comparison is between the fact and the practice observed in the most developed stage of the history of capitalism. This method of critique, as shown by Engels, has a number of advantages when compared with the 'historical' method.

Firstly, contemporary facts were better known to Marx and, if it were necessary, could be verified more carefully than the facts of the more or less distant past. Secondly, contemporary facts showed clearly and distinctly all the necessary tendencies of the capitalist development and did so better than the facts known to Smith and Ricardo and theoretically expressed by them.

All the laws and forms of capitalist economy that were not clearly seen at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries acquired a much more mature and classically distinct form of expression by the middle of the nineteenth century. It is sufficient to mention economic crises.

The 'logical' method allows us to consider every economic (when we are talking about political economy) phenomenon precisely at the point of its max-

imally full and mature expression. It is clear that in this comparison with the facts of developed capitalism it was much easier to discover both the 'rational kernel' of the labour theory of value and the falsity of its theoretical constructions. Additionally, the immediate result of this method of critique was that it provided Marx with the theoretical understanding of important contemporary empirical fact and practical problems, while the 'historical' method would only provide an understanding of the facts from the time of Smith and Ricardo. The understanding of contemporary problems would then have to be an additional special task.

But these advantages would remain unclear, from the philosophical point of view, if we did not show how and why the 'logical' analysis (i.e. analysis that is based on the facts that belong to the historically higher stage of development of the subject matter, on the results of this development) was able in and of itself to give us an understanding of facts, historical in essence but logical in form, even in that case when the real history that led to the facts in question was not itself studied.

If we are talking about the relationship between the theory and the real historical process, then it turns out that principally there are two situations. In the first situation theory develops too fast for the thing it studies to change in any significant way. This is characteristic of natural sciences – astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and so on.

In the second situation the thing under consideration develops in such a way that the length of its development is comparable to the length of the development of the theory about it. The different stages of the development of science reflect the essentially distinct stages of the development of the thing, the large historical changes in its constitution. This is characteristic not only for political science, but also for all social sciences – history, aesthetics, law, logic, epistemology, and so on.

In the first case the application of the logical method of critique of the preceding theories is, from the point of view of philosophy, the only possible option. Such theoreticians from different centuries as Newton, Einstein, Kant, Laplace or Otto Schmidt all dealt with the same object at the same stage of its historical development, with the object that did not change at all. The solar system and the laws of relationship between motion, time and space did not significantly change during the time between Newton and Kant, Einstein and Schmidt. The constitution of the atom remains the same as it was during the time of Descartes.

Here we have the case of the principal correspondence with Hegel's presentation of the question of the relationship between the 'logical' and the 'historical': the thing under investigation does not change during a given period of

time while the knowledge about it develops. In this case it is understandable and justifiable that we apply the logical method of the critique of theories created tens, hundreds or even thousands of years ago. The old theory and its categories, having been compared with today's observable facts, are naturally interpreted as an incomplete, as a one-sided, as an abstract reflection of the subject matter. The new theory then presents itself in this case as a fuller and more concrete theoretical expression of the very same subject matter. Therefore all the positive aspects of the previous theory are included in the new theory as its legitimate abstract moment. And what is rejected is the notion that the old understanding was as comprehensive and concrete as it appeared to the theoretician who created it.

The old theory (not in its entirety, but only that which is acceptable in it, i.e. only the relative truth found in it) is transformed into one of the particular cases of the new theory. Here the propositions that appeared at some point in time to be the 'logically' primary expressions of the universal law of the thing's existence, inside the new theory turn out to be derivative expressions of some deeper regularity found in the thing, abstract expressions of some different concrete-universal law.

We can mention as an example of such a relationship between the propositions of the old and the new theory the famous 'correspondence principle' discovered by contemporary physics.

Things are quite different in the second case. Here we may doubt ourselves – did we make a mistake and were we not unjust in relation to the thing under investigation and to our research of the past if we are criticising the theory that was created tens, hundreds or thousands of years ago from the point of view of the facts that we are observing today?

But if we take a closer look, we will see that we are dealing with the same thing but only at different stages of its historical development, its historical maturation and therefore the second case not only may but must be methodologically reduced to the first simpler case. After all, a theory, i.e. a logical and systematically developed understanding of a thing, deals exclusively with the universal forms and laws of the thing which constitute in their concrete unity its internal structure. These forms and laws cannot disappear without at the same time 'breaking up' the thing as a given, concrete and specific object.

On the other hand, those forms and regularities that appear at one stage of the historical development of the thing and then disappear without a trace at the next stage objectively demonstrate by this very fact of their disappearance that they do not belong to the number of internally necessary conditions of the thing's concrete being, to the number of universal and necessary conditions of its development.



Therefore the application of the 'logical' method of analysis of fact and concepts (categories) is fully justified in the second case as well. And here we not only may but also must submit to critique the categories created by science tens, hundreds or even thousands of years ago, from the point of view of their correspondence to the facts known to the theoretician who belongs to the more mature stage of the development of the same subject matter.

Marx in the logical analysis of the theories of his predecessors consciously and systematically used this principle. This, of course, does not mean that he completely ignored the 'historical' method of critique. Where it was possible, Marx constantly turned to that method, discerning historical circumstances in which some of the theories and categories he considered were born, presenting the concrete-historical background of their emergence. However, the 'historical' method everywhere in Marx played only the subordinate role, only the secondary role, only the role of the testing ground. The main path of the critical analysis of facts and categories was always the 'logical' method of critique. It is especially clear in *Capital*. In this approach the 'logical' method of analysis opens the way for the correct understanding of history, of the past facts; it gives the true methodological keys to the understanding of the past. 'The anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape', – this is how Marx aphoristically expressed this circumstance.<sup>4</sup> Any 'hints at the higher level' or 'embryos' of this higher level may be found in the past only when this 'higher' level is itself thoroughly worked out, cognised and revealed. The empirical history as such is only grasped correctly if one correctly (i.e. concretely-historically) grasps the 'essence' of the thing whose history one wants to study. And this 'essence' can only be found by following the 'logical' method. Marx proved the correctness of this method concretely in *Capital*.

As is well known, Marx gives the historical overview of the epoch of the 'original accumulation' in Chapter 24 of *Capital*. This chapter is preceded by 23 chapters dedicated to the 'logical' investigation of the essence of capitalist relations. The answer to the question about the historical circumstances of the birth of capital is given only after we get a clear answer to the question – what is capital? If we go in the opposite direction, we will not be able to answer either question.

Thus, the issue of the relationship between the 'logical' and the 'historical' is immediately connected to the issue of how and why 'logical' analysis (i.e. the analysis of facts that are related to the higher, more developed stage of the historical maturity of the subject matter under consideration) may provide us

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<sup>4</sup> Marx 1977, p. 211.

with concrete-historical understanding even in cases when history ('the past') that happened before the 'present' is not given any special consideration.<sup>5</sup>

The key then is to understand the 'present' in its essence, historically. And in order to do that we do not at all need to go into the depths of past centuries and to investigate the details of the actual history that preceded the current state. Conversely, the correct understanding of the present reveals the mystery of the past.

Marx notes in his preparatory notes to *Capital*:

In order to develop the laws of bourgeois economy, therefore, it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production. But the correct observation and deduction of these laws, as having themselves become in history, always leads to primary equations – like the empirical numbers e.g. in natural science – which point towards a past lying behind this system. These indications, together with a correct grasp of the present, then also offer the key to the understanding of the past ...<sup>6</sup>

Engels also accomplished a lot in this realm. Lenin based his immortal work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* on the historical materials of Russian capitalism.

Consequently, the 'historical moment' was found in the very form of the 'logical' analysis. More than that, the 'logical' method of analysis in its dialectical-materialist interpretation was, for Marx, 'nothing but the historical method, only stripped of the historical form and diverting chance occurrences'.<sup>7</sup>

What does that mean? What is the foundation of this mysterious ability of the 'logical method of critique' to provide the historical understanding of the facts even in those cases where the 'history' of their emergence and development is not researched? It is clear that this method may rely only on the real circumstance that somehow and in some changed form the results of the historical process contain or 'preserve' the history of their origin. Therefore the problem that at first sight appears to be purely 'epistemological', in reality

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5 It is not considered because either this history is known less than the 'present', or it is not known at all. We see the case of the latter, for example, in cosmogony that, based on the study of the contemporary state of space systems, attempts to logically recreate their historical emergence and development.

6 Marx 1993, pp. 460–1.

7 Marx 1977, p. 225.

turns into a different problem: the problem of the objective regular relationship between the real process of historical development and its own results.

Above we noted that all actually necessary (universal) moments that characterise the thing as a given concretely historical 'whole' are preserved in it throughout the entire duration of its historical development, thus establishing the law of its existence and development.

Consequently, it is necessary to explain in what form these universal and necessary conditions of the thing's historical emergence and development are preserved at higher stages of its development, in what form these conditions are objectively reproduced at every moment of its development, at every stage of the historical maturation of the subject matter under consideration.

Every concrete historical process of real development begins not on an empty spot and not in the ether of pure reason, but inside and on the basis of specific preconditions created by the processes that precede it in time. Biological development (the history of life) presupposes the existence of chemical conditions that are completely independent from life, as well as the specific circumstances that exist only on a few heavenly bodies. The society begins its history on the basis of preconditions created by nature. And its entire history consists in recreation and transformation of these preconditions by human beings. Generally speaking, every new form of movement – later in terms of the time of its appearance and higher and more complexly organised in terms of its nature – emerges on the basis of the less complex forms and continues its development in the constant and very complex interrelation with these forms. So it is here that we see the beginning of the dialectics of development.

The important point here is that this new, historically later and more complex form of development does not at all remain only the 'result', only the passive 'consequence' of the preceding process of development. The 'result' actively transforms the conditions within which it originally emerged. More than that, if this newly emergent form of development (whether it appears in nature, society or in thinking) turns out to be the beginning of the new direction in this development, the beginning of the qualitatively new form of interaction, then it necessarily transforms all the forms of development that historically precede it into external forms of its own realisation, into secondary forms of its own concrete being, into the 'organs of its own body'.

Every new higher form of development begins to preserve and reproduce with its own movement all the necessary conditions of its own existence, begins to 'bring forth' out of itself all that which was created by the development that preceded it. It actively reproduces the necessary conditions of its own concrete being, inherited from the preceding development. The move-

ment in this case resembles a spiral that is characteristic for any truly dialectical progressive development.

In *Capital* Marx concretely and in great detail demonstrates how this takes place and, at the same time, discovers a universal dialectical law (and therefore a law of logic). Capital establishes itself as a new qualitatively higher stage of economic development by subordinating to its own movement and its own requirements, found in its specific nature, all those necessary preconditions within which it originally emerged. It begins to actively reproduce all the necessary conditions of its own existence. Thus it simultaneously erases from these conditions that historical form in which they existed before it. The labour force as such, as a general capacity of human beings for labour, belongs to the number of historical preconditions of the emergence of capital in the same way that land, minerals, air, sun or machines are such preconditions. Capital does not reproduce the labour force as such. It reproduces labour force as a commodity, i.e. as that form in which labour force functions as an element of capital. Theory thus reflects this concretely historical form.

Thus we are able to discern the concrete historical conditions of capital's existence as opposed to simply seeing the 'historical' conditions, the 'preconditions', of its existence. The same happens with the commodity form, with money, with exchange surplus and with rent. As such, these forms emerged earlier than the capital, were produced by the movement of the capital itself, and reflected in their own way capital's specific movement.

Therefore it turns out that all the necessary conditions and preconditions of the historical emergence of capital can be found on the surface of the developed capital. We observe them here in the 'purified of historical form' mode. And those conditions and preconditions that were not absolutely necessary conditions for the birth of capital, even though they existed everywhere while it was emerging, disappear in the process of the development of capital; they 'dissolve' into it and do not show themselves in the higher stages of its historical maturity.

And this is why the 'logical' analysis does not need to 'purify' the 'logic of the thing' from the purely historical accidents as well as from the purely historical form of appearance. Such 'purification' is accomplished by the objective historical process itself. Marx pointed out the following in his preparatory writings for *Capital*: 'While in the completed bourgeois system every economic relationship presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited (jedes Gesetzte) is thus also a presupposition (Voraussetzung), this is the case with every organic system.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Marx 1993, p. 278.

This observation is interesting in that the law, in accordance with which every concrete historical condition of the existence of the thing simultaneously appears as a concretely historical product and as a consequence conditioned by the existence of a thing, is directly presented as universal dialectical law that applies to 'every organic system'.

The real 'organic system' (the concrete system of interacting phenomena) cannot at all emerge without dialectical 'interchange' of the conditions of existence of things and their effects. It happens in nature, in social development, and in the history of cognition.

The original protein body, the cell of life, emerges completely independently of any biological processes as a product of the chemical process, and additionally it is an extremely unstable product from the chemical point of view. We do not know enough about the original emergence on Earth of this simplest protein structure. Chemistry even today is still incapable of artificially reproducing the conditions under which the non-living would necessarily be transformed into the living. But inside any living body there exists a necessary combination of such conditions as the organism itself is actively transforming substances that get into it from the outside, without waiting while the chemical environment that exists outside and independently of it produces a living molecule of protein. This molecule, this simplest form of life, is created within the organism using its own internal forces. If this were not the case, if the simplest form of life were not reproduced as the effect, as the product of life itself, but was brought to life in the same way it did at the dawn of biological development – outside the organism and completely independently from it, in a purely chemical manner – then the evolution of life would never move an inch. Life would forever remain only the secondary and more or less regularly occurring product of chemical process that due to its instability would constantly return into its own original state and would never evolve into highly organised forms of existence of protein bodies. Nonetheless life established itself because the living organism was actively reproducing the cells, because the chemical processes were transformed into 'secondary' forms of the realisation of the living process.

Humans preserve, reproduce and produce all the necessary conditions of their specifically human existence through labour, i.e. by actively transforming the conditions given to them by nature into conditions that are the products of their own existence in the same measure as the natural conditions are recreated by humans and become the genuine conditions of their specifically human existence.

Marx described the dialectics of the emergence and development of capital in great detail. Capital emerged in the depths of pre-capitalist formations and

depended on the conditions that were not created by it. In the beginning its existence fully depended on, for example, the number of serfs who were able to escape the feudal villages and arrive in the cities. In the beginning, the sources of labour force were diverse.

The workers were serfs who escaped from their feudal lords or bankrupt artisans or vagabonds. But when they entered the process of production of surplus value, they turned into the conditions of the emergence of capital. When capitalism released workers from its refractory chamber, they were as free from the ownership of the conditions of their labour as they were before they entered it.

And because capital was able in its development to reproduce the condition of its specific existence, not originally created by it, but by other processes that did not depend on it, it was able to 'stand on its own feet'. Only here capital became independent from the charity of circumstances not under its control as it subordinated these to itself and actively created the conditions it required. This act signifies the real beginning of capital's true history.

In the development of thinking the newly discovered theoretical principle (new concept, new theory), having emerged on the basis of all the preceding development of knowledge, all previously developed concepts and ideas, also did not remain (if this principle is correct) only the result of previous knowledge, only its conclusion or its effect.

The new theoretical principle, being the final conclusion of the preceding theoretical development, changes from abstract hypothesis to concretely developed theory when it helps to achieve an explanation of all those particular events that were previously explained from the point of view of other principles. This is exactly the way Lenin interpreted the history of transformation of historical materialism from a hypothesis into a proven theory. The new theory, having been derived from the newly found principle, pushes out the old theory when it provides a new concrete explanation of all those 'particular' cases that were explained by the old theory only incompletely and abstractly. Without this the new theoretical principle would remain only a hypothesis, and the old theory would remain unshaken. Human beings, as Hegel wittily noted, are not satisfied when instead of an oak tree they are shown an acorn, when they are shown an unelaborated abstract principle instead of the system of facts concretely interpreted with its help.<sup>9</sup>

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9 [Translator's Note] See Hegel 1977, p. 7: 'When we wish to see an oak with its massive trunk and spreading branches and foliage, we are not content to be shown an acorn instead.'

In *Capital* Marx clearly and concretely demonstrated that only from this point of view of cognition there may be realised the genuine, i.e. concrete in its essence, historicism of the understanding of things. Historicism 'as such', abstract historicism, is as old as philosophy itself. Such 'historicism' is part of the metaphysical understanding of the world.

These days the idea of development as such is recognised by any metaphysician who would eagerly talk about the necessity of 'historical' approach to the subject matter, would eagerly make references to 'history' of the thing and would justify his ideas on the basis of 'historical' proofs. And it is not as easy as it might seem to distinguish the genuine – concrete, dialectical – historicism from the abstract 'historicism' of the metaphysics.

The point of view of the abstract historicism (pseudo-historicism) is easy to adopt since it appears to be, at first sight, a natural point of view. If you want to understand a phenomenon from a historical point of view, then take a look at the history of its emergence. However, any attempt to achieve this would encounter a difficulty that cannot be resolved without the help of dialectics. Every concretely historical reality has the entire infinite history of the universe as its point of reference. Therefore any attempt to understand a phenomenon 'historically' in the sense of considering all the processes that in one way or another determined its emergence would inevitably lead to 'bad infinity' and could not lead to any concrete and determinate scientific result.

By going 'back' to the past, to the history of a phenomenon, one must stop somewhere in order to 'begin' with something. The slogan of the abstract 'historicism' does not and cannot set any limitations to the subjective arbitrariness at play here. But it does not stop here. The point of view of the abstract 'historicism' inevitably, and aside from the wishes of a theoretician, leads to what under the guise of the 'historical' approach turns out to be the most vulgar anti-historicism.

It is clear that the process of emergence and development of, for example, capital cannot be traced back to its origin without possessing this or that, even if very approximate, understanding of what capital is. If a theoretician thinks that capital is the 'accumulated labour as such', then it is perfectly natural that he will trace the historical point of capital's origin to the event of Neanderthal's picking up of his club. The club is after all also a form of 'accumulated labour'. If capital is understood as money that, having been put into circulation, brings more money, then its birth would be found somewhere in ancient Phoenicia or Egypt of the time of Pharaohs. Then the historical laws of emergence of capital will be confused with the laws of emergence of completely different economic (and even pre-economic) forms, and capital itself will thus be

transformed into a non-historical category, into a relation that is if not 'eternal', then in any case more ancient than it is in reality.

Let us take a careful look at this vulgar-historical erroneous way of thinking, taking as a characteristic example so-called 'primitive accumulation' as it was understood by the bourgeois economists and through its interpretation by Marx.

The bourgeois economists of Marx's time were also forced to view capital 'historically' and to agree with Marx that capital was not something 'eternal' and that it emerged at some point in time and in some place. But where and when? The 'historical' capital emerged, as it happens, through concentration of the means of production in the hands of the few. How did this happen concretely? By various means.

Here we have the infamous 'miserliness', the inheritance from feudal times, the successful trade operations, the swindle and even the plunder. In any case, capital emerged historically by any means except for one, the appropriation of surplus value by way of exploitation of a wage labourer.

The bourgeois economists come to the 'historically justified', 'logical' conclusion that capital, in its origin and, therefore, in accordance with its 'historical nature' is anything but the product of appropriation by the capitalist of the surplus value, anything but the product of capitalist exploitation. It is labour as such (appropriated by various means and in various ways) that is then transformed into the labour of a wage labourer. On the other hand, wage labourers historically come from runaway serfs, vagabonds, bankrupt artisans, and so on and so forth, i.e. the wage labourer is the 'historical product' of any kind of circumstance but that of capitalist exploitation. And when the capitalist offers a vagabond a chance to work for a fee at his factory instead of wandering the streets hungry, he is, according to bourgeois economists, doing this vagabond a favour.

Capital is presented as a natural and eternal relationship exactly with the help of such 'historical' arguments. The key point is that the process of creation of historical conditions for the emergence of capital is presented as the first stage of the concrete history of capital itself. The facts of the history of capital as concrete historical phenomena are replaced by the facts of a completely different history, a history of all the preceding forms of economy that are destroyed with the development of capital and on the ruins of which capital founds its own concrete history. Marx demonstrated that the real concrete historical development of capital emerges only when capital begins to 'construct its own body' from the unpaid labour of wage labourers.

Originally the accumulation of 'wealth' in the hands of future capitalist indeed may have taken place by whatever ways and means. But all these



ways and means of accumulation did not at all belong to the history of capital. The person who accomplished this accumulation was not yet a capitalist. The process of accumulation was found somewhere below the 'lower limit' of the history of capital in the same sense as biological evolution of the primate ancestors of human beings did not constitute the first (or any other) stage of human history, but only its pre-history, the history of maturation of the historical prerequisites for emergence of human society.

The same anti-dialectical take on the issues is characteristic of the contemporary right socialists who take the process of maturation of economic preconditions of socialism (that takes place, as Marx demonstrated, within capitalism) for the 'first stage' of the history of socialism, for the 'socialisation' of the means of production. With the help of this 'logical' trick theoreticians of this type – Karl Renner, George Cole, Karl Kautsky and others – try to abolish Marx's thesis that only the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is able to end the capitalist development and thus to help start a principally new historical phase, socialism. The entire history of the twentieth century is interpreted by such theoreticians as a unified process of the 'socialisation as such' that is taking place both in the US and in the USSR. However, if in the US this process is accomplished by 'natural' means, in the USSR the methods and ways of this 'socialisation' are 'artificial' and 'violent'. The main opposition that determines the state of today's world – the opposition between the socialist countries and the countries stuck in the previous stage of historical development – is interpreted by these theoreticians as an abnormal state, as a result of the subjective error of Marxist-Leninist politicians, as a product of 'stubborn dogmatism'.

It is the same 'logic' in accordance with which we must see in human beings only the deformed ape and all the specifically human features must be declared to be unhealthy and artificial deviations from the natural ape norm.

In the somewhat softened form the same logic participates in the creation of the newest revisionist theories that try to present the matter in such a way as to suggest that there are no real differences between socialism and imperialism. In both cases we have the state, salaries, and so on and so forth. The thought orients itself here on abstractions that emphasise the 'common elements' of the two principally distinct phases of the historical development. As a result neither imperialism nor socialism are understood correctly. 'Socialism', according to these theories, begins only where both the state and state-wide planning disappear and 'die out'. It is clear, however, that in practice this 'dying out' of state-wide planning only leads to the return to that state that preceded socialism, that is to say, to the realm of commodity-capitalist property.

Here again we see the same logic that takes the historical preconditions for the 'natural' forms of development and therefore is directed against the actual forms of historical development as though they were artificial forms. This logic is suitable only for the ape that does not want to become a human being and sees in its own ape forms of life a 'natural' ideal. And this is the inevitable consequence and the form of pseudo-historicism, the abstract historicism.

Historicism in the dialectical-materialist sense is concrete. It obliges one to think not about history 'in general', but about a concrete history of a concrete object; it requires that we understand history not as a smooth evolutionary sequence but as a series of changing, qualitatively distinct states. And here each of the concrete historical stages of development (in nature, in society or in thought) is understood as the stage with specific regularities. The concrete history of each of these stages has its own objectively stated universal 'beginning', the emergence of which signifies a qualitative rupture in the course of universal development, a 'leap', and a revolution.

This new 'beginning', having emerged only as one of the 'secondary' products of preceding history, acquires the role of universal, dominant and determining principle that transforms all the previously developed preconditions into secondary forms of its own realisation, partially by destroying them without any remainder, partially by continuing to drag them along with itself while developing in them what they have in the form of undeveloped tendencies and possibilities. The historical process therefore appears as an uninterrupted sequence of organic transformations in the course of which the historically preceding is transformed into the 'secondary' form of its own historical product, into 'logically following'. This 'inversion' of the historically preceding into the logically following expresses the objectively real 'inversion' of the role of certain events within the historically emerging system of interacting phenomena. It is not at all an artificial 'method' of logical investigation, but the immediate expression of the real dialectics of concrete historical development. The 'logical' sequence of the categories in the system of science expresses the real sequence of the process of formation of that concretely historical system of interacting phenomena that is investigated in the given case.

And the crux of the matter is that this real objective 'sequence' in accordance with which the formation of the internal structure of the subject matter takes place cannot be easily identified by looking at the complex and extremely confusing picture of the historical process. It is impossible to achieve without conscious dialectical approach.

The so-called 'natural' sequence of the development of events in time, i.e. that sequence that we may observe on the surface of the historical process with a theoretical 'naked eye', does not at all coincide with the genuine hid-

den sequence of these events in their 'essence'. More than that, the order of the development of events 'in essence' sometimes turns out to be the direct opposite of the order of their development in phenomena. For example, the universal crisis of over-production often reveals itself in the form of crashes and difficulties in the monetary exchanges, bank operations, and only then does it encompass commerce and finally express itself in the over-production of commodities. Thus a superficial observer for whom the so-called 'natural progression' of events in time appears to be the point of view of 'sober historicism' makes the conclusion that the 'cause', the original point and the 'beginning' of the universal crisis, is found in the sphere of monetary relations. As a result, the 'sober empiricism' leads to the same result as the sophisticated and refined scholasticism: the true 'cause' of events begins to appear to be the effect of its own effect. Vulgar empiricism in general inevitably becomes the purest kind of scholasticism as soon as it is made into the principle of theoretical explanation of events.

From the point of view of genuine concrete historicism, the matter is exactly the opposite. It is fairly clear that the over-production of commodities in fact took place earlier than it manifested itself in the form of monetary crisis. It is clear that monetary crisis only expressed in its own peculiar language what was an already accomplished fact, but it did not create it. Here we can see the 'logical' expression of the order of the development of events in time that is juxtaposed not with the true objective (even if hidden from the empirical view) order of their course, but with the superficial appearance, seemingness. This appearance is also objective; it is not an illusion that appears only in consciousness; it is the superficial form of manifestation of the 'essence' of the process. And if this superficial form of development of historical events is taken for the 'natural' form of historical development of events in time, if it is taken to be the leading thread of the 'logical' expression of history, then as a result we have not the coincidence of the 'logical' and the 'historical', but the opposite effect.

The 'logical' expression of history that is guided by this impoverished principle necessarily turns out to be anti-historical in its essence. And conversely, the 'logical' development of the categories that at the first sight differs from the 'historical' (temporal) progression turns out to be the correct objective expression of the history of the subject matter. The 'logically' determined order of the development of events (phenomena) thus for the first time reveals the mystery of the actual historical order of their unfolding; it coincides with the 'historical', understood and expressed in its 'essence'. Additionally, it gives us an opportunity to understand the temporal sequence of events scientifically and not empirically, not vulgarly. Marx categorically formulated this point

that had a decisive significance from the point of view of the method of historical study of the facts:

It would be inexpedient and wrong therefore to present the economic categories successively in the order in which they have played the dominant role in history. On the contrary, their order of succession is determined by their mutual relation in modern bourgeois society and this is quite the reverse of what appears to be natural to them or in accordance with the sequence of historical development.<sup>10</sup>

In other words, we arrive at the true 'historical' order of the development of some forms of existence of the subject matter from some other forms only through the 'logical' analysis of the thing's highest stage of maturity. The historical process emerges in its objective results in the form that reveals its 'essence'. The study of the 'present' throws light on the 'past'.

The theoretical understanding of the 'present' (i.e. its 'logically systematic' exposition) turns out to be the key to the corresponding theoretical understanding of the past. This approach allows one to consider the historical process ('the past') from the point of view of its objective results, in its strictly necessary tendencies, in its regularity that makes its way through the mass of alien and external circumstances.

In the 'logical' investigation of the highest stage of development of the object, there is disclosed first and foremost the genuine 'beginning' of the process that this object actually created. The objective concrete historical 'beginning' of the history of the given thing appears here as the universal and dominant form of interaction, as the simplest 'substance' of all other forms of the existence of the thing. Writing about the social-economic development, Marx noted:

There is in every social formation a particular branch of production which determines the position and importance of all the others, and the relations obtaining in this branch accordingly determine the relations of all other branches as well. It is as though light of a particular hue were cast upon everything, tingeing all other colours and modifying their specific features; or as if a special ether determined the specific gravity of everything found in it.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Marx 1970, p. 213.

11 Marx 1970, p. 212.

This relationship does not apply to human history alone. In nature (as well as in thinking) the real dialectical development takes place in the same manner and it cannot be otherwise. In the process of the development of organic life there is also created a 'special ether' that determines the 'specific gravity of everything found in it'. And this 'special ether', i.e. the concrete historical 'beginning' of the new higher (more complex in the degree of organisation and later in terms of the time of its emergence) forms of movement, cannot be understood as the product of smooth evolution of the historically preceding it forms of movement. This new form of movement can be scientifically understood only 'from itself', and it must be considered before, outside and completely independently from those forms that not only precede it in time but also constitute the historical precondition of its emergence.

Rent as a form of commodity-capitalist economy cannot be understood before capital and in abstraction from it. One cannot understand the essence of rent without understanding capital even though rent emerged before capital and everywhere served as a 'historical' precondition of capital's emergence. There were plenty of landowners who, having accumulated their feudal rent, began to use it as capital. The same was the case with profits from trade.

The historical fate of rent and trade profit may be used as a point of illustration compared with the fate of the piece of marble from which a sculptor chisels out a statue.

The concrete form that this piece of marble will receive cannot be explained on the basis of the natural qualities of marble. It can be understood (and scientifically explained) on the basis of the features of artistic development, the process that began much later in time than the natural physical-chemical history of the piece of marble.

Thus the 'logical' order of development of the categories in science contradicts not the actual concrete history of the thing, but only the external appearance of the historical process, only the abstractly (i.e. incorrectly) understood and expressed 'history in general'.

On the surface, industrial capital – capital that really creates the surplus value – appears as a 'historical product', as a consequence of the development of trade profit and rent. But in reality the essence of this fact consists in the opposite process: industrial capital subordinates the form of trade capital to itself, transforms it into a secondary form of expression of its own movement, into the product and consequence of its own being, into the 'organ of its own body'.

It is clear that the genuine concrete historical 'beginning' of the new higher form of development may be discerned more easily at the later stages of this development when this 'beginning' already took all the historically preceding

conditions and prerequisites of its own emergence and subordinated them to itself, transformed them into the forms of its own expressions.

It is here that we find Marx's famous methodological observation that the genuinely historical understanding of something may be achieved only by way of 'logical' analysis of that something at a higher stage of its development.



The logically concrete understanding of the 'present', i.e. understanding that is 'logical' in form and 'historical' in essence, turns out to be the only correct path to the historically concrete understanding of the 'past' (to the understanding that is 'historical' in essence and form). The crux of the matter is then that we must use 'historical' approach first and foremost in relation to here and now, to the present.

Non-historical understanding of the present leads with absolute inevitability to the corresponding non-historical understanding of the past, to the anti-historical representation of the history itself. 'History' thus turns out to be just the means with the help of which the 'present' is described as the pinnacle of the development incapable of further evolution.

What is called historical evolution depends in general on the fact that the latest form regards earlier ones as stages in the development of itself and conceives them always in a one-sided manner, since only rarely and under quite special conditions is a society able to adopt a critical attitude towards itself ...<sup>12</sup>

The critical revolutionary relation to the present is the condition without which the objective historical approach to the past (understood both as objective reality and as the science of that reality) cannot exist.

The apologetic philistine attitude toward the existing situation, to the present stage of development, is expressed in that this existing situation is understood as containing no contradictions that are the springs for further development. The existing situation is transformed into a certain ideal, and the entire preceding development begins to appear only as the process of gradual approximation of reality to this 'ideal'.

Here any previously achieved stage of development is presented in an extremely one-sided manner and only from that perspective from which it can be interpreted as a not quite formed present. Everything else is ignored as

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<sup>12</sup> Marx 1970, p. 211.

'non-essential'. And what counts as 'non-essential' is precisely those concrete historical contradictions that gave rise to this past stage and that disappeared with it giving way to other concrete historical contradictions.

Such an abstract and therefore false 'historicism' is characteristic of the entire bourgeois science and philosophy, and corresponds to the essence of the bourgeois attitude toward the present, the past and the future. This approach left its mark even on Hegel's understanding of the problem of the relationship between the logical and the historical. Hegel's contemporary reality, reduced to the abstract-logical expression (idealised in the form of logic), appeared in his system as the immanent goal of the entire development of nature, society and thinking.

History, according to Hegel, deals only with the past, and not with the present and, of course, not with the future. The categories that express only the concretely historical forms of being of bourgeois reality contemporaneous to Hegel, such as 'freedom', 'equality', 'right', 'value', 'capital', and so on, are transformed into supra-historical, eternal categories that allegedly express the 'genuine' hidden meaning of the entire preceding history.

History, understood abstractly and one-sidedly, on the one hand, and the apologetic attitude toward here and now on the other, complement one another.

Thinking thus goes around in circles and does not give one a concrete understanding of the past, the present and the future.

Marx was able to break out of this logically hopeless circle not so much due to the power of his theoretical mind, but above all due to the revolutionary-critical attitude toward the existing situation.

In science (in logical-theoretical research) this revolutionary critical attitude is expressed above all in that the present state (of social life, determinate sphere of natural being and scientific development) is taken as a historically transitional stage on the way to the next higher state.

In other words, the past is, firstly, considered from the point of view of the achieved result (from the point of view of the present) and, secondly, the present is considered above all from the point of view of the future with which it is pregnant.

The image of the future is discerned in the present in the form of its immanent concretely historical contradictions that insistently demand their own resolution. The only form of such resolution of the contradictions of the present is the transition to the new state in which these contradictions disappear and are replaced with others.

But this approach also creates a completely new point of view on the past. The historically preceding epochs of development no longer appear only as

stages of maturation of the present, only as steps on the way to the present state. They are now conceived as peculiar historical stages that emerged on the ruins of the stage that preceded it, that lived through the era of its youth, the time of its maturity and, finally, the time of its decline, preparing the conditions and prerequisites for the birth of the next higher form of development. Every stage of historical development (in nature, in society and in the development of knowledge) is conceived in its own immanent contradictions and concretely historical regularities that are born with it and that disappear with it. (This 'disappearance' may take place both literally and by way of transformation of these previous stages into the 'secondary' forms of the more developed system as in the example of chemical regularities that 'disappear' in the development of life).

It is here that we find the distinctive feature of the truly historical approach. In this form, historicism of the logical research is found in full measure only in the materialist dialectics of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The key to understanding the past here is not just the 'present', but the historical understanding of the present. The contemporary state of things, from the point of view of which one analyses the past history, is understood above all from the perspective of the objective tendencies of development. And these are always expressed in the form of contradictions that matured in the course of the historical development, contradictions that demand their practical and theoretical resolution.

The contemporary state of things (in reality as well as in science which is its theoretical reflection) here is no longer idealised, as inevitably happens in the works of bourgeois historians and philosophers, but is considered as a passing phase of the historical movement, a stage in the struggle of the new with the old, of the present with the past.

It is not difficult to note that such a historicism is organically connected with the point of view of the practice, with the point of view of the revolutionary transformation of the world in the direction that is dictated by the historical process itself.

This peculiar feature of Marxist-Leninist historicism is clearly visible in such works as *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (Marx) and *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* or *The Collapse of the Second International* (Lenin). Here history is written 'in hot pursuit', during the heat of the moment by arming the participants of these events with an understanding of the meaning of their own historical creation.

The remarkable historical documents of our time, such as resolutions of the Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, are also permeated with this concrete historical approach to the analysis of our time.



In N.S. Khrushchev's speech at the Twenty-First Party Congress and in the decisions regarding that speech, the strictly scientific analysis of the existing state of affairs is organically connected with the exploration of the necessary perspectives of the further development of historical events. These documents once again persuasively demonstrate that communism is above all the historically inevitable necessity that determines the entire vision of the modern world, the direction and the character of all important events of our time, and not at all some 'ethical ideal' as it is often argued by the bourgeois and revisionist critics of Marxism-Leninism who accuse communists of subjectivism and 'dogmatism'.

The crux of the matter is that the theoretical ('logical') analysis of the events identifies and expresses the main core tendency of the historical development. Thus it allows for a precise evaluation of the role and the place of particular events, their importance in the general picture of the historical process; it allows one to spot the sprouts of the future society, to pick out the genuinely progressive events and help their explication.



The solution to the problem of scientific prediction of the future was found only on the basis of the dialectical solution of the problem of the relationship between the logical and the historical.

This problem arises in science when the past is considered 'in hindsight', from the point of view of its result: is there in its original given state of things any necessity as a result of which they will produce a definite result that can be predicted ahead of time?

The metaphysical thinking cannot handle this problem. It either adopts a vulgar-teleological point of view, or it is forced to reject with the idea of the 'final cause' the very possibility of the strict scientific prediction. In reality, if history is reduced to the simple sequence of causally determined events, then this view eliminates the question about the universal tendency of development in the direction of which all development as such takes place. To reduce necessity to metaphysically understood 'causality' means to reduce it to the purest case of contingency.

Thus for a materialist of the eighteenth century the fact that matter in the process of its own development produced a brain was pure contingency, even if it was causally determined.

From the point of view of such abstract understanding of necessity, we cannot say that in the given present state of affairs there is found an objectively determined (and therefore scientifically determinable) future. The direction of

development now completely depends on the 'efficient causes' and the contingent combination in which they occur. And this direction cannot be predicted.

The materialist dialectics, rejecting the teleological notion, provides us with a rational explanation of the fact that any given stage of development (any state of affairs) contains within itself, as if in an 'embryo', the objectively determined and therefore scientifically determinable future.

The categories of the 'efficient' and the 'final' causes are sublated by the materialist dialectics in the category of 'interaction'. The historical process as a whole begins to look not as a smooth evolutionary sequence of events, but as a process of constant organic 'rebirth' of one system of interacting events, one 'concreteness' into another 'concreteness', into another concretely and historically determined system of interaction.

It is natural that the form of interaction that consequently becomes universal and dominant (that very 'special ether' that determines 'the specific gravity of everything found in it') originally emerges as part of a particular side of the preceding concretely historical system of interacting phenomena, as one of its distinct 'effects'.

Further process, from this point of view, looks like the transformation of this form of interaction from potentially dominant, potentially universal into actually dominant, actually universal.

Thus the scientific prediction is reduced to discovering that real form of interaction that is dominant and universal in its tendency, even if it is not yet dominant and universal but is only an abstractly subordinate moment of the existing historical concreteness.

But already in this point we may theoretically see where in its tendency leads the process of transformation of historical concreteness into a real and an actual universal form of interaction; we may theoretically foresee (in very general outlines, of course) the image of that reality that will come out as a result of this process.

Therefore we, living in the middle of the twentieth century, on the basis of the theoretical analysis of contemporary facts, may elaborate a general notion of the structure of the future communist society, that concretely-historical form of social life whose laws may be formulated when the principle of common property finally takes over and transforms all the spheres of social life in accordance with its requirements.



The dialectical-materialist solution to the problem of the relationship between the logical and the historical, based on the recognition of the primacy of the

real historical development over the logical-theoretical development, at the same time reveals the entire complexity of their regular relationship. The coincidence of the 'logical' with the historical is for the first time understood on the basis of the materialist theory of reflection and constitutes the original principle of logic of Marxism-Leninism.

The relationship between the logic of developed thinking (dialectical logic) and the history of thinking, and both of these and the real history of nature and society – this is the problem that coincides with the problem of the structure of dialectics as logic, as the theory of cognition of Marxism-Leninism. This is the problem of the sequence of elements of dialectics in its systematic exposition. The 'logical' is put forward as the theoretical expression of reality of historical process of the emergence of concrete actuality, purified of the historical form and its contingencies.

It is on this basis that we understand the relationship between the theory of something and the history of that same something. Here we also see the overlap of the two realms at the very heart of the matter. Theory (as logically systematised form of knowledge) discloses the laws of development. History as science also discloses the laws of development; otherwise it would not have been a science but only a disorderly eclectic piling on of randomly selected facts.

## Lenin's Idea of the Coincidence of Logic, Theory of Cognition and Dialectics

The question of the relationship between logic, theory of cognition and dialectics preoccupied Lenin's thinking throughout his entire course of study of philosophy. One may say, without fear of exaggeration, that this problem remained central in all of his specifically philosophical reflections: Lenin returned to it again and again, every time formulating its understanding and solution more precisely and categorically. It is enough simply to reproduce Lenin's statements that had a direct relation to this problem, in the order in which they were made, in order to clearly see the main direction of the development of his thought. Let us do that.

- 1) 'The theme of logic. To be compared to present-day "epistemology"'.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) 'In this conception, logic coincides with the *theory of knowledge* [cognition]. This is in general a very important question'.<sup>2</sup>
- 3) 'Logic is the science of cognition. It is the theory of knowledge [cognition]'.<sup>3</sup>
- 4) 'In general, the introduction to Section III ("The Idea") of Part II to the *Logic* ("Subjective Logic") Volume V, pp. 236–43 and the corresponding §§ of the Encyclopaedia (§§ 213–15) – ARE PERHAPS THE BEST EXPOSITION OF DIALECTICS. Here too, the coincidence, so to speak, of logic and epistemology is shown in a remarkably brilliant way'.<sup>4</sup>
- 5) 'If Marx did not leave behind him a "*Logic*" (with a capital letter), he did leave the *logic* of *Capital*, and this ought to be utilised to the full in this question. In *Capital*, Marx applied to a single science logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge [cognition] of materialism [three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing] which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further'.<sup>5</sup>

1 Lenin 1976, p. 103.

2 Lenin 1976, p. 175.

3 Lenin 1976, p. 182.

4 Lenin 1976, p. 192.

5 Lenin 1976, p. 317.

- 6) 'Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "aspect" of the matter (it is not "an aspect" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention'.<sup>6</sup>

In the passages cited above – all made in the course of critical rethinking of Hegelian constructions – two themes clearly emerge. First, it is the theme of the relationship between 'logic' and 'epistemology' (theses 1, 2, and 3), and second, it is the understanding of dialectics as science that deals with finding the scientific-theoretical solution for the problems that are traditionally separated from it in the form of 'logic' and 'theory of cognition' (theses 4, 5, and 6). These two intersecting and internally connected themes-problems are clearly visible throughout the entire text of the 'philosophical notebooks'; of course, the cited passages only schematically represent the development of Lenin's thoughts, and it is very important to reconstruct those ideas that fill in the gaps between the formulas-theses and articulate the unbroken line that leads to the emergence of final formulas (dialectics is logic and theory of cognition of contemporary materialism; we do not need three words, and three different sciences – 'they are the same'; and this is not an 'aspect' of the matter, but its essence).

The reconstruction of the ideas that allowed Lenin to formulate his position so categorically is very important because in our literature on the subject there has not yet been established one uniform interpretation. In light of this situation, it is necessary to understand that the proposition concerning the identity of dialectics, logic and theory of cognition is not an accidental remark, but a necessary conclusion that summarises the enormous critical work that Lenin has accomplished in relation to both classical and contemporary points of view on logic, theory of cognition and dialectics.

Although the immediate subject matter of the critical analysis, documented in *Philosophical Notebooks*, is first and foremost Hegel's conception, it would be erroneous to see in them only a critical commentary on Hegel's works. Lenin was interested, obviously, not in Hegel as such, but in the real content of the problem that is relevant to this day. In other words, in the form of the critical analysis of Hegel's conception, Lenin considered the contemporary situation in philosophy, compared and evaluated the methods of posing and solving its most important problems. It is perfectly natural that the problem of cognition comes to the forefront, or, more precisely, the problem of scientific cognition around which – the further from it, the more distinctly – turns the entire philosophical thought of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the

<sup>6</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 360.

twentieth centuries. That is why the first note that touches on the theme that interests us articulates that purposeful orientation – ‘compare with contemporary “epistemology”’ – in light of which Lenin read Hegel’s pages dedicated to the question: what is the status of logic as science?

The quotation marks around the word ‘epistemology’ are not accidental here. The explanation is found in the fact that a number of old philosophical problems were united into a new philosophical science only recently (and it is irrelevant whether it is presented as the only modern form of scientific philosophy or only as one of the sections of philosophy). The word itself – ‘epistemology’ (‘theory of cognition’) – only entered into general use at the end of the nineteenth century, precisely as a designation of a special science that was not singled out as such in the classical systems not only into a special science but even into a special section. However, it would be ridiculous to claim that cognition in general and scientific cognition in particular became the subject matter of special attention only with the emergence of ‘epistemology’.

The constituting of ‘epistemology’ into a special science was historically and essentially connected to the wide spread of neo-Kantianism that in the last third of the nineteenth century became one of the most influential schools of philosophical thought in bourgeois Europe and turned into the officially recognised school of professorial philosophy of universities – first in Germany, then in all those places from which students traditionally came to German universities to study, hoping to learn there serious professional philosophy. Neo-Kantianism owed its spread also to the traditional reputation of Germany as the birthplace of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.

The peculiar characteristic of neo-Kantianism was, of course, not the discovery of the problem of cognition as the central philosophical problem, but the specific form of posing that problem that, despite the disagreements between the various versions of the schools, could be formulated as the following:

The teaching about knowledge that determines the conditions of possibility of indubitably existing knowledge and in relation to these conditions established the limitations of the possible knowledge and beyond which there opens the domain of equally indemonstrable opinions, is called ‘theory of cognition’ or ‘epistemology’ ... Of course, theory of cognition can pose additional tasks for itself, in addition to the already mentioned. But if it wants to be a meaningful science, then it must first of all deal with investigating the question of the existence or non-existence of the limits of knowledge ...<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Vvedensky 1923, p. 23.

Russian neo-Kantian A.I. Vvedensky, who provided this definition of 'epistemology', precisely and distinctly formulates the definition of the science that is 'usually designated' with this term in the literature of neo-Kantian school and all those schools that appeared as a result of its predominant influence. One can cite dozens of analogous formulations that belong to the classics of neo-Kantianism – Rickert, Wundt, Cassirer, Windelband, as well as to the representatives of its 'affiliated' schools (for example, Schuppe, Vaihinger, and so on). Despite all differences and nuances, the understanding of the special task of theory of cognition (thanks to which the theory of cognition is able to be constituted as a special theory, a special science) remains invariant in its main points underscored by Vvedensky. This task is found in the establishment of the 'boundaries of cognition' – those frontiers that knowledge cannot cross under any conditions, regardless of the level of the development of cognitive capacities of a human being and humanity, technology of scientific research and experimental technology. The 'boundaries of cognition' separate the sphere of the principally knowable from the sphere of the principally unknowable; they are posited not by the limited nature of human experience in time and space (in such case the widening of the sphere of experience would also enlarge the 'boundaries' of cognition and turn them into the boundaries between cognised and not yet cognised that is in principle cognisable), but exclusively by specific peculiarities of the very 'capacity for cognition', specific 'forms' of this capacity, i.e. activity that processes the constantly changing states of the subject into 'experience' – into fixed representations and into the system of connected representations (in 'concepts') – into 'knowledge'.

This delimitation between the 'knowable' (immanent) and the 'unknowable' (transcendent) was historically and essentially the only ground for separating 'theory of cognition' into a special science, as opposed to 'metaphysics' and 'ontology'. If this delimitation, done in its classical form by Kant, is rejected, then any necessity for singling out 'epistemology' into a special science disappears, since there is no longer any subject matter that it could study in separation from 'metaphysics' (again taken in specifically Kantian meaning of the word).

The same A.I. Vvedensky understands this circumstance very well, connecting the birth of 'epistemology' specifically with the Kantian understanding of 'metaphysics' as the 'science of true being, and therefore of transcendent things', i.e. science of being that is thought in the form that it has in itself, independently of 'how it is cognised by us or as it is represented by us'. According to Kant and the entire Kantian tradition, cognition of this kind is absolutely impossible and regarding the things-in-themselves (i.e. the world of things that exist outside consciousness and independently of it) humanity can forever use

only faith. 'Metaphysics' is impossible as a science. Or, conversely, 'science' does not have the right to claim any 'metaphysical' meaning for its propositions, to claim the role of 'metaphysics'. Science must humbly limit itself to the description of the phenomenal world, i.e. world as it appears in human consciousness as a result of the refraction of external impulses through the prism of the organs of sense and a priori forms (schemes) of the activity of understanding.

In other words, Kantian understanding of metaphysics presupposes that the entire human 'science' was, is and always will be only the ordered and systematised description of the phenomena that take place only in our own experience, and that any statement of 'science' must be interpreted as a statement about, and only about, that which takes place in the sphere of experience, in the sphere of ideas and concepts. As long as science ('knowledge') interprets its statements this way, it remains a 'science'; as soon as it dares to affirm (or to deny) something about the world of 'things-in-themselves', it immediately ceases to be science and turns into 'metaphysics'. We are talking, of course, not only about such subject matters as 'God', 'immortality of the soul' or 'freedom of will', but about any notion of contemporary natural science and social science, whether it is an atom or an electron, chemical or biological type, value or class, capital or socio-economic formation ... The same applies to such concepts as causality and quantity, regularity and probability, part and whole, and so on and so forth – it applies to any concept that is part of scientific knowledge. Therefore metaphysics in the Kantian understanding is not a special and separate science that, unlike the 'particular' sciences, deals only with general, universal 'principles of being'. Metaphysics is the same as physics, or chemistry, or political economy that are understood as containing knowledge about 'things-in-themselves', knowledge about the reality outside human consciousness and humanity.

In this sense concepts and laws of physics do not differ in any way from concepts and laws of 'logic'. Both are equally forms and laws of connections between 'phenomena', i.e. 'things' as they are given to us in our own consciousness, in the course of their cognition, perception and comprehension. Logical forms and laws may differ from physical laws only in the degree of commonality, only quantitatively and under no circumstances in the subject matter in the study of which they are deduced. This is something that any consistent Kantian understands and accepts, unlike an 'eclectic' who interprets 'logical laws' as 'specific laws of thinking', and laws of physics – as general schemes of connection between things outside of consciousness, outside of thinking.

Any Kantian understands that 'logical' forms and laws may be identified and formulated only in the course of study of real scientific thinking as those



schemes and rules that would apply equally to thinking of a physicist, thinking of a chemist, thinking of an economist, for there is no thinking in general that would be neither the first, the second or the third kind of thinking, that would take place before, outside or independently of the entirety of its own 'manifestations'. Such notion of thinking as the subject matter of logic would be fully metaphysical: thinking would then be the next 'thing-in-itself', a thinking that exists and can be thought outside of those forms in which it presents itself as a phenomenon ...

But the thinking of the professional physicist realises itself ('manifests itself') in the form of physical theory, and therefore in the 'forms and laws of thinking' of the physicist are manifested the forms and laws (schemes and rules) of the phenomena that are known and knowable in physics. The laws that the physicist's intellectual activity really obeys include the law of conservation of energy, Ohm's law, and Maxwell's equations and  $e = mc^2$  formula. The same is the case with chemistry, biology and any other branch of knowledge. In this sense 'logical' forms and laws are not at all different and cannot be different from the notions and laws of physics – they are also schemes of analysis and synthesis of phenomena, given to a human being in 'experience': in intuition, in representation, in experiment. Therefore 'logical' forms and rules may be discerned and understood only as general (universal) forms and schemes that remain invariant in any sphere of phenomena; in other words, the forms and laws are common to physical, chemical, biological and economic worlds, or to 'thinkable world in general', to that very 'world' that constitutes the subject matter of research and thinking of physicist, chemist, biologist, economist, and so on.

No Kantian (or Humean, or Berkelyean, or Machist) doubts that these 'forms and laws of thinking' are but another name for the forms and laws of the 'thinkable world' itself, and since philosophy never disputed this fact, no one ever had any doubts about this. Logical (i.e. universal) forms and schemes of the activity of thinking (theoretical consciousness) are given to a logician only as forms and schemes of the thinkable – known and knowable – world or, in other words, the world as it is described by science. In this sense the expression 'general principles of cognition' is fully equivalent to the expression 'general principle of the world'. Neither Kant nor any of his consistent followers ever challenged this axiom.

That is why no philosopher ever had the silly idea of constructing two sciences side by side – one would present the principles for cognition of the world, another the principles of the science of the world cognised by it. For any Kantian, and first and foremost Kant himself, it is obvious that there cannot be two sciences and that it is one and the same science – both in the subject matter

(one and the same) and in the content of concepts that express this subject matter (the same concepts that Kant considers in his ‘transcendental logic’ – categories of quality, quantity, necessity, substance, causality, and so on). Taken as principles of judgements with objective significance, as schemes of synthesis of representations in scientific cognition, categories appear as forms of organisation of experiential data into the scientific picture of the world.

For Kant, these are exactly the ‘principles of cognition’, or, more precisely, of theoretical cognition, the universal schemes of connecting representations into the scientific picture of the world.

Taken in and of itself, this view of categories does not contain anything specifically Kantian or specifically idealist – it is simply a clearly expressed understanding of the active role of universal categories (and, wider, of concepts in general) in the process of cognition, in the process of constructing the scientific picture of the world, in the process of constructing the scientific worldview.

And this moment in the Kantian understanding of categories was not disputed by anyone – neither Fichte, nor Hegel, nor Feuerbach, nor Marx.

What is specific for Kant is something different – it is the principal and categorical denial of any possibility of constructing the complete scientific worldview or, which is the same, denial that science (the entirety of sciences) is capable of playing the role of the worldview, performing the function of the worldview.

This tendency of Kant’s thinking was taken up by neo-Kantianism that developed in various forms the view that science (the entirety of natural and social sciences) never, under any circumstances, regardless of the level of the development of technology of observation and experimentation, will be able to create such a ‘picture of the world’ that would satisfy its own principles and primarily the highest principle of any ‘unity of phenomena in consciousness’ – the principle of the prohibition of contradictions in definitions.

The very same ‘principles of cognition’ that are the ‘conditions of possibility’ of any scientific synthesis of representations into a concept, a judgement and a syllogism – a category – turn out to be at the same time the conditions of impossibility of reaching the full synthesis of all scientific representations as part of interconnected, unified and non-contradictory ‘picture of the world’. And in the language of neo-Kantianism it means the following: a worldview built on scientific principles (or simply, a ‘scientific worldview’) is in principle impossible. In any ‘scientific worldview’ – and not accidentally, or because of the lack of information, but due to the necessity contained in the very nature of thinking, necessity expressed in the categorical schemes – there are always cracks of contradictions, breaking the ‘whole worldview’ into pieces that one

cannot put back together without flagrantly violating the highest principle of 'all analytical judgements' – the prohibition against contradictions in scientific determinations, connected in the 'unity of concepts'.

To connect, to tie the disparate fragments of a 'scientific picture of the world' together into a higher unity (i.e. into a 'worldview') is only possible in one way: by violating in all points of 'synthesis' the highest principles of thinking or, which is the same, by creating some other – non-scientific – principles of synthesis necessary for the linking together of representations into one connected whole. These schemes will not obey the prohibition against contradiction, and this highest prohibition will no longer serve as a criterion for allowing or disallowing the 'synthesis'.

What kind of principles are these, if they are outside of the control of logical schemes of the activity of cognition, categories of 'transcendental analytics' and 'transcendental logic'? They are the principles of faith, scientifically improvable and scientifically irrefutable postulates, axioms, accepted exclusively in accordance with irrational inclination, sympathy, feeling of conscience, and so on and so forth.

With the help of these postulates – not subject to the court of science – one may glue together a connected and unified picture of the world, a worldview. Without accepting these principles a worldview breaks down into pieces, into self-contradictory fragments or it is put together with the help of obvious or hidden from the superficial view crimes against the highest logical principles – prohibition against contradiction and principle of identity.

And because the unity of the worldview has always been, is and will be the constant need of any thinking being, this worldview is forced to combine in itself the principles of scientific cognition with the irrational postulates of faith, whether it is a religious or purely moral, aesthetic or some other kind – here one can choose according to one's liking (as long as the chosen faith is scientifically improvable and scientifically irrefutable). Only such 'faith' is capable of connecting the fragments of knowledge into a unified picture where all the attempts to do so using the scientific means were doomed to fail (due to the violation of the prohibition against contradiction).

From this is derived a specifically Kantian slogan of the unity of science and faith, logical principles for constructing a scientific picture of the world and irrational (logically improvable and irrefutable) positions that compensate for the intellect's organic powerlessness in the face of a higher synthesis of knowledge.

Without taking into consideration this specific motif that is central to all Kantianism, it is impossible to understand the meaning of the Kantian formulation of the question of the relationship between logic and theory of cognition

(‘epistemology’), the very same formulation that Lenin had in mind when he wrote: “Theme of logic. Compare with contemporary “epistemology””.

Logic as such is interpreted by all Kantians as a ‘part of the theory of cognition’ (as Vvedensky calls his treatise). Sometimes this ‘part’ is given an important role and ‘part’ consumes the ‘whole’ (for example, in Cohen and Natorp, Cassirer and Rickert, Vvedensky and Chelpanov); sometimes it takes on a more humble role, subordinated to other ‘parts’, but it always plays the role of a ‘part’. The limits of the ‘theory of cognition’ are always wider, for its task is wider, because understanding is not the only, even if the most important, capacity that processes the material of the senses, perceptions and representations into the form of knowledge, into concepts and the system of concepts, into science. Therefore ‘logic’ in Kantian interpretation never covers the entire field of the problem of the ‘theory of cognition’ – outside of its limits we find the processes that are carried out by other capacities: perception, intuition, memory, imagination and many more. As part of ‘theory of cognition’ logic, as a theory of discursive knowledge, moving in strict determinations and in strict accordance with rules that are clearly understood and strictly formulated, solves the main problem of the ‘theory of cognition’ only partially, only through analysis of its own subject matter, strictly separated from the entire complex of ‘cognitive capacities’ of the subject matter.

However, in this case the main task of the ‘theory of cognition’ remains the highest task of logic as well. And this task, specifically understood in logical terms, remains one and the same: to establish the limits of knowledge, to figure out the internal limitation of the possibilities of thinking in the course of constructing the ‘worldview’. Here is how Vvedensky formulates this task: ‘From the significance that logic has for philosophy – precisely as a part of the theory of cognition, follows that logic must be presented in teaching in such a way as to make logic lead us to the important issue of theory of cognition, i.e. as part of theory of cognition’.<sup>8</sup>

This important issue of the theory of cognition – and we should not forget this for even a second – for all Kantians consists in establishing an eternally impassable boundary between the knowable and the unknowable, limiting the sphere of knowable to immanent things only, beyond which there begins the transcendent (sphere), i.e. that which is forever closed off from scientific study, the world of ‘things in themselves’. Therefore logic with its principles is applicable only and exclusively within the limits of the world as it is represented inside our own consciousness (individual and collective).

<sup>8</sup> Vvedensky 1923, p. 40.

Cognition of the real world of 'things in themselves' does not have anything to do with logic as well as any other cognitive capacity – logic is applicable only to the already cognised (either with or without its participation) 'things', i.e. to the mental phenomena of human culture. Its special task is the strict analysis of the already acquired forms of consciousness, i.e. their dissolution into simple elements, expressed in strictly defined terms, and the opposite operation – synthesis and connection of these simple elements into complex systems of determinations (concepts, systems of concepts, theories) again in accordance with the strictly established rules of such 'synthesis'.

Logic as the theory of discursive thinking demonstrates the fact that the real discursive thinking nowhere, at any point, under any circumstances or in any attempt is able to take cognition beyond the limits of the already existing, already available consciousness, to cross the boundary that separates the 'phenomenal world' and the world of 'things in themselves'. If thinking is 'logical', then it cannot, and does not have the right to, touch the 'thing in itself'.

In other words, 'thinking' (as the subject matter of logic) even within the 'boundaries of cognition', established by theory of cognition in general, has a limited realm of application, within the limits of which the rules of logic are strictly obligatory.

But in relation to the forms of perception as such, sensations, representations, phantoms of the mythologising consciousness, including the ideas of God, immortality of the soul, and so on, the laws and rules of logic are inapplicable. They, of course, serve and must serve as a sieve that keeps all these forms of consciousness from entering scientific knowledge as scientific concepts. But that is about it. Whether these forms are 'in themselves' correct, whether they play a positive or negative role as part of spiritual culture (as a part of an entire 'worldview'), logic-oriented thinking has neither the possibility nor the right to judge. Therefore there is and can be no rationally justified and scientifically tested position with regard to any form of consciousness that emerges before and independent of special logical activity of the mind, before and outside of science.

In science, within its specific boundaries drawn by logic, the presence of such forms is unacceptable. Outside of these boundaries, their existence is sovereign and not under the jurisdiction of understanding and concept, and therefore 'epistemologically' untouchable.

This is the entire essence of the Kantian position on the issue of the relationship between logic, 'epistemology', and 'theory of cognition'. Logic cannot and does not have the right to introduce into its own consideration either intuition as such, or representation as such, or imagination as such, and, as a consequence, the products of these cognitive capacities.

Taking this peculiarity of Kantian interpretation of the relationship between logic and epistemology into consideration, we can understand the close attention that Lenin pays to Hegel's solution to this problem – the problem of the relationship between thinking (as the subject matter of logic) and all other cognitive human capacities (the subject matter of 'theory of cognition as a whole').

In Hegel's understanding of the issue, logic covers the entire field of the problem of cognition wholly and without irrational remainder, without leaving outside of its boundaries either the forms of intuition or the forms of fantasy. It includes their consideration and does it on the basis of the fact that these forms of intuition – representation and fantasy – are nothing but the 'external' (realised in the material of sense-perception) products of the active force of thinking; it is the same thinking (as the subject matter of logic), only objectified not in words, judgements and syllogisms, but in sensuous things (actions, events, and so on) that stand against the individual consciousness. Logic in its entirety and without remainder merges here with the theory of cognition because all the remaining cognitive capacities are considered as forms of thinking, as the same thinking that has not yet reach the adequate form of expression that has not yet matured to this form.

Here we seem to encounter the extreme expression of Hegel's absolute (all-consuming) idealism, according to which the entire world, and not only 'other cognitive capacities', is interpreted as alienated, objectified and not yet arrived at itself, not yet returned into itself thinking. And, of course, Lenin as a materialist cannot agree with this. However, and this is notable, Lenin formulates his attitude toward Hegel's solution very carefully: 'In this conception [i.e. in the above-mentioned Hegelian one – E.I.], logic coincides with the *theory of knowledge*. This is in general a very important question'.<sup>9</sup>

We hope that we were able to show exactly why Lenin considers this question to be a 'very important' one in the course of his reading of Hegel's logic, perhaps even the most important question, and why Lenin's thought returns to it, again and again, as in a circle, every time becoming more definitive and categorical. The reason is that the Kantian – widely known at the time – understanding of logic 'as part of the theory of cognition' did not at all remain a speculative philosophical-theoretical construction. The Kantian theory of cognition defined, after all, the boundaries of scientific competence in general, the boundaries of scientific approach and judgements in general, leaving out-

9 Lenin 1976, p. 175.

side of its boundaries, by declaring them 'transcendent' for logical thinking, i.e. theoretical cognition, the sharpest worldview problems, and by declaring not only permissible but also necessary, as part of this 'worldview', the connection of the scientific research to 'faith' as the condition of possibility of any worldview in general. It is precisely under the banner of Kantianism that a revisionist stream emerged in the socialist movement, beginning with people like Eduard Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt. Kantian theory was used to directly propose the 'connection' (but in reality simple watering down) between the 'strictly scientific thinking' (the thinking of Marx and Engels, according to Bernstein, was not strictly scientific, but was spoiled by foggy Hegelian dialectics) and 'ethical values', indemonstrable and irrefutable faith in transcendental postulates of 'good', 'conscience', 'love of neighbour', love of 'all humankind', and so on and so forth.

The colossal harm done to the workers' movement by this preaching of 'higher values' was not, of course, found in the talks about how conscience is good and lack of it is bad, or that the love of humankind is to be preferred to the hatred of humankind – in this case these sermons were not at all different from those heard in any church on any given Sunday. The principal harm of the Kantian idea of connecting 'science' with the 'system of higher ethical values' was found in its orientation of the theoretical thought on a completely different course than that alongside which developed the thought of Marx and Engels. This 'epistemology' outlined its own Kantian strategy of scientific research even for social-democratic theorists, it displaced the ideas about direct, straight-line development of theoretical thought, about the methods one must use to look for the scientific solution to the real problems of modernity.

This 'theory of investigation' directly oriented theoretical thought not toward strictly theoretical analysis of the material, economic relationships between human beings as the foundation of the entire pyramid of social relationships, but toward building far-fetched constructions of 'ethics', morally interpreted politics, social psychology à la Berdyaev and other such things that were absolutely useless (even harmful) for the workers' movement.

Thus theoretical thought was oriented not toward the path of *Capital*, but toward the path of moral-fictional discussions of the secondary and derivative faults of the bourgeois order and mainly its secondary 'superstructural' levels thanks to which primary, decisive, dominating tendencies of the new – imperialist – stage of the development of capitalism were not noticed by the theoreticians of the Second International. And this was the case not because these theoreticians were lacking in talent, but precisely due to the false 'epistemological' orientation of their minds. Those who (like Rudolf Hilferding) in accordance with tradition formally continued the line of *Capital* did not have

the genuine logical culture with which the materialistically reworked dialectics of Hegel armed Marx and Engels. With the help of the same 'logical culture of scientific thinking', which was given to them by Cohen, Rickert, Natorp, Cassirer, Mach and Russell, who claimed to speak in the name of 'contemporary scientific thinking', the economists who bought into it could not, of course, understand anything in the complex dialectics of imperialist development. The fates of Rudolf Hilferding and Heinrich Cunow are here very characteristic.

The political economy of Marx, since it was elaborated not with the help of dialectics, but with the help of the 'newest' logical tools, inevitably degenerated into superficial classificatory description of contemporary economic phenomena, i.e. into complete and uncritical acceptance of such phenomena, into their defence. Here the road led directly to Karl Renner and his *Theory of Capitalism Economy* – this Bible of right socialists that in terms of its method of thinking and its logic of research already directly oriented itself on vulgar-positivist epistemology. Here is the philosophical credo of Karl Renner:

... Marx's *Capital*, written during the epoch that is distant from ours, different in its method of thinking and presentation from the contemporary method, left unfinished, presents more and more difficulties to its readers with every decade ... The manner of presentation of the German philosophers became alien to us. Marx's own roots go back to the epoch that was primarily philosophical. Contemporary science, not only in the description of phenomena, but also in the theoretical research, uses not the deductive, but inductive method; it bases itself on the immediately observed facts of experience, it systematizes them and then gradually raises them to the level of abstract concepts.

To the generation that is accustomed to think and read this way, the first section of Marx's main work presents insurmountable difficulties ...<sup>10</sup>

In reality this orientation toward 'contemporary science', 'contemporary method of thinking', already found in Bernstein, turned out to be the orientation toward fashionable idealist and agnostic interpretations of this 'contemporary science' and this 'method of thinking', an orientation of Humean-Berkeleyan and Kantian 'epistemology'. Lenin saw this perfectly well. The bourgeois philosophy, starting around the middle of the nineteenth century, openly retreated 'back to Kant' and even further – to Hume and Berkeley; Hegel, des-

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<sup>10</sup> Renner 1924, pp. 5–6.



pite his absolute idealism, more and more clearly appeared as the highest point in the development of the entire pre-Marxist philosophy in the realm of logic, understood as the theory of the development of scientific cognition.

Lenin returned many times to this evaluation of the place and role of Hegel's logic, emphasising that from Hegel one can move only one way – the way of materialistically rethinking his achievements, because Hegel's 'absolute' idealism in reality absolutely exhausted all the possibilities of idealism as the principle of understanding thinking, cognition, and scientific consciousness. But due to the circumstances that lay outside of science only Marx and Engels chose this way. For the bourgeois science this path was closed and the slogan 'Back to Kant' (and then even further back) was forcefully dictated by the fear instilled in the ideologues of the bourgeoisie by social perspectives opened up from the heights of Hegel's view of thinking and its role in the development of the social world. Marx and Engels discerned the genuine meaning, the 'earthly content' of Hegel's main achievement, that is dialectics, by demonstrating not only the constructive-creative, but also the revolutionary-destructive force of its principles, understood as the principles of the rational relation of real human beings to the really existing world.

This 'pathos of negation' became obvious as soon as it was realised that dialectical schemes and categories, discovered by Hegel in the history of the 'spirit' (read: spiritual culture of humanity), were not only active forms of construction of the 'kingdom of spirit', but also forms of real life activity of human beings, forms of constant renewal and transformation of that world where this activity took place – the same world that constituted the subject matter, material and object of that activity.

The understanding of this decisive circumstance, i.e. the connection between forms of activity of the 'spirit' and forms of real human life activity that transformed the real world, the world of 'things in themselves', was precisely the most important step forward that Hegel made in comparison with Kant. Hegel sufficiently clearly described the 'feedback' (positive as well as negative) that existed between the 'world of spirit' and the 'real world' in the form of human practice, in the form of sensuous-objective activity of the social human being; he saw the transition, the 'bridge' between the world 'in consciousness' and the world outside human consciousness.

Neo-Kantians (and all of their followers today) unanimously condemned and continue to condemn Hegel for 'unacceptably widening' the very concept of logic by including in it 'in addition to the forms and laws of thinking' also the entirety of the forms and laws of the development of the world existing outside and before human thinking – an entire 'metaphysics', an entire 'ontology'. At first glance this reproach appears to be very persuasive and legitimate – and it

is still repeated and directed at Hegel as a thinker who allegedly 'ontologised' the forms of thinking and 'hypostatised' them.

However, regarding this point Lenin decisively and categorically stood on the side of Hegel against Kant and Kantianism that committed the opposite sin – it psychologised without exception and without remainder all forms and laws of the real world cognised by human beings, interpreting them as 'pure forms of the mind', as 'transcendental' schemes for connecting representations into the complex of the 'concept' and nothing more.

Why then did Lenin, while fighting against the absolute idealism of Hegel, stand on the side of Hegel regarding the point where this idealism seemed to be transforming into absolute idealism? Wasn't it this very understanding of logic as science that encompassed in its principles not only human thinking but the real world outside human consciousness that confirmed Hegel's 'panlogism', his understanding of the forms and laws of the real world as 'alienated' forms of thinking, and thinking itself – as absolute force and power that organised the world?

Indeed, it is precisely here that we find the most important and at the same time the most subtle way in which there arises a conflict not only between Hegel and Kant, but also between the general position of Hegel and Marxism on the one side, and the united forces of Kant, neo-Kantianism and positivism on the other.

The fact is that in Hegel's understanding of 'thinking' as an active force that transforms and even creates the world outside human consciousness, there can be found its idealist perverted expression of the real circumstance that Kant was tragically blind to and from which neo-Kantians consciously turned their gazes. This circumstance, expressed in Hegel's definition of thinking (and, therefore, of logic as a science and its subject matter), is found in a simple fact: 'thinking' as subjectively human, mental faculty realises itself not only in the form of a series of successive 'mental states', but also in the form of real actions, i.e. real human actions, in the form of practical human actions that change the form and situation of things outside consciousness. In this matter Hegel looks at things in an infinitely more realistic and sober manner than Kant and Kantianism.

If we strictly 'explicate' that understanding of 'thinking' that, without realising it, neo-Kantians (and following them, positivists and neopositivists) use as their reference point, then we find out that it is reduced to the capacity that reveals itself immediately as the capacity to talk through 'to oneself' or out loud all that is taking place 'in consciousness' – in the sphere of intuition, representation, imagination, memory, and so on – as the capacity that is connected with language and that acquires its 'determinate being' in language.

When neopositivists reduce the entire purpose of logic to the analysis of language and consider as the subject matter of logic only the phenomena verbally explicated in consciousness and cognition, they simply honestly reveal the mystery of 'thinking' that is understood that way. The mystery of the very understanding that Hegel destroyed without remainder when he insisted that thinking reveals itself (realises itself, acquires 'determinate being') not only in the chains of words, but also in the chains of acts, in the chains of actions aimed directly at 'things' – and therefore in the forms of things created and transformed by these actions.

Therefore, for Hegel, 'logical forms' are forms of human activity that reveal themselves equally well in the chains of words and in the chains of intelligent actions. For him the category is the form that defines equally the schemes of one and the other. It is realised simultaneously as 'Sache und Sage' – 'thing' and 'word', or more precisely as deed and saga, as history and myth, as real human deed-action and as story about such deeds.

That is the exact point of radical difference between Hegel and Kant, including all Kantianism, in understanding thinking, logic. Hegel was and remains the only thinker before Marx who consciously introduced practice into logic and, more than that, introduced it as the criterion of truth, the criterion of correctness of those operations that humans accomplish in the sphere of verbal-signifying explication of their mental states.

In Hegel, logic is identified with the 'theory of cognition' for the exact reason that human practice – sensuous-objective realisation of the goals of the 'spirit' in natural material – is introduced as the phase of logical process, considered as thinking in its external manifestation, in the course of testing its results in the direct contact with 'things in themselves', with things outside of human consciousness and will.

Lenin follows especially carefully the development of Hegel's thought in this direction. 'That is, the practice of man and of mankind is the test, the criterion of the objectivity of cognition. Is that Hegel's idea? It is necessary to return to this', – he writes.<sup>11</sup> He returns to this later and writes categorically: '... undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to objective ('absolute', according to Hegel) truth. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice into the theory of knowledge: see the Theses on Feuerbach'.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Lenin 1976, p. 211.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

As a 'practical act', thinking includes in its movement the very things that are located outside consciousness, and in the course of this act it turns out that 'things in themselves' submit to the dictate of thinking (thinking person) and obediently move and change in accordance with the laws and schemes that are dictated by this thinking. And this proves that logical schemes are the schemes in accordance with which move not only the 'spirit', but also the world of 'things in themselves', and not only the 'transcendental' schemes of the mind, as was postulated by Kant.

Consequently, logic turns out to be the theory of cognition of things as well and not only the theory of self-cognition of the spirit. Things in their general universal determinations are therefore represented in logic precisely as things that are included in the logical process, drawn into it and orbiting the schemes of thinking.

For that reason logic turns out to be not only the science concerned with pure 'transcendental-psychological' schemes of the flow of thinking, but also (and even primarily) with those schemes of thinking that, as practice shows, are simultaneously also the schemes of the movement of things outside the consciousness and will of an individual. That is precisely Hegel's point.

Articulating the 'rational kernel' of Hegel's conception of the subject matter of logic as science, Lenin writes: 'Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development "of all material, natural and spiritual things, i.e., of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition, i.e., the sum-total, the conclusion of the History of knowledge of the world"'.<sup>13</sup>

Such formulation, or even such understanding, of the subject matter of logic is not found in Hegel himself. From the orthodox Hegelian point of view this definition is, strictly speaking, incorrect, imprecise – if only for the reason that in Hegel there is no, and there cannot be any, talk of the laws of the development of 'material things' as such, and, therefore, of the laws of the development that are common to the world of material and spiritual things. According to Hegel, what 'develops' are not things, but only their concepts, things in thinking, things represented in the logical process.

Therefore the cited formulation is not simply Hegel's thought presented in Lenin's 'own words', but a Hegelian idea materialistically reworked by Lenin, or, in other words, Hegel's idea presented in its rational content (that was not clear to Hegel himself).

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13 Lenin 1976, pp. 92–3.

Hegel's own text, in which Lenin finds the above-mentioned 'rational kernel' of Hegelian understanding of logic, does not exactly sound like that. Here it is:

The indispensable foundation, the concept, the universal which is thought itself (provided that with the word 'thought' one can abstract from figurative representation), cannot be regarded as *just* an indifferent form that attaches *to* a content. But these thoughts of *all things natural and spiritual*,<sup>14</sup> even the substantial *content*, still contain a variety of determinacies and are still affected by the distinction of soul and body, of concept and reality relative to it; the profounder foundation is the soul standing on its own, the pure concept which is the innermost moment of the objects, their simple life pulse, just as it is of the subjective thinking of them. To bring to consciousness this *logical* nature that animates the spirit, that moves and works within it, this is the task.<sup>15</sup>

The difference between the formulations by Hegel and Lenin, i.e. between the canonical understanding of Hegel and the materialist understanding of the 'rational kernel' of Hegel's conception, is not only large but also principal. For there is not and cannot be any talk of the 'development of natural things' in Hegel.

Therefore it is erroneous to claim that the definition of logic as the science of the laws of the development of 'all material and spiritual things' is only 'Hegel's idea' that is retold or even simply cited by Lenin. Nothing of the sort. It is Lenin's own idea, formulated by him in the course of the critical reading of Hegel's texts.

Logic is the theory of cognition in Hegel because this logic (science of thinking) is deduced by Hegel from the study of history of self-cognition of the 'spirit', and therefore also of the world of 'natural things', since these 'things' are considered as moments of the logical process, as 'alienated' into the natural material schemes of thinking, as concepts.

Logic is the theory of cognition in Marxism, but now for a different reason – these very 'forms of activity of the spirit' – categories and schemes of logic – are deduced, according to Lenin, from the study of the history of cognition and practice of humankind, i.e. from the process, in the course of which a thinking person (or more precisely, humankind) cognises and transforms the material world. Logic from this point of view cannot be anything but the theory

14 Note that Lenin's formulation contains only the words italicised in Hegel.

15 Hegel 2010, p. 17.

that articulates the universal schemes of the development of cognition and the transformation of the material world by the social human being. As such logic *is* the theory of cognition. There is not and there cannot be any other ‘theory of cognition’ that exists alongside it as part of Marxism (contemporary materialism); any other determination of the tasks of the theory of cognition inevitably leads to this or that version of the Kantian understanding of these tasks.

According to Lenin, there aren’t at all two different sciences here. From this point of view, logic is even less likely to be defined as ‘part of the theory of cognition’, for such understanding of it leads to the transformation of logic into a subdivision of psychology that is preoccupied with the study of the ‘other cognitive faculties’ of human beings – intuition, perception, memory, imagination, as well as ‘thinking’, considered here as one of the ‘cognitive faculties’ that belong to an individual, a person.

In logic ‘thinking’ cannot under any circumstances be considered that way. In logic ‘thinking’ is juxtaposed as with its ‘other’, not with other ‘cognitive faculties’ but with its object – objective reality in the most precise and general sense of the word. Therefore as a part of logical determinations of ‘thinking’ there are included categories and laws (schemes) of the development of the objective world in general, cognised in the course of the 1,000-year development of the scientific culture and tested for objectivity in the fire of the social-human practice, schemes common to both natural and socio-historical development. Reflected in social consciousness – in spiritual culture of humanity – these universal schemes of ‘every development’ appear in the role of active logical forms of the work of thinking, but logic as science is the systematically theoretical presentation of these universal schemes – forms and laws of the development of nature, society, and ‘thinking’ itself.

But in this interpretation logic (i.e. materialistic theory of cognition) already in the very determination of its subject matter and task fully and without remainder merges with dialectics. These are, once again, not two different, even if ‘closely connected’, sciences, but one and the same science. It is one science in terms of both its subject matter and its conceptual content. And it is not an ‘aspect of the matter’, but the ‘essence of the matter’ – underlines Lenin. To put it differently, if logic is not understood simultaneously as the theory of cognition, then it is not understood correctly.

The very same ‘relationship’ exists between logic (theory of cognition) and dialectics. This relationship is, according to Lenin, the relationship of complete identity, complete coincidence in the subject matter and the content of categories that reflect this subject matter. Dialectics has no subject matter that is different from the subject matter of the theory of cognition (logic), and logic (theory of cognition) does not have the subject matter of study that is different

from the subject matter of dialectics, from the general, universal forms and laws of the development in general, reflected in consciousness precisely in the form of logical forms and laws of thinking, through the determination of categories.

Precisely because categories as the 'schemes of synthesizing the data of experience into concepts' have entirely objective significance, the 'experience' that is reworked with their help has the same significance, i.e. it is science, scientific picture of the world, scientific worldview.

Kantianism thinks that our understanding of the world ('worldview') must necessarily contain the non-scientific component – such as ethical, moral, irrational-aesthetic or even openly religious components – this or that contemporary variety of Kant's 'practical reason'. In this matter, and Lenin constantly underlines this, Hegel remains a natural ally of contemporary materialism in its struggle against Kantianism, Humeanism, Berkeleyanism – with those very philosophical constructions that lay at the foundation of all 'contemporary' bourgeois conceptions of logic, 'epistemology', and dialectics.

'Dialectics *is* the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "aspect" of the matter (it is not "an aspect" but the essence of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention,'<sup>16</sup> writes Lenin in his fragment called 'On the question of dialectics', where he summarises his entire effort to rework Hegel's conception of logic materialistically and critically, work accomplished by him in the duration of several years of intense labour.

And this categorical conclusion, hardly allowing anything other than a literal interpretation, must be taken not as an accidental phrase, but as an actual summary of Lenin's understanding of the problem of the 'relationship' between dialectics, logic and the theory of cognition of contemporary materialism.

In light of this proposition, it is absolutely illegitimate (and in no way connected to Lenin's understanding) to attempt to interpret the relationship between dialectics, logic, and the theory of cognition as parts of Marxism in such a way that dialectics is transformed into a special 'ontology' that deals with 'pure forms of being' and has nothing to say about 'cognition' and thinking, and 'logic and theory of cognition' are transformed into separate sciences, even if connected but not coinciding with dialectics, that are dedicated exclusively to 'specific' forms of reflection of the above-mentioned 'ontology' in the subjective consciousness of human beings: one ('epistemology') deals with 'specific forms of cognition as such', while another ('logic') deals with 'specific forms of discursive thinking'.

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16 Lenin 1976, p. 360.

In practice this view inevitably leads to the situation in which under the guise of epistemology we get bad psychology, and under the guise of logic, only its part, namely that analysis of that cognitive faculty that realises itself in the form of the strictly terminologically constructed speech, in the form of 'propositions' and 'systems of propositions' – neither linguistics nor psychology, but an eclectic mixture of both.

And it is not simply difficult but, in principle, impossible to correlate this view of the relationship between dialectics, transformed into 'ontology', and 'epistemology' and 'logic', degenerated into bad psychology and equally deplorable speculative linguistics, with the clear and philosophically thought-out and categorical position of Lenin regarding this problem: 'three words are not needed', and three different, even if connected, sciences are not needed. It is one and the same thing. And that is the essence of the matter.



## Materialism Is Militant and Therefore Dialectical

Dedicated to the seventieth anniversary of the publication of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*



'But does the responder accept that the philosophy of Marxism is *dialectical materialism*?' – thus Lenin persistently demanded a straight answer from Bogdanov in May of 1908, decisively underlining these two keywords. Not just 'materialism', since materialism without dialectics in contemporary conditions cannot be called 'defeating' but rather defeated, and dialectics without materialism is inevitably transformed into a purely linguistic art of turning the generally accepted concepts, statements, terms, inside out, long known as sophistry. And only *materialist* dialectics and only *dialectical* materialism, only the organic unity of dialectics with materialism equips thinking with capacity and skill to create an objectively true image of the external world, with capacity and skill to remake this world in accordance with the objective laws and tendencies of its own development. This is the key thought of Lenin's entire understanding of philosophy that he consistently explored in the chapters of his brilliant book.

The significance of *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* for the history of our century does not stop with the fact that here, once and for all, came to an end 'one reactionary philosophy' and its pretensions on the role of 'philosophy of contemporary natural science' and 'entire contemporary science'. Much more important was the fact that in polemics with this reactionary philosophy Lenin clearly articulated his own positive understanding of all the essential problems set before Marxist philosophy by the events of the contemporary epoch – the epoch of grandiose revolutions in all spheres of human life: in economics, politics, science and technology – everywhere categorically formulating the fundamental principles for solving these problems and presenting the *logic* of finding their solution. It was necessary to state clearly, distinctly and unambiguously to the party, to the country and to the entire international labour movement that it was only Bolshevism as a strategic and tactical position in revolution that had as its theoretical foundation the philosophy of Marx and

Engels, and therefore that only Bolshevism was the direct descendant of the work of the founders of Marxism in politics, political economy and philosophy.

We must insist on this point because the content of this sharply polemical work is sometimes understood too narrowly and one-sidedly and therefore incorrectly. And it is done not only by the enemies of the revolutionary Marxism, but also by some of its 'friends'. Thus Roger Garaudy (and he isn't the first or the only such author) who in his book *Lenin* condescendingly allows that *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* does contain the exposition of the basics of materialism in general, but that they are allegedly not the basics of a specifically Marxist materialism since they are not directly connected to 'dialectics', and so on. According to Garaudy, Lenin only became interested in 'dialectics' later during the period of his 'Philosophical Notebooks' and at that time he changed his attitude toward materialism and idealism, substantially limiting the prerogatives of his principle of reflection. This is a clear untruth in relation to Lenin's understanding of dialectics.

To this we can add that Lenin never changed his attitude toward idealism. Idealism, in his view, had always remained a mortal enemy of both the revolutionary movement and scientific progress, an enemy more dangerous the more carefully it presents itself as a friend and an ally. The essence of idealism remains the same whether it is connected with 'god' or the 'absolute spirit', the 'complex of feelings' or the system of forms of the 'socially organised experience'. In any case, it is 'the complex of ideas generated by the brutish subjection of man both by external nature and by the class yoke, ideas which *consolidate* that subjection, *lull to sleep* the class struggle', – explains Lenin to Maxim Gorky who at the time was enchanted with the philosophy of Bogdanov.<sup>1</sup>

Idealism in any of its forms – from theological to 'positivist-scientific' – was always placed by Lenin on the same level as all the rest of the most disgusting creations of societal arrangement that was founded on the exploitation of humans by humans. 'Opium for the people', 'spiritual moonshine' – these are not just colourful metaphors. They are the exact and powerful expressions of the social essence of the matter. 'Spiritual moonshine', just like the regular material moonshine, stupefies a human being's consciousness, deprives him of sober clarity, creates in his head an ideal-psychic mechanism of adaptation to any, even the most inhumane, conditions.

This is why Lenin – a Communist and a Revolutionary – so violently hated the 'spiritual moonshine' of all sorts, all kinds – from the sweetly Christian to the 'sugary and fake' efforts of 'god-builders' and 'god-seekers'.

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1 Lenin 1966b, p. 128.

Many people then (and some people even today) could not understand this heat of Lenin's intolerance and indignation caused by the collective approach (collective work) of Bazarov – Bogdanov – Lunacharsky – Berman – Geldfand – Yushkevich – Suvorov in *Essays on Marxist Philosophy* that he forever renamed *Essays 'Against' Marxist Philosophy*. This book, in Lenin's assessment, was 'ridiculous, harmful, philistine, fideist – the whole of it, from beginning to end, from branch to root, to Mach and Avenarius'.<sup>2</sup>

Even in Lenin's closest circle this fierce reaction caused bewilderment. 'The moment was critical. The revolution was declining. The situation needed a very drastic change of tactics, and yet Ilyich [Lenin] was in the National Library, sitting there day in and day out, writing a philosophical book', – remembered later, after Lenin's death, M.N. Pokrovsky.<sup>3</sup>

The speed with which *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* was written and prepared for publication, as well as the force of its theoretical impact and the fierce, all-destroying passion of its literary style, can be explained by the following circumstance: at the time Lenin was pretty much the only revolutionary Marxist who understood the colossal significance of dialectical materialism for the fortunes of the socialist revolution, the social and scientific progress. He understood its significance, first and foremost, for the real scientific elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the upcoming political struggle, its significance for the concrete analysis of the objective, materialist, and economic conditions of its progress.

Those who were infected with Machist disease were absolutely unfit for such struggle. That is why there was such a colossal harm for the revolution in this variety of 'spiritual moonshine'. All of the dangers of this conceptual sabotage in the rear of the revolutionary Marxism were not discerned by the contemporary Social Democrat 'leaders', the official 'keepers' of the theoretical heritage of Marx and Engels. Karl Kautsky, generally indifferent to philosophy, was not in the least concerned that his journal (*Neue Zeit*) was gradually turning into a propaganda organ for all kinds of positivist vulgarity, and so he published everything without any discernment. Plekhanov, however, while perfectly understanding the philosophical helplessness and reactionary status of the views of Bogdanov and his friends, still did not see the important thing – the real ground in which all of their specialised philosophical nonsense was deeply rooted, he did not see the impassable philosophical obscurity of the majority of the contemporary natural scientists, including the most significant.

<sup>2</sup> Lenin 1966a, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> Pokrovsky 1924, p. 69.

Mach, Ostwald, Pearson, Duham, Poincaré, Verworn, Helmholtz, Hertz – all were stars of the first calibre in the sky of contemporary natural science. It is about them and not about some unimportant provincial amateurs in science that Lenin found necessary to say directly and without diplomacy (which would only be harmful in such a case):

*Not a single one* of these professors, who are capable of making very valuable contributions in the special fields of chemistry, history or physics, *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to philosophy. Why? For the same reason that *not a single* professor of political economy, who may be capable of very valuable contributions in the field of factual and specialised investigations, can be trusted *one iota* when it comes to the general theory of political economy. For, in modern society, the latter is as much a *partisan science* as is *epistemology*.<sup>4</sup>

The sharp and ruthlessly frank presentation of this fact – that was the decisive advantage of Lenin's analysis of Machism-Bogdanovism in comparison with Plekhanov's critique. Plekhanov understood that 'we are threatened with exceptional harm from such philosophical doctrines, which, while being idealist to the core, pose at the last word in natural science ...'.<sup>5</sup> And here he was absolutely correct. Lenin was in complete agreement with him that Machists present their philosophy as 'the latest word in natural science' without any legitimate right to do so, that it was an illusion, a self-deception and demagoguery of the worst kind.

But this illusion, unfortunately, is not without foundation. It is the same illusion as that of the rest of the naturalistic illusions of the bourgeois consciousness. It is such an objectively conditioned illusion, an appearance as a result of which the purely social (and therefore historically emerging and historically disappearing) qualities of things are taken to be their natural (and therefore eternal) qualities, and the determinations of these very things are taken to be their natural-scientific characteristics ...

In this, and not in some personal philosophical naïveté of Bogdanov, we find the force of illusion that influenced him. Plekhanov did not see it. Only Lenin saw it.

Russian – and not only Russian – disciples of Mach seriously believed that their philosophy was the 'philosophy of contemporary natural science', the

<sup>4</sup> Lenin 1962, p. 342.

<sup>5</sup> Plekhanov 1977b, p. 282.

'natural science of the twentieth century', and in general the 'science of our epoch', philosophy of 'all modern science'; that its difference from the 'orthodox Plekhanov' philosophy was that it had the 'methods of exact or so called "positive" science' (these are all phrases from *Essays on (!) Marxist Philosophy*).

That is why they saw their main task in reorienting the revolutionary Marxism along the lines of the 'method of natural science' and its application in the analysis of the social events.

'We can learn a lot from Mach. In our turbulent time, in our country that is awash with blood, what he offers is especially valuable: calm tenacity of thought, strict objectivism of method, ruthless analysis of all that is accepted on faith, ruthless destruction of all idols of thought', – Bogdanov and his friends declaim at every step.<sup>6</sup>

Thus no matter how formally perfect was Plekhanov's critique of Machism as a terminologically redressed philosophy of Berkeley, it made no impression on either Bogdanov or his followers. At some point they began to seriously believe that everything written about this issue by Marx and Engels was a 'semantically imprecise' expression of their own philosophy. All the statements by Marx and Engels allegedly became 'obsolete' because they were expressed in obsolete language, in the lexicon of the philosophical tradition in whose atmosphere they were formed in their youth. All of that is allegedly just verbal garbage from their heritage – 'verbal trinkets' of the Hegelian-Feuerbachian 'idle talk' and nothing more. That is why they still write about 'matter' and about 'contradiction'.

Therefore we must purify the 'genuine' philosophy of Marx and Engels from this verbal garbage, and express its 'rational kernel' in the language of contemporary science – in the terminology of Mach, Ostwald, Pearson, Poincaré and other coryphaei of contemporary natural science. All that is 'scientific' in their works will therefore be allegedly preserved. Plekhanov, from this point of view, looked like a retrograde who did not wish to take into consideration the successes and achievements of contemporary natural science and the scientific methods with the help of which those successes were accomplished, he conservatively and stubbornly preserved the obsolete verbal fetishes. Their own philosophy Machists portrayed as the 'genuine' philosophy of Marx and Engels, critically ('empiricritically') purified of the verbal garbage.

This demagogy made an impression on the philosophically unprepared readers, especially since it was not demagogical on purpose, but only as a result of self-deception, self-seduction by these philosophical 'stupidists', as Lenin called them.

6 [Translator's Note] Ilyenkov does not provide the citation. This particular quote is from Bogdanov's introduction to the Russian translation of Mach's major work. See Bogdanov 2005.

While exposing this illusion, 'Vl. Ilyin' contrasted it with the Marxist understanding of that real relationship that exists between philosophy as such and the development of natural science and the sciences of the historical cycle. First and foremost he determines that not everything that is said or written in the name of 'contemporary science' may be and must be blindly believed. The science itself might reject some of these things tomorrow and thus put 'philosophy' in an awkward situation. For any serious philosophy in the matter of the 'philosophical generalization of the data of contemporary science' there is no place for gullibility.

We must be especially cautious about everything that the natural and social scientists wrote and thought about the 'logic and theory of cognition' of contemporary science – in this area they cannot be considered experts. It is precisely here – in 'epistemology' – that we cannot 'believe a single word' they say.

While trying to articulate the methods and the approaches that are consciously used in their area, they are forced to use not their own scientific terminology and phraseology, but special epistemological and special philosophical ones. And it is here that they very often embarrass themselves, for even the most significant and intelligent of them use the terminology like amateurs, borrowing it, as a rule, not from the best and truly contemporary philosophy, but from that fashionable, vulgar, 'professorial' terminology that is considered in general circles to be most 'commonsensical'.

That is how there appeared what at first glance was thought to be an 'impossible' phenomenon: a brilliant and most progressive physicist (chemist, biologist, electro-technician, and so on) is at the same time also a shallow, vulgar and most reactionary epistemologist-philosopher. Ernst Mach is the typical example of this paradoxical combination.

There is nothing surprising or odd about this paradox, for 'these people's whole environment estranges them from Marx and Engels and throws them into the embrace of vulgar official philosophy',<sup>7</sup> and as a result even the 'most outstanding theoreticians are handicapped by a complete ignorance of dialectics',<sup>8</sup> and therefore are unable to express the essence of their 'scientific methods' and their work in the terms and concepts of the truly scientific – dialectical materialist – epistemology and logic.

It is not their fault, but it is their misfortune. The guilt lies with the specialist-philosophers who pick up the philosophically vague statements of the natural scientists and hurry to use them as building material for their philosophical

7 Lenin 1962, p. 263.

8 Lenin 1962, p. 265.

constructions in order to 'confirm' their 'scientific' status. Lenin therefore draws a clear principled line between the logical-epistemological self-understanding of the natural scientist and that use of it that is made by the philosopher.

It is one thing when the phrase – 'the matter has disappeared' – is made by a physicist. This particular phrase was made by a very important physicist. In his mouth, this is an epistemologically vague, philosophically careless verbal expression of the real fact, a real step in the direction of the better knowledge of the physical reality, which is the only thing he has in mind. It is a different thing when the same phrase is found in the mouth of the representative of 'professorial philosophy'. Here it is not a description (even if it is inexact) of the real scientific fact, but an expression of a complete, idealist, philosophical lie, illusion and fiction that, in reality, does not correspond to any real fact either in the objective world or in cognition of it.

In this case (as in any other similar case) the task of Marxist philosopher, according to Lenin, is to identify the real fact, poorly and inexactly expressed in the words of the natural scientist, and express it in the philosophically correct, epistemologically flawless language; to make this fact philosophically transparent for the very same natural scientist, to help him understand this fact correctly.

Lenin has a very different attitude toward such a specialist-philosopher who founds his business on the imprecision, carelessness and gullibility of the scientist who is not a philosopher, on the philosophical 'approximation' of this scientist's expressions. This is an attitude toward a mortal enemy who consciously speculates on the epistemologically ill-informed natural scientist. Here the tone of the conversation changes.

To stigmatise such a natural scientist as an idealist is as unwise and inappropriate as it is inappropriate (and harmful for the revolution) to publicly shame the oppressed and illiterate peasant who prays to God for the rain by calling him the ideological ally of the bureaucratic order of the landed nobility, an ideologue of reaction. But a priest – that is a different matter. And not some pathetic little village priest who shares with the peasant his naïve superstitions, but an educated priest who knows Latin and read Thomas Aquinas, and maybe even Kant – a priest of Berdyaev's status – he is the professional enemy of materialism and revolution, the parasite that feeds on ignorance and superstition.

'... the idealist philosophers seize on the minutest error, the slightest vagueness of expression on the part of famous scientists in order to justify their refurbished defence of fideism'.<sup>9</sup> And they are not only trying to catch, but to

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9 Lenin 1962, p. 283.

actively provoke natural scientists to make such errors. They shamelessly flatter the scientists by respectfully citing their careless statements and making them think that any significant natural scientist automatically becomes the highest authority in philosophy, in theory of cognition and logic of scientific investigation – that is, precisely in that area which the scientist knows badly, unprofessionally, by hearsay, from someone else's words, from second or even tenth hands.

Gladly and respectfully repeating these errors and 'ambiguities in expression', the philosopher-positivist then creates an illusion that it is not he himself who brings in and actively introduces these statements into the natural science, but that he only takes out and extracts them from it. This is an old tired illusionist's trick that was fully exposed by Lenin, and the illusion of novelty is only given to this trick by the newly invented terminology.

From here – from this tendency to present what is inexact as exact – originates that ridiculous jargon with which the positivists of the twentieth century stubbornly try to push out and replace the clear terminology polished by centuries, that originated in the best traditions of classical philosophy and in which Marx and Engels therefore preferred to express their philosophical views.

Lenin ruthlessly mocks this positivist addiction to create 'new little words' – all those 'introjections' and 'principal coordinations', 'transcensuses' and 'empiriosymbols', 'notals', 'securals', and 'fidentials'.<sup>10</sup> This manner of expression was only then becoming (or rather was introduced as) fashionable, but Lenin judged it necessary to deal with it and finish it off. He showed that the only purpose of it was to give trivial idealistic vulgarities an appearance of depth and 'scientific' status.

There is perhaps something to think about here for those authors who persistently attempt to 'enrich' the lexicon of the dialectical-materialist theory of cognition and logic with the fruits of the philosophical verbal promiscuity produced by Carnap, Ayer, Schlick and Popper – all these 'conceptions' and 'denotations', 'extensionals' and 'explanandums', 'epistemological postulates' and other 'paradigms' – and in light (or rather in the darkness) of such 'precise and verified conceptions', they all dream of making the theoretical definitions of the concepts of materialist dialectics more exact, 'more effective and heuristic'. Just imagine what sort of dialectics this would be if it were to use this absurd mix of the anglicised Latin with the high Bavarian and the low Novgorod dialects!

10 [Translator's Note] See, for example, Lenin 1962, p. 93.



Of course it is necessary to add new terms to the lexicon and syntax of the language of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in order to make it richer, more flexible and more expressive, that is to say, in order to make it more precise in expressing the subtlest aspects of thought. We should learn this art not only from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the classics of the natural science, but also from Herzen, Belinsky, Pushkin, and Tolstoy. However, this is very different from that pedantic regulation of the 'language of science' that brings out the opposite result and makes the language not only hopelessly monotonous, boring and grey, but ultimately also incomprehensible to those who are not initiated in the mysteries of positivist hieroglyphics, its secret 'codes' and ciphers.

While only copying the external characteristics of the special language of mathematics and linguistics, physics and biology, the philosophers-positivists create an illusion of 'comprehensibility' of the language of their philosophy for the representatives of these sciences. But the natural scientists do not always notice that the borrowed terms then lose their concreteness and are transformed into verbal empties even if they retain the appearance and the glory of the 'strictly-scientific determinacy and univocity'. Lies and demagoguery, pure and simple.

And Lenin exposes this lie: 'Bogdanov is not engaged in a Marxist enquiry at all; all he is doing is redressing the results already obtained by this enquiry in a biological and energeticist terminology.'<sup>11</sup> Labelling such concrete-historical events like crisis or class struggle or revolution with terms from biology and energetics ('metabolism', 'assimilation and dissimilation', 'energy balance', 'entropy', and so on) is an empty verbal game that adds absolutely nothing new either to our understanding of crisis or to our understanding of metabolism. But why then does Lenin react so sharply and angrily?

Because this empty verbal game *takes the place* of the concrete-scientific research. And because the empty game creates the illusion that with the help of the natural sciences we reach a 'deeper', 'wider' and more 'philosophical' understanding of the very same events that are discussed in political economy and social-historical theory.

Here it is no longer innocent fun. It is a complete philosophical-logical disorientation of the researcher, both of the political scientist and the biologist. The first ceases doing his work, and the second starts doing the work that is not his and only harms his real occupation. And both produce not scientific knowledge but only pseudo-scientific abstractions that are presented as philosophical generalisations.

<sup>11</sup> Lenin 1962, p. 328. English translation slightly changed.

With such an understanding of philosophical generalisation, it turns out, in essence, to be irrelevant whether the new findings of the natural sciences are translated into one specific language (say, of physics) or if they are retold in the traditional language of philosophy: in both cases their concrete content evaporates. Therefore, the lessons of the critique of the positivist interpretation of the role of philosophy and its relationship with natural science were taken into consideration by Lenin in his 'Philosophical Notebooks' when he was developing his own conception of dialectics as the logic and theory of cognition of contemporary materialism.

The method of presenting (and developing) dialectics as a 'sum of examples' that illustrate already known dialectical laws and categories is essentially as fruitless as is Bogdanov's method of translating the already available conclusions of the theory of surplus value into the language of biology and physics. And this method is no less harmful if it is used not for the popularisation of the general formulas of dialectics, but instead for its creative elaboration as philosophical science.

Neither philosophy nor natural science benefit from this 'word-for-word' translation of the scientific data into the language of philosophy. It is harmful because it creates and feeds the illusions that philosophy is not a science but only an abstract copy of the available concrete scientific data, uncritically summarised in the abstract-formal language of philosophy, and nothing else. In the same way, even the materialist dialectics is rethought (and essentially perverted) in a typical positivist manner. And since *such* 'dialectics' is of no use to the natural scientist, it appears in his eyes as an empty creation of words, as abstract fiction, as the art of subsuming under abstract-universal schemes of basically anything, including the latest fashionable nonsense. It is this that discredits philosophy in the eyes of the natural scientist, teaches him to look down on it with contempt and thus undermines Lenin's idea of the unity of the dialectical-materialist philosophy with the natural science.

Reducing dialectics to the sum of examples, rented from one or several areas of knowledge, made the Machists' job of discrediting it very easy. (By the way, even Plekhanov did not understand this point). 'One does not need to be an especially knowledgeable expert of *Capital* – wrote one of the Machists, – in order to see that all of the scholastic schemes in Marx play an exclusive role of philosophical form, of the dress in which he dressed his inductively discovered generalizations ...'<sup>12</sup> Thus dialectics is understood by Berman to be something like a hat that was taken from someone else's head and put on Marx's 'positive'

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<sup>12</sup> Berman 1908, p. 17.

thinking that has nothing to do with this 'philosophical superstructure'. Therefore, Marxism must be carefully cleaned of all the dialectics, i.e. from Hegelian phraseology, substituting this phraseology with a 'scientific' one, extracted by a 'purely inductive method' from the results of 'contemporary science'.

This awkward understanding of 'philosophical generalisation' is what causes such anger and agitation in Lenin. When philosophy is built from such 'generalisations' it inevitably becomes a heavy burden and only slows down the scientific movement forward. The intellectual 'energy' of Bogdanov and his friends turned away from the road of revolutionary Marxism onto the crooked byways of clericalism and obscurantism precisely because of this positivist understanding of philosophy as the aggregation of the latest, 'most general' conclusions of the 'positive' knowledge, mostly from the natural sciences.

This superficial-positivist interpretation of philosophy, its subject matter, its role and function as part of the developing worldview – scientific worldview – was axiomatic for all of the friends of Bogdanov. For them philosophy was an 'attempt to provide the *unified picture of being*' (Bogdanov), the '*general theory of being*' (Suvorov) or the totality of the 'problems that constitute the genuine subject matter of philosophy, that is, *question about the world as a whole*' (Berman). It is the 'precious dream' of all Machists – to create such philosophy, it is the goal of all their efforts.

Lenin does not even bother to seriously argue with this ridiculous dream – he just mocks it mercilessly:

Well, well, here we have 'the general theory of being' discovered anew by S. Suvorov, after it has already been discovered many times and in the most varied forms by numerous representatives of scholastic philosophy. We congratulate the Russian Machists on this new 'general theory of being'! Let us hope that their next collective work will be entirely devoted to the substantiation and development of this great discovery!<sup>13</sup>

The described presentation of philosophy invariably solicits Lenin's anger, irritation, and sarcasm: 'blaguer! fool!' – he writes on the margins of the positivist Abel Rey's book referring to the latter's discussion of analogical reasoning ('*Why should not philosophy, therefore, in the same way, be a general synthesis of all scientific knowledge, ... theory of the totality of the facts that nature presents us with, the system of nature, as it used to be called in the eighteenth century, or at*

13 Lenin 1962, p. 328.

any rate, a direct contribution to a theory of this kind<sup>14</sup>). An evaluation that is not very polite, but very unambiguous. Lenin did not admit to any compromise with positivists on this point.

At the same time, he considered it very important and necessary to enlighten the reader about the newest scientific data from physics and chemistry about the constitution of matter, that is to say, to present the reader with the summary of all the newest scientific knowledge, all the contemporary achievements of natural science and technology. However, Lenin never and nowhere considered or thought of this important task as philosophy. More than that, he was rather indignant when this task was presented as the ‘newest philosophy’ in place of the philosophy of Marxism.

Lenin clearly and unambiguously poses the question of the relationship between the ‘form’ of materialism and its ‘essence’, of the impermissibility of identification of the former with the latter. The ‘form’ of materialism is found in those concrete-scientific ideas about the constitution of matter (about the ‘physical’, about ‘atoms and electrons’) and in natural scientific generalisations of these ideas that are inevitably turn out to be historically limited, changing, subject to reconsideration by the natural science itself. The ‘essence’ of materialism is found in the acceptance of the objective reality that exists independently of human cognition and that is only reflected in it. The creative development of dialectical materialism on the basis of the ‘philosophical conclusions derived from the newest discoveries of natural science’ is, according to Lenin, found not in the reconsideration of this essence and not in making the ideas of natural scientists eternal, but in the deepening of the understanding of the ‘relationship between cognition and the physical world’ that is connected with these new ideas about nature. The dialectical understanding of the relationship between the ‘form’ and ‘essence’ of materialism, and therefore, the relationship between ‘ontology’ and ‘epistemology’ constitutes the ‘spirit of dialectical materialism’.

‘Hence’, – writes Lenin summarising the genuinely scientific interpretation of the issue of the creative development of dialectical materialism – ‘a revision of the “form” of Engels’ materialism, a revision of his natural-philosophical propositions, is not only not “revisionism”, in the accepted meaning of the term, but, on the contrary, is an essential requirement of Marxism. We criticize the Machists not for making such a revision, but for their *purely revisionist* trick of betraying the *essence* of materialism under the guise of criticizing its *form* ...’<sup>15</sup>

14 Lenin 1976, p. 469.

15 Lenin 1962, p. 251.

Lenin mercilessly castigates this Bogdanov-Suvorov idea of philosophy and contrasts it, on every point, with that understanding that crystallised in the works of Marx and Engels, and develops that understanding further.

The role of philosophy in the system of the Marxist (dialectical-materialist) worldview is not to construct global-cosmic systems of abstractions in *aqua regia* of which are dissolved all the differences and contradictions (for example, between biology and political economy); its role is exactly the opposite – it exists and develops for the sake of the real scientific, real concrete study of concrete problems of science and life, for the sake of the real transformation of scientific understanding of history and nature. The role of philosophy in the system of views of Marx and Engels is to serve this concrete cognition of nature and history. In it, universality and concreteness are not mutually exclusive but presuppose one another.

The materialism of this philosophy is found precisely in that it orients scientific thinking towards a more exact grasping of the events of nature and history in all of their objectivity, in all of their concreteness, and their dialectical contradictoriness – in all of their independence from the will and consciousness of human beings. However, ‘philosophy’ in its Machist-Bogdanovist version gives the scientific thinking exactly the opposite orientation. It directs human thinking toward the creation of ‘extreme abstractions’, in the ‘neutral’ midst of which all distinctions, all oppositions, and all contradictions are extinguished. It is the case both in matter and in consciousness, and in the relationship between matter and consciousness. And this is the direct consequence of the idealism of its epistemological axioms. The ‘elements of the world’, technological ‘structures of organisation’, ‘logical frames’, ‘abstract objects’, ‘god’ and the ‘absolute spirit’ – are all but different pseudonyms hiding the one and the same idealistically mystified human consciousness.

The key point of the whole strategy of the Machist attack against the philosophy of Marxism was found in their attempt to split the living unity of the materialist dialectics as the theory of development and as the theory of cognition and logic by first separating ‘ontology’ from ‘epistemology’ and then by juxtaposing the two, thus killing the very essence of dialectics as philosophical science. The calculation was simple: with such a split the materialist understanding of the world would have been easy to identify with some concrete and historically limited natural scientific ‘picture of the world’, with the ‘physical’, and on that basis to attribute to materialism all the flaws and miscalculations of such ‘ontology’. The same operation then could be performed, on the other side, on the materialistic ‘epistemology’ by identifying it with some newest natural scientific conception of the ‘mental’. This identification of philosophy with a generalised summary of scientific data allowed one to present the matter in

such a way as to imply that the natural science itself gives birth to idealism. To assign idealism to the natural science is to destroy the uniqueness of philosophy, its approach to phenomena, and its system of concepts. Lenin exposes the very roots of these intentions by showing concretely what constitutes the 'main spirit of materialism' of contemporary natural science that gives birth to dialectical materialism.

According to Lenin, the subject matter of the philosophical generalisation (and therefore of the introduction into the system of philosophical knowledge) is not the latest results as such, 'positive data' as such, but precisely the *development* of scientific knowledge, the dialectical process of the deeper and more comprehensive, concrete, grasping of the dialectical processes of the material world, for it is not unlikely that tomorrow natural science will itself be evaluating the latest results 'negatively'. Lenin thinks about the revolution in natural science from the positions of the dialectical-materialist philosophy and comes to the general conclusion that the objective content of scientific knowledge can be fixed and evaluated only from the positions of the dialectical-materialist theory of cognition that discloses the dialectics of the objective, absolute and relative truth, and the 'ontology' is as closely connected with 'epistemology' as the categories that express the dialectical nature of truth are connected with objective dialectics.

It is impossible to include the 'negative' into the understanding of the 'positive' without the 'epistemological' approach to the 'ontology' of scientific knowledge, without at the same time losing the unity of opposites (and this is exactly what dialectics does). The genuinely scientific philosophical generalisation must consist, according to Lenin, in 'dialectical elaboration' of the entire history of the development of cognition and practical activity, in understanding the achievements of science in the entire historical context of such development. It is from these very positions that Lenin approached the question of the relationship between philosophy and natural science in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, 'Philosophical Notebooks' and 'On the Significance of Militant Materialism'. Machists were counting on discrediting materialism by tearing out its truths out of this historical context.

Positivism considered (and still considers) epistemology from analogous positions. Its intention is to oppose epistemology as a 'strict and exact' science to materialist dialectics as philosophical science and, in that, it wants to critique dialectics in light of such 'epistemology'. We see this intention already in the title of Berman's book – *dialectics in light of contemporary theory of cognition*. Essentially, it is not a theory of cognition in any real sense. It is again the collection of the 'latest data' from the research in psychology, psychophysiology, physiology of the organs of perception, and later – mathematical

logic, linguistics and so forth. Understanding and use of this data in isolation from 'ontology', from the general law of development of nature and society was what allowed for opposition between such 'epistemology' and dialectics.

Lenin clearly shows the incompatibility of the scholastic 'epistemology' of Machists and the genuinely scientific theory of cognition – the theory of the real study of the real world by the real people (and not by some imagined 'epistemological subject'), using the real logic of the development of science, the real logic of production and accumulation of objective truth. Its real subject matter – the entire historically (dialectically) developing process of the objective cognition of the material world (world of natural scientific and socio-historical phenomena) by the societal human being, the process of reflection of this world in the consciousness of the human being and humanity. The process, the result, and the absolute goal of which is the objective truth. The process implemented by billions of people, by hundreds of successive generations. The process that is at every step checked by practice, experiment, facts, and that is realised in the results of the entirety of all concrete ('positive') sciences and materialised not only and not just in the neurophysiologic mechanisms of the brain, but also in the form of technology, industry, in the form of real socio-political achievements, consciously realised by the revolutionary forces under the leadership of its political and intellectual avant-garde – the party.

Logic as a philosophical science of thinking is understood by Lenin to be a teaching about those objective (independent of human will and consciousness) general and necessary laws that apply equally to the development of nature and society, as well as the development of the entirety of human knowledge, and not only to thinking, understood as subjective-mental process taking place in the depths of the brain and mind, for the specific laws of thinking are studied not in philosophy, not in dialectics, but in psychology, physiology of the higher nervous activity, and so on. These general laws act in cognition with the force of objective necessity, whether we realise it or not; these laws ultimately reach the individual consciousness as well. Therefore, the laws of thinking *at their limit, in their tendency*, coincide with the laws of development as such, and logic and theory of cognition – with theory of development. But according to Bogdanov (Berman, Carnap, Popper), logic is the reflection of the subjective 'devices', 'methods', 'rules', that are consciously applied by thinking that is not scientifically aware of those deep regularities and patterns that underlie cognition.

Lenin saw the task of dialectics as logic and theory of cognition in making these general laws available to the consciousness of each thinking individual – to teach him to think dialectically.

And if we understand the ‘theory of cognition’ and logic (theory of thinking) this way – in a Leninist, that is to say, dialectical-materialist way – then there is no reason to fear that the consistent application of the idea of coincidence of dialectics with logic and theory of cognition would lead to the ‘underestimation of significance of philosophy as a worldview’, or its ‘ontological’ (that is, objective) ‘aspect’. To be afraid of that is to understand epistemology not according to Lenin, but according to Mach and Bogdanov, and logic – according to Carnap and Popper, that is to say, as sciences that are limited in their study by the facts of consciousness, its specifics, ‘phenomena of consciousness as such’ (indistinctly-individual or ‘collectively-organised’) and that are only concerned with the external world as long as it is represented in this consciousness ...

In the beginning of the century, Lenin was the only Marxist who understood and appreciated the whole great *worldview* significance of epistemology and logic. The significance was not understood or appreciated by Kautsky, Plekhanov, or all other Marxists.

The Machists were reading *Capital* (they even translated it into Russian), but they did not notice that in the process of the development of concepts in this scientific work there is ‘applied’ a very specific ‘theory of cognition’, a very specific logic of thinking – materialist dialectics. And they did not notice it for a very simple reason – because they borrowed their understanding of ‘theory of cognition’ from Mach.

The genuine theory and logic of scientific cognition in Marx and Engels is materialist (and only materialist!) dialectics as a science of the general laws of the development of nature, society and human thinking. This is the true core idea of the entire *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* – the thesis that expresses the entire essence of the book. It could serve as an epigraph and as a final conclusion, a summary, even though the thesis was only formulated in a, more or less, quotable form by Lenin later in ‘Philosophical Notebooks’:

‘In *Capital* Marx applied to a single science logic, dialectics and theory of cognition of materialism [three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing] which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further’.<sup>16</sup> ‘Dialectics is the theory of cognition of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the “aspect” of the matter (it is not an “aspect” but the essence of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention’.<sup>17</sup> ‘Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development “of all material, natural and spiritual things” ...’<sup>18</sup>

16 Lenin 1976, p. 317. Translation changed.

17 Lenin 1976, p. 360. Translation changed.

18 Lenin 1976, p. 92. Translation changed.



These formulations emerged as a final conclusion to that long struggle that Lenin led for many years against Machists and against vague and opportunistic interpretations of philosophy by the theoreticians of the Second International. They are the summary of the further creative development of the philosophy of dialectical materialism. In these formulations, we find expressed the very essence of Lenin's understanding of dialectics, its subject matter, its problem, its role and function as a part of the developing scientific worldview. So, it is not just a 'side of the matter', not just 'one of the aspects' of such understanding.

The lack of understanding of this decisive circumstance even today leads some Marxists to the path of reconsidering Lenin's understanding of 'matter', expressed in its classical understanding of this concept as fundamental concept of the entire dialectical-materialist philosophy, and not just as a part of its 'epistemology'. Thus even today we read that Lenin's definition is incomplete and insufficient, that it has a 'narrow epistemological character', that it only expresses the 'one-sided epistemological aspect', and therefore it allegedly needs to be 'expanded' and 'supplemented with a wide ontological aspect'. These seemingly innocent 'supplements' and 'extensions' are in fact directed against the very 'essence' (and not the 'aspect') of the matter, against the essence of Lenin's understanding of matter.

The meaning of these attempts is clear: to portray *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* – this classical work on philosophy of dialectical materialism that explored in general form all of the important contours and problem of this entire science – as a book that is dedicated to only one (and not the most important) 'side of the matter', only 'epistemology', only this allegedly 'narrow' circle of issues that Lenin had to address due to the specific conditions of the polemics with some second-rate school of subjective idealism ... Understood this way, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* with all of its definitions is deprived of all general philosophical significance outside of this special debate, and what is deprived of significance is the book that ultimately exposed every kind of idealism and not simply the special subjective kind.

In his essay 'On the Significance of Militant Materialism' Lenin bequeathed to Marxist philosophers the task of following 'the problems raised by the recent revolution in natural science'. Without fulfilling this task, militant materialism 'can be neither militant nor materialism'.<sup>19</sup>

The union of philosophers and natural scientists, according to Lenin, may be strong and voluntary only under the condition that it is mutually beneficial and mutually excludes any attempt to force the results of philosophy unto sci-

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19 Lenin 2012, p. 237.

ence and the results of science unto philosophy. Such union, such voluntary cooperation in the work of cognising the world is possible only with Lenin's understanding of dialectics.

At the same time, Lenin underscored that 'no natural science and no materialism can hold its own in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of the bourgeois world outlook unless it stands on solid philosophical ground'.<sup>20</sup>

In these conditions no Marxist philosopher has the right to console himself that physics (and the natural sciences in general) is 'in any case' allegedly moving spontaneously along (even if unwillingly and 'backwards') the lines of dialectical thinking, the lines of dialectical-materialist cognition (reflection) of the objective reality without giving itself the correct self-report, but satisfied with the incorrect one passed off to it by positivists.

And here (and not just in politics) all the admiration for spontaneous movement forward, all the diminution of intentionality and its great significance for progress only means in practice the enabling of the reactionary-idealistic intentionality and its influence on the 'spontaneity' – in the end, it means the increase of the epistemological confusion in the heads of scientists.

So Lenin proves that if the natural scientist does not use the materialist dialectics intentionally, that is in the same way as it was used by Marx and Engels, then he will inevitably, despite his spontaneous tendency towards it, occasionally slip, slide, blunder into idealism, into the swamp of quasi-scientific obscurantism (positivism) every time there is before him a fact (a system of facts) that contains a dialectical difficulty, dialectical contradiction, and therefore a correct reflection of his fact in a concept, a system of concepts.

And, as long as he sees in this dialectical contradiction not a correct form of reflection of the objective reality in consciousness, but only an illusion born from the 'specifics of consciousness as such', specific qualities of the brain or 'language' – he will not completely free himself from the shameful slavery to idealism and obscurantism.

Of course, the natural scientist remains the active participant in the 'revolution in natural science', the scientific-technical revolution. The logic of facts will in the end pull him out of the swamp. But at what cost?

At the very same costs that were made fully clear to the world in Machists' participation in the revolutionary events of 1905 and especially 1917. There were ridiculously Leftist (objectively unprepared and therefore doomed to fail) actions, and inevitably following them were panic-stricken retreats to long-

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<sup>20</sup> Lenin 2012, p. 238.

abandoned positions, and complete perplexity in the conditions of dialectically tense situations in the summer and fall of 1917, and the *Proletkult* caricatures of the 'cultural revolution', and the harm done to the country's economy by the influence of Bogdanov's 'theory of equilibrium', and many, many other things that cannot be described in this essay but require an entire book.

Revolution is still revolution, whether it is taking place in the social-political 'organism' of the large country or in the 'organism' of the contemporary developing natural science. The logic of revolutionary thinking, the logic of revolution is the same in both places. And this logic is called materialist dialectics. Therefore we do not even need two separate words, not just two (or even three) separate sciences – materialist dialectics is the same as logic and the same as the theory of cognition of Marxism-Leninism.

That is the main point of *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, if it is read in the light of all the consequent history of political and intellectual development in Russian and the entire international revolutionary movement of the working class. The history clearly showed, and there its verdict cannot be appealed, where led and still leads the way of Lenin and where leads the crooked ways of Bogdanovism, the ways of revision of the principles of revolutionary logic from the positions of positivism – this philosophy of verbal parasitism of the ready results of someone else's mental labour.

Luckily, things today are not the way they used to be in the beginning of the century when many natural scientists were under the hypnotic influence of this positivist demagoguery. Today, already, a large number of natural scientists, and not only in our country, became conscious allies of Lenin's dialectics, and this union is becoming wider and stronger, despite all the efforts of the priests of positivism (about whose efforts to damage this union we must not forget). This union is indestructible and the duty of philosophers is to make it wider and stronger. That is Lenin's main testament, the main lesson of his immortal book.



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