

## MARX AND THE ISSUE OF MAN'S SELF-REALIZATION

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The publication of Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 in 1932 commanded widespread attention. These *Manuscripts* revealed a side of him as the passionate humanist concerned above all with the issue of man's self-realization. This in turn resulted in the popularization of the term 'alienation' used extensively in the *Manuscripts* in Marx's criticism of contemporary society and his characterization of contemporary man. The *Manuscripts* thus occupy a position of great importance in relation to current discussion of alienation. The Manuscripts also draw attention to Hegel's discussion of alienation in *Phenomenology* through Marx's extensive analysis of it, and through the importance he attributed to the *Phenomenology*.

Marx's interpreters are divided on the issue whether the concept of alienation has a place in his natural thought. Sidney Hook<sup>1</sup> takes the position that the notion of 'self-alienation' is foreign to the historical, naturalistic humanism of Marx, Robert Tucker, on the other hand, has argued that "Alienation remains his central theme"<sup>2</sup>. The term 'alienation' figures centrally in the *Manuscripts*. It has also been pointed out that "wage labour" has the same force in Marx's later writings as does "alienated labour" in the *Manuscripts*.

### I

Marx held Ludwig Feuerbach in high esteem, and remarked that Feuerbach's writings, since Hegel's *Phenomenology* contained a real theoretical

revolution. What Marx considered revolutionary in Feuerbach was his redirecting attention to the real world. He held that the conception of God was nothing other than a conception of the essential natural man. In two of Feuerbach's works, *The Essence of Christianity* and *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* there is a systematic anthropological reduction. Theology, argued Feuerbach, describes the actual structure of things, but not applied properly. The right configurations of predicates are attributed the entities which are mere abstract images of the actual concrete ones. Therefore a programme of reduction is needed to reveal the objects of metaphysics and theology to be nothing other than the concrete ones. "Theology is anthropology ... the God of man is nothing other than the divinised essence of man".<sup>3</sup>

Marx may be said to have carried the programme of reduction further, the reduction of Hegel's philosophy of spirit to political economy. But the fact remains that he was indebted to Feuerbach for the basic idea of reduction. He criticised Hegel saying that the abstract, logical and speculative expression of the historical process that we have in Phenomenology is not yet the real history of man. Man there appears only as spirit or self-consciousness, To characterise man in abstract fashion is to misrepresent *real*, corporeal man. Consequently, Hegel's idea of alienation and the way of overcoming it are also abstract or vacuous.<sup>4</sup>

The criticism may be questioned with regard to its fairness. It is true that Hegel's instances of alienation are different forms of consciousness and self-consciousness, but they are not unduly abstract. When the individual regards the social substance as something alien to him, his regarding it in this manner, the *thought is* the reality of the alienation. The alienation takes place at the level of consciousness and self-consciousness, and could not have obtained otherwise.

## II

Marx however seeks to outline the *real* history of man. Hegel had used the term *Entauesserung* in connection with property transfer and labour contract in his *Philosophy of Right*, and had at times used *Entfremdung*

interchangeably with this term in the *Phenomenology*. Marx finds here a place to begin the reduction of Hegel's philosophy to the concrete, for its transformation into political economy as suggested by Hegel's own usage. Marx notices that the two German terms have a close connection with the concepts of "labour" and "personality". It suggested to him that the submission of one's labour to the direction of another could itself be characterized in either of the terms. To contract one's labour or personality to another is to surrender it to another, and thereby to make it alien to oneself. This is how the story in the *Manuscripts* comes to be told. And we shall take the *Manuscripts* as the text of our study. In this we shall be following Tucker, who suggests that the *Manuscripts* served to make it plain that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is the work with which Marxism is immediately affiliated. Schacht of course comments without minimising the importance of *Phenomenology* that Marx's concept of alienation of labour has its origin in the *Philosophy of Right* as well. We do not intend to take any side.

### III

Marx approaches the question of man's essential nature in terms of the kinds of "activity" or "life" which corresponds to it. The whole character of a species, says Marx, is manifested in its type of life - activity. Hence he identifies man's nature with the types of "Life-activity" characteristic of genuinely "human" Life. And he places greatest emphasis on production. Labour or productive life, for Marx, is man's species-life. In addition, he designates as essential two other general kinds of life; "social life", or existence in fellowship with other men, and "sensuous life", or cultivation and enjoyment of the senses. This specification indicates that Marx regards man as essentially social and sensuous being. Man's essential characteristics are those of individuality, sociality and sensuousness. The first two characteristics are strikingly similar to what one finds in Hegel. Both conceptions refer to man's individuality. But is individuality always consonant with universality which Hegel had insisted on? In spite of the similarity, there is a difference between Hegel's and Marx's anthropologies. The

Marxian characteristics of sensuality was not seriously contended by Hegel. So Marx could be taken as having modified Hegel's conception of man.

As regards Marx's emphasis on production, the production serves as a link between it and the self realisation of the individual person. Hegel discusses it at length in the *Phenomenology*. The *Philosophy of Right* devotes considerable space to a discussion of "Property". *Qua* "person" one is characterized by one's particular characteristics and by the freedom to express them. Production is the primary activity through which property comes to exist. Property, says Hegel, is the embodiment of personality, through it alone personality achieves objective reality. Further, he contends, property is the first embodiment of freedom. It is through acquiring property that one's essentially free will becomes actually free. In the process of acquiring property one's freedom becomes something actual in as much as one translates his freedom into an external sphere. Hegel further observes that we acquire property by taking possession of things. This may be done in three way's (a) by grasping it physically; (b) by farming it and (c) by making it ours. The first is subjective and temporary. The third, he says, is indeterminate. The second is of greatest significance. "When I impose a form on something, the things determinate character as mine acquires an independent externality".<sup>5</sup> In the third case, Hegel explains, the thing's relation to me is neither feeling nor superficial, for it is essentially transformed through my productive on "forming" activity in such a way that it bears my imprint." I put my will into it,"<sup>6</sup> In doing so one objectivies his will and personality. In the formed thing they attain objective embodiment in the actual world. It is thus that Hegel shows an essential connection between production and the actualization of personality. The same idea is expressed in *Phenomenology*, it is through engaging in production that self existence becomes truly realised. In the work one does self-existence is externalized and passes into the condition of permanence. Through productive activity one becomes factually and self-consciously self existent.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV

Marx can be seen closely following Hegel, even in the language he uses, in stating his position. For the individual the sensuous external world

is the material out of which and through which he produces things. The thing produced is the product of labour and the product is an *objectification* of labour. In all this the individual's labour becomes an object and assumes an external existence. Marx calls this process "externalization".<sup>8</sup>

It may be noted in this context that in presenting Marx's view we shall have the *Manuscripts* as our basic text, and shall cite passages and phrases from the Early Writings, which includes the *Manuscripts*.

Marx argues that initially the self of personality is implicit in the realm of objectivity, but in and through the product of his labour man reproduces himself. The reproduction of himself constitutes an actualization of his implicit self. Through this process, man becomes an objective fact for himself. In Marx's account of man's self-realising process there is much that is Hegelian in temper. For example, Marx emphasizes upon the importance of property in this connection. There is a mistaken idea that Marx had the complete abolition of property in the *Manuscripts*. He rejects, instead "crude communism", arguing that this would "negate the *personality* of man in every sphere". He echoes Hegel's contention that property is essential to the realization of personality and urges its "genuine appropriation". He speaks of "the positive nature of private property". The institution of private property as it *presently exists* is objectionable, as Marx says.<sup>9</sup> But released from its alienation, "private property is the existence of essential objects for man, as objects of enjoyment and activity"<sup>10</sup>. Marx's is a call for a positive transformation of private property, not its complete obligation.

Marx contends that only man produces in accordance with the laws of beauty. As distinguished from the animals human production alone is essentially *free* production. In saying this Marx could be said to be looking back to Kant, who in *Critique of Judgement* has a similar point in section 43, "Analytic of the Sublime". Art, says Kant, is production through freedom. The product of bees is called "art" only "by way of *analogy*". What is more interesting is the fact that this very example of bees, and celebration of freedom finds an elegant statement in Tagore collection of essays in Bengali, called *Kāfāntar*. However, the point for Marx is that man

produces when he is free from physical need and truly produces in freedom from such need. Marx's conception of production, if it is also a theory of artistic creation, is obviously non-naturalistic in the sense that it is free from the exigencies of biological and economic determinations. The kind of production that Marx considers is man's "life-activity", motivated by nothing more than the need to create, to express himself, to give oneself external embodiment.

Man also is conscious of the fact that what he does is his 'life-activity'. Man is not, as Hegel had shown him to be "self consciousness", rather he is a self conscious being, who produces and perceives at the same time that it is his nature to do so, Conscious life-activity distinguishes man from the life activity of animals. Only for this man is a species-being.<sup>11</sup> From this it does not of course follow that all men are conscious of their essential nature. The point however is that man alone is *capable* of such consciousness.

The fundamental form of production, for Marx, is material production. But he recognizes that "religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc."<sup>12</sup> are also human products. He attempts to subsume such particular forms of production under the general law of material production. But he is not blind to the wide range of man's productive activity.

We may now turn to Marx's conception of labour. It should be noticed that Marx does not employ the terms 'labour' and 'alienated labour' interchangeably in the *Manuscripts*. Without the adjective "alienated", labour refers to production of "practical human activity". In the context of acquisitive society the purpose of labour is merely the increase of wealth - Marx has a negative attitude toward such labour. It is a perversion of labour. But viewed from the standpoint of its essential nature, labour is "end in itself" which has "human significance and worth". Marx suggests that labour should be an activity through which man "fulfills himself", and "develops freely his spiritual and physical energies". It should be itself "the satisfaction of a need", rather than a mere means through which other needs can be

satisfied. It should be *voluntary* and *free*, a man's "own work", his spontaneous activity".<sup>14</sup>

Man, for Marx, is essentially social as well as individual. Life is human when it is characterized not simply by productive activity, but also by fellowship with other men. In a world marked by disunity, antagonism and exploitation Marx speaks of the possible "return of man to his *human*, i.e. social, life"<sup>15</sup>. In civil society man's species-bonds" with other man are severed. The concepts of community, solidarity, harmony and fellowship are undermined. That man is essentially a social being is not only intuitively plausible idea, it has been one of Marx's most profound convictions. His argument for this contention does not appear very strong, since, the fact that man is a "species - being" because man is a being capable of consciousness of his essential nature may not be enough. Possession of a social nature is by no means entailed by the capacity for self consciousness. Some thing more is required.

However having stated his initial conviction that man is a social being, Marx goes on to state that man is sensuous being, his "subjective human sensibility" requires to be cultivated or created. His basic point is that a man cannot be considered fully "human" until his "senses have become *human*"<sup>16</sup>. Here again he distinguishes between "humanised sense" and 'sense which is subservient to crude need." What is noteworthy is the fact that Marx distinguishes humanised sensibility of man from that of animals, and also the refined sensibility from the brutish, and the aesthetic from the materialistic. It is clear that Marx has in mind the cultivation of the capacity for aesthetic appreciation. Possession of a cultivated sensibility according to Marx, is connected with "social existence" and self-objectification through production. How are the three characteristics are related to one another is not very clear. To live in fellowship with others and being able to appreciate things aesthetically are different. Again, aesthetic appreciation involves an appreciation of things in virtue of their having a certain form, whose production consists in giving things a new form which reflects one's own personality. However as Marx conceives man's nature three dimensions of life, though conceptionally distinct, are the three essential characteristics.

## V

Schacht has remarked that in Marx Hegel's two senses of 'alienation' come together, and a single general sense emerges. We may now notice how this obtains.

In the context of alienation there is a point of agreement between Hegel and Marx. Marx does not consider that product constitutes alienation as Hegel did. Nor does he think that production as such leads to alienation. The product is not rendered alienated from its producer merely because in it the producer's labour has become an object, assuming an *external* existence. The product is the objective embodiment of its producer's self and it is far from alien to him. The product becomes alienated only when it comes to exist independently, outside himself, i.e. *out side of his control*, or stands *opposed to him as an autonomous power*<sup>17</sup>. Hence Marx distinguishes, between externalization or objectification and the alienation of the product. Hegel had referred to the social substance as alienated when the individual is related to it as to an alien reality. For both Hegel and Marx an object is alienated only when it is related to the individual as something remote and foreign, which he no longer feels or experiences as his own.

In the *Manuscripts* the situation that Marx has in mind is the capitalistic system of production. Under this system the product ceases to be the objective embodiment of the individuals' own personality and the distinctive expression of his creative powers and interests. When the product is not distinctive in having any relation to the individual's personality, when he does not choose to make it, rather is directed to it, nor does he choose how to make it, and is compelled to suppress his individuality in the course of its production, it is only then the product gets alienated. When, again, the production is finished it is no longer his, nor is he in any position to do with it as he pleases, the product, then, is alien to him.

Marx adds further that the alienness of the product is not a passive affair. It exerts its detrimental influence being a power independent of the producer, and "sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force."<sup>18</sup> Marx attributes "hostility" to the alienated product. The source of its hostility is in the power, the capitalist mode of production, which governs it.



The capitalist mode of production consists of (a) the "other man" for whom the product is produced, and (b) the set of economic laws which govern the behaviour of capital. The first is a human power, while the second is an "inhuman power".

This view of Marx profoundly affected his later programme of political action as well as the development of his theoretical position. He holds that if my product is related to me as an alien and hostile object, this is so because it belongs to someone alien and hostile to me. Its alienation from me is grounded in my surrender of it to another person. Marx finds this state of affair objectionable under any circumstances. He uses the term *Entfremdung* to refer to the alienation of the object. The product now serves the purposes of another man. In return I get the means of mere subsistence, Marx suggests that I am made to produce the object what the other man desires, and I have *often* to do so even at the cost of my own self-realization, and even at the cost of my physical wellbeing. So the product is an instrument of the other man's will, and he becomes all the more powerful in relation to me by possessing it. My product thus contributes to my own oppression. The circumstance is such that my product is a hostile force to me as well as unrelated to my personality.

As regards market economy Marx writes "Alienation is apparent not only in the fact that *my* means of life belong to someone else..., but also that ... an *inhuman power* rules over everything."<sup>19</sup> This inhuman power is the set of laws governing capital and the market. These laws operate upon the products of the workers' labour, and are brought into operation by the workers themselves. This is the irony. The worker, under this economic system, produces large quantities of the same item, which he cannot use. "The more objects the worker produces, the fewer he can possess."<sup>20</sup> The worker has to do it in order to secure the necessities of life, and also to enrich himself. He becomes dependent on the fluctuations in market price and in the movement of capital. The fluctuations are governed by economic laws, that are "power" alien to the worker, and have no regard for his welfare. The inevitable result of the operation of economic laws is such that a part of the workers is beggary or starvation"<sup>21</sup>. Their alienness is marked

by "hostility". The product here is "alien" to its producer as it reflects the market profile rather than his personality. In short, Marx terms the product "alinated" from its producer when it comes under the sway of an alien hostile power, human or inhuman. Two of Hegel's senses of alienation have together in Marx: (a) the alienated product is separated from its producer; and (b) it is separated from him because he has surrendered it to another man, or to the market - its alienation through surrender.

## VI

The term "alienation" is applied not only to the product of labour, but also to labour itself. Marx's discussion in the *Manuscripts* has a title. "Alienated Labour". "The alienation of the object of labour merely summarizes the alienation, the surrender, in the work activity itself."<sup>22</sup> Labour is alienated when it ceases to reflect one's own personality and interest, and instead comes under the direction of an alien will, i.e., another man. Alienation of labour, for Marx, involves its surrender, and its surrender - its separation from the worker's personality. Labour is alienated when one is related to "his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him"<sup>23</sup>. If my labour does not belong to me, to whom does it belong? Marx answers the question as follows: "If the worker is related to his own activity as to unfree activity, then he is related to it as activity in the service, and under the domination, coercion and yoke, at another man."<sup>24</sup> One whose labour is alienated from him views his labour as an alien activity. The individual does not "feel at home" in the work he does. It is not part of his nature, says Marx, since it has no connection with his own interests, and is no expression of his personality. Man's labour is truly his own labour only when it is spontaneous, free and self-directed activity, when it is prompted by his own need to build or create or do something of his own choosing. It must be what he wants to do. In a famous passage in the *German Ideology* Marx has suggested that in communist society it will be possible for a man to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, first in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as he pleases.

Marx appears to suggest that alienation is a relation not merely between two terms, the worker and his labour, but also a third, another man to whom the worker surrenders direction of his labour. He refers to alienated labour as "slave labour"<sup>25</sup>. His basic concern is with the dissociation of labour from the worker's interest and personality. But given this concern, does it follow that the dissociation obtains because of the submission of labour to the direction of another man ? Labour performed under the direction of another man need not necessarily be alienated. A musician playing under the direction of the conductor of a symphony, or a cameraman shooting a film under the director's direction are not examples of alienated labour. It is possible to think of labour dissociated from one's interests and personality though not subjected to the direction of another men. An independent farmer or a shop keeper may be able to sustain himself through an expenditure of all his time and energy, and be never able to do things he really wants to do. He is oppressed by physical need, and Marx would say, he does not truly produce. Hence the connection between one's labour and one's interests and personality can be severed with the mediation of an alien will. The surrender of labour to the direction of another man is a matter of factual correlation, and need not be looked upon as a matter of definition.

We may now ask about Marx's conception of alienated labour and the nature of labour. For him, when labour is subjected to the direction of another man, then occurs the resulting separation from the interests and personality of the one who performs it, and it also involves its divorce from its essential end and function. Essentially considered, labour for Marx is productive activity through which the individual objectifies and thus realizes himself, simultaneously expressing and developing himself as an individual personality. It is therefore a perversion of its essential function, according to Marx, when it is undertaken nearly under the compulsion of direct physical needs or of that selfish need which is greed, under these circumstances it is not what it should be, Man only truly produces in freedom from such need.

This is suggested to be a condition of labour in the wage system. When it is regarded as something to be exchange for pay, labour appears not as an end in itself but as the servant of wages, and thus loses its human

significance and worth, Hence it is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other ends. In return for wages it is placed under the direction of another men, and thus no longer performs the function of self-objectification.

There is thus a radical disparity between the character and function of labour in the kind of economy Marx describes, and those in terms of which he conceives the essential nature of labour. He characterizes labour of the farmer sort as the alienated form of human activity as species-activity. When he speaks of alienated labour, he has in mind this general disparity between such labour and its essential nature, as well as its separation from the interests and personality of the worker as such. It is not only alien to the worker, but also alien to itself.

## VII

An important dimension of alienation is alienation from other men. According to Marx, it is relationship between each man and other men that the economic fact of the alienation of the worker and his production is first realised and expressed. In particular it has the direct consequence that man is alienated from other men.

Marx writes, "In the relationship of alienated labour every man regards other men according to the standards and relationships in which he finds himself placed as a worker."<sup>26</sup> He further contends that "communism, through which human self-alienation is overcome, is thereby also the definitive resolution of the antagonism ... between man and man."<sup>27</sup> Marx seems to have in mind a situation in which men regard others as rivals rather than fellows, and as of no inherent worth. He suggests further that a state of constant impersonal strife prior to the advent of communism. There are among the features which for Marx characterize the relation of men to each other in capitalistic or "Civil" society. He speaks of the member of civil society as man separated from other man. He refers to civil society as the sphere of the war of all against all. It is, he contends, one only exists for another person, as the other exists for him, insofar as each becomes a means

for the other.

Civil society, according to Marx, is the sphere of egoism. It is a world of atomistic, antagonistic individuals. Man in civil society is egoistic man, man regarded as an isolated moved and, withdrawn into himself. Marx describes egoistic man as "... as individual **separated** from community, withdrawn in to himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his private caprice ... The only bond between egoistic men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the presentation of their property and their egoistic persons,"<sup>28</sup>. Egoistic man is motivated solely by self-interest, which leads every man to see in other man not the realization, but rather the limitation of his own liberty. Instead of regarding other men as his fellows, he regards them as his rivals and adversaries. Accordingly, he is hostile to them, His antagonism toward them is motivated only to the extent that enlightened self-interest suggests cooperation with them is desirable, and shows him that they may be of use to him.

Thus the alienation from other men of which Marx speaks is to be understood as involving a complete absence of fellow feeling, an estimation of others as of no more positive significance than that of means to personal ends, an antagonism based on a feeling of rivalry and the anticipation of attempted counter exploitation. It is grounded in a self-centredness which attends only to private advantage, and in a self-conception which excludes an idea of sociality.

In the standard usage of 'alienation', the term refers to interpersonal estrangement. But for Marx, more importantly, egoism appears to be the necessary and sufficient condition of its occurrence. And secondly, when alienation in Marx's sense occurs, it is total, one is separated from other man *generally*, not that one is estranged only from certain individuals, while remaining close to others, Further, in ordinary usage alienation does not necessarily imply that one regards the others in question merely as means to one's own ends. The ordinary conception also comprehends cases of indifference, regretted lost intimacy as well as cases of antagonism. In cases of interpersonal estrangement, the background situation is one of actual

unity of some sort, which has given way to a feeling of alienness, some one has become alien, who formerly was not so. Marx of course, presupposes no previous actual unity of the egoistic individual with other men. There is through an *ideal* unity of the individual with other men generally, which Marx predicates of him on the ground that men's essential nature requires it. This is something that is not presupposed by the ordinary usage of 'alienation'.

The difference between Marx's conception and the ordinary usage of 'alienation' raises problems. Marx conceives of communism as the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and man, and thus of the alienation of man from each other the elimination of the basis of egoism. Can one suppose that it would thereby also bridge the generation gap, restore to intimacy erstwhile friends who have drifted apart, or rekindle love grown cold?

There are other forms of alienation. How is egoism as a mode of alienation related to other forms of alienation? For Marx, alienation from other men is a direct consequence of the alienation occurring at the level of production. What is Marx's actual point in saying that? The relation he conceives to exist between egoism and civil society is such that egoism is both encouraged and virtually required for survival in civil society. "Civil Society" ... severs all the species bonds of man, establishes egoism and selfish need in their place, and dissolves the human world into a world of atomistic, antagonistic individuals."<sup>28</sup> To live in civil society is to live under the economic system of alienation. This economic system is the essence of civil society as Marx conceives it. The whole society is purportedly organized to facilitate the accumulation of private property through alienation. The point is that the alienation of the individual from others is related to the alienation of his labour and product as one result to another of his existence under the general economic organization which is the basis of civil society.

Marx seems to think that everyone who exists in civil society necessarily becomes a creature of it, i.e. becomes egoistic. But is it not possible for an individual to cease to identify with the values of his society, and to adopt an attitude of opposition to them? Marx himself is a perfect

case in point, Moreover, his own behalf the possibility of solidarity among the members of the working class within the framework of capitalistic society presupposes the ability of men who continue to live in this society to overcome their egoism and alienation from each other. Marx's call to the workers of the world to unite and overthrow capitalism at the conclusion of the *Manifesto* would be pointless if men could only remain egoistic and therefore mutually antagonistic creatures of civil society as long as they live in it.

### VIII

We may now turn to consider the case of self-alienation. Marx's concept of self-alienation involves the idea of a two-fold separation. He has in mind both the separation from a person of something which is very much a part of him, and the resulting separation of the person from his essential nature. One may speak of two such senses of self-alienation in Marx's usage.

In one sense the expression "self-alienation" characterizes more profoundly the alienation of labour, and occasionally, that of the product. The point he wishes to stress in doing so is that a Man's labour is his life, and his product is his life in objectified form, and that therefore when they are alienated from him, his own "self" is alienated from him. Marx takes the position that the substance of my being, or my "self", is made into another's property to the extent that I give another the use of my labour.

Marx also uses the expression 'self-alienation' to refer to one's separation from his truly human self, or essential nature. In this sense, "alienation" conveys the idea of total loss of humanity. Alienated labour he says, "alienate for men .... his spiritual life his life".<sup>29</sup> It produces man as spiritually and physically dehumanized being. At this level, "self-alienation" is virtually synonymous with "dehumanization." A man is self-alienated if his true "human" nature is something alien to him, if his life fails to manifest the characteristics of a truly human life. There are three such characteristics for Marx; individuality, sociality and cultivated sensibility,

self-alienation thus takes the form of dehumanization in the spheres of life which correspond to them; production, social life and sensuous life., It may best be understood in terms of dehumanization in each of these areas. According to Marx, the worker in contemporary civil society is dehumanized *qua* producer in a number of ways. He is dehumanized in the sense of being reduced to the level of an animal, because he produces merely "under the compulsion of direct physical needs". When he does not "produce in freedom from such need", his production falls to the level of mere animal production, and he thereby loses his advantage over animals. He is also dehumanized in the sense of being reduced to the subhuman condition of a slave, by virtue of his surrender of his labour power to another man. Marx views labour directed by another man as slave labour". And finally, as a result of the division of labour, the worker is dehumanized in the sense of being reduced to the condition of machine. The activity required of him is merely "simple mechanical motion."<sup>30</sup> In short, the worker, under the system of alienation, is reduced to the level of an animal, a slave, and a machine, common to all of these descriptions is the idea of sinking to a subhuman level, or dehumanization. The worker is truly human only if his labour is truly human, i.e. manifests and develops his personality. This is one dimension of his self-alienation in which his actual condition fails to correspond with his essential nature.

In another respect, a man is not truly human until his senses and feelings have been cultivated or humanized. Such a man will have had no occasion to develop "The wealth of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye which is sensitive to the beauty of form)", and an appreciation of things in virtue of their intrinsic qualities.<sup>31</sup> His sensibility will be subhuman; and therefore he himself will be less than human as well.

There is another aspect of man's self-alienation. This concerns his relations with other men. Marx holds that life is not truly human unless it is "social" life, life in genuine community with other men. If one is alienated from other men, one's existence is "inhuman" existence. It fails to manifest one's essential society. Thus one is self-alienated. Marx appears to trace



alienation from others to existence under the conditions which prevail in civil society. In his view, therefore, all three forms of dehumanizations or self-alienation, have the same origin, and thus tend to occur together.

It is also possible to explicate Marx's concept of self-alienation in terms of the perversion of productive, social and sensuous life. He uses the expression 'alienated labour', in part, to convey the idea of labour the actual character and function of which do not correspond to its essential ones. He also speaks of 'the alienation of the senses' in characterizing the sensibility which view things as if they were "means of life" to be utilized in some way<sup>32</sup>. In like manner he terms the "exploitation of human communal life."<sup>33</sup> In their contents the term "alienation" serves to indicate that the forms of life in question are *not as they should be*. For Marx, man's nature is realized only when these forms of life *are* as they should be, their perversion entails that the person affected is not as *he* should be, their alienation is his self-alienation.

It may be of interest to note that Marx's senses of 'self-alienation' are similar to Hegel's senses of self-alienation in the *Phenomenology*. In each, the expression is used to refer both to the separation from the individual of something which is importantly "His", Marx is concerned with the individual labour and particular product; Hegel with social substance. The sense in which the expression refers to a disparity between the individual's actual condition and his essential nature, the unrealized essential nature is conceived by Marx in terms of individuality, sociality, and cultivated sensibility, by Hegel, in terms of individuality an universality. Thus, while they employ the expression in the same senses, their conceptions of self-alienation differ.

Marx's use of the expression is of greater interest than Hegel's. One may question whether the social substance may legitimately be considered the individual's objectification, and a part of his "self", but his own product may quite reasonably be so conceived. The same is true of his productive capacity. Marx's notion of the alienation of labour and the product indicates perspicaciously the usefulness of the expression "self alienation". It enables one to indicate the deeper significance of the phenomenon.

In respect of Hegel and Marx, one estimates of their conceptions of man's essential nature, and of their suggestion that a disparity can exist between it and a person's actual condition. Marx's conception and suggestion should enable one to refer to the existence of such a disparity conveniently, and the expression "self-alienation" will serve the purpose well.

Apropos Marx's conception of man's nature, there is much to be said for his insistence upon the inclusion of reference to man's senses and his interpersonal relationships. Marx is keenly aware of the power of social institutions to shape men, but he shares the Romantic views that the influence of these institutions are detrimental to human development. In his eyes, they serve primarily to serve or further the interests of the dominant class. But he has little to say about them in his characterization of "truly human life" in the ideal, classless society.

Here Hegel may have had deeper insight, in his insistence upon the importance of the "social substance" in human life. For him, the idea of participation in socio-cultural institutions is inseparable from the idea of life that is truly human, Marx's insistence on the exploitative character of existing political and economic institutions urged him to depreciate their importance and the broader functions these institutions generally have. In the question of justifiability Hegel's concept of man's nature appears superior to that of Marx's.

## IX

Marx traces alienation to egoism and the existence of alienation to the predominance of egoistic need". This expression implies the idea of greed or acquisitiveness, and "physical need", i.e. the kind of need associated with survival. These needs are only the immediate source of alienation, while the fundamental source lies in the nature of civil society and the institution of private property around which it is organized.

This has profound implications for the issue whether and how such need can be eradicated, and the resulting alienation overcome. It is commonly held that human nature and human inadequacy are responsible for the

greediness and neediness of men. The latter either are ineradicable or can be mitigated only by changes effected at the level of the individual person and in the technological sphere. Marx takes the position that both the "desposition of physical need" and the greed which prevail in civil society are results of the nature of civil society itself. He concludes that their eradication can *only* be accomplished by changing the socio-economic system of civil society. He quite explicitly takes the same position, and draws the same conclusion, with regard to the origin and overcoming of the various forms of alienation. For Marx, "the positive suppression of *Private property* .... is the positive suppression of all alienation"<sup>34</sup>. In this light, one can understand Marx's intense dissatisfaction with Hegel's programme for the overcoming of alienation. It can hardly be overcome, in Marx's view, by conforming to the existing social order, for he holds that contemptment in it is precisely the root of the problem. For both Hegel and Marx, the problem is to resolve the conflict between existence and essence. For Marx, however, the true solution of the conflict is possible only through a fundamental socio-economic reorganization, namely, the positive suppression of private property. It is in these terms that he conceives communism. Indeed, Marx states that communism is the solution. It is because he traces it to this source that he can speak of "the categorical imperative to over through all these conditions in which man is afased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being."<sup>35</sup> Marx observes that it is only when industry is very highly developed that "the emancipation of humanity" from the necessity of working simply in order to live becomes a possibility." Prior to this stage of development, labour is a mere means of physical existance, regardless of the character of the prevailing socio-economic institutions. In is only under certain circumstances, therefore, that the deposition of physical need can legitimately be attributed to the operation of socio-economic institutions, and that its diminution can reasonably be expected through their transformation.

This is quite an attractive view. But Marx does not provide a satisfactory explanation of how civil society comes to have the character he attributes to it, if not because *men* are inherently egoistic. If men are inherently egoistic, its character is easily explained. It reflects man's innate

disposition., Marx rejects this explanation, but appears to have no adequate one of his own. His only attempt to provide one has in his blaming christianity. He contends that christianity taught men to be spiritually self-centred, and thereby to a spiritual egoism" which "in practice becomes a material egoism". The character of civil society is thus suggested to reflect not on innate disposition of man, but one acquired under the influence of christianity. Can this view be globalised covering other religions like Buddhism? However, Marx's critique of Judaishm and Christianity only *postpones* the need for an explanation of the emergence of egoism. Marx's explanation occurs in his early essay "On the Jewism question", but he does not suggest it in the *Manuscripts*. One could argue that if Marx has failed to give an explanation as how and why egoism originated, then his discussion of the origin and overcoming of alienation is rendered questionable.

And finally as a point about conceptual methodology I should like to state the following. Hegel uses the term 'alienation' in two distinct senses: in the sense of "separation" and in the sense of "surrender". Marx neither rejects one of these senses, nor introduces a radically new sense of the term, but rather fuses Hegel's two senses. This results in that the term for him has the single sense of "separation through surrender". Hegel equivocates his term, using alienation' in two distinct senses. This is a source of confusion. Marx may be expected to improve on Hegel by eliminating the possible confusion. But this does not happen. Marx's retention of the ideas of both separation and surrender allows him to emphasize first the one and then the other, even when speaking of the same kind of alienation, thereby giving rise to antiquities concerning its necessary and sufficient conditions. In one passage, for example he characterizes the alienations of labour as "the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him."<sup>36</sup> In another, he refers to it as " the act of alienation of practical human activity."<sup>37</sup> The former suggests that labour is termed "alienated" primarily by virtue of its separation form the worker's interests and personality; while the latter suggests that its surrender by the worker is the definitive factor. Hegel at least avoids ambiguities of this sort.

NOTES

1. *From Hegel to Marx*, University of Michigan Press, 1862, 8,5.
2. *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press 1964, 13, 176.
3. *The Essence of Christianity*, quoted in Schacht, *Alienation*, P 68.
4. *Early Writings* (ed, and trans) T.B. Bottomore, London:C.A. Watt, 1963, 215.
5. *Philosophy of Right*, trans, T.M. Krook, Oxford, 1942, Section 56. In the paragraph above we have been summarizing Hegel's views as in the sections 35,45,54,54 and 58.
6. *Op. cit.* Section. 44
7. *PM* 238. 239
8. *Early Writings*, 148
9. *Early Writings*, 153
10. *Early Writings*, 189
11. *Early Writings*, 127
12. *Early Writings*, 156.
13. *Early Writings*, 132
14. *Early Writings*, 125
15. *Early Writings*, 156.
16. *Early Writings*, 189
17. *Early Works*, 122-123
18. *Early Works*, 122-123
19. *Early Works*, 177-78.
20. *Early Works*, 122

21. *Early Works*, 72-73
22. *Early Writings*, 124.
23. *Early Writings*, 126.
24. *Early Works*, 130.
25. *Early Works*, 71
26. *Early Works*, 129
27. *Early Works*, 155.
28. *Early Works* 26., 38-39
29. *Early Works*, 129.
30. *Early Works*. 71.72 and 187 - 188
31. *Early Works*, 161
32. *Early Works*, 159-160
33. *Early Works* 169
34. *Early Works*, 156
35. *Early Works*, 52
36. *Early Works*, 126 (Emphasis added)
37. *Early Works*, 125 (Emphasis added)

## ON BASIC PARTICULARS

JASHOBANTA RAY

'Particulars' play a primary role in the core of our thought structure. It is 'particulars' with which we think about the world which is presented to us. The world consists of 'particulars' and therefore any thought about the world will involve the use of particulars. In this paper an attempt is made (1) to give a brief exposition of the views of Locke, Hume, Leibnitz and early Wittgenstein on the nature of basic particulars, (2) to give a detailed account of Strawson's view of basic particulars, (3) to put forward Strawsonian argument against the views of these philosophers, and (4) to show some inadequacies in Strawsonian view of basic particulars.

### I

Let us begin with the Locke's view of 'particulars'. Locke says that in reality there are only particulars but in our minds there is something else not images but ideas. By 'idea' he means that the term, which stands for the object of the understanding when, a man thinks. He adds that it will easily be granted to us that there are such ideas in man's mind, everyone is conscious of them in himself also conscious of them in others. Whatever conscious activity we are engaged upon, we must necessarily be 'having ideas'. Locke sometimes thought of these ideas as 'mental images' or 'pictures in the mind's eye'. It is assumed that, in relation to anything in the world, there can be my idea of it and the thing itself. We all have ideas, which are expressed by the words such as whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion etc. These 'ideas' Locke considers as 'simple ideas' which supply the materials for our experience. He says that in our experience of