

REIFICATION-THINGIFICATION AND ALIENATION

--- BASIC CONCEPTS OF MARX'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND PRACTICAL MATERIALISM---

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I. *Reification (Versachlichung) and Thingification (Verdinglichung)*

In this paper, I attempt to clarify the basic categories constituting Marx's theory of reification (*Versachlichung*), thingification (*Verdinglichung*) and alienation (*Entfremdung*), and to explain their logical interrelation in order to reconsider the logical structure of the method of his critique of the political economy and the actual meaning of his materialism, which he names practical materialism.

The German language has two words standing for the thing (*la chose* in French) : *Sache* and *Ding*. *Sache* and *Ding* have different meanings even in everyday German. *Sache* stands for matter, business, case, cause (political or social), briefly something that owes its existence to some complicated social relations as background while *Ding* stands for a natural or material thing. Marx regards the common essence of commodity, money and capital as a phenomenal conversion of the relations between persons into those between things, and further differentiates two different levels of conversion in terms of *Sache* and *Ding*. The relations between commodity producers convert themselves into those of things (*Sachen*). At this stage, the mystification of economic relations just takes the first step because the thing (*Sache*) itself represents a social relation. However, when the conversion takes a further step from *Sache* to *Ding*, the dimension of the relations between things (*Sachen*) disappears, and a thing (*Ding*) shows itself only as a bearer of different properties. To illustrate the second phase of conversion, profit, interest and ground rent are in essence nothing but different phenomenal forms of objectified surplus-labor that the industrial capital gratuitously extracts from wage laborers. However, at the phenomenal level, their relations to the surplus-labor of laborers are completely concealed; means of production, money and ground appear to be endowed by nature with the ability to spontaneously bear profit, interest, and ground rent as their fruits. This type of mystification of economic relations

in the final phase is termed thingification (Verdinglichung), which means the conversion of Sache into Ding, and is conceptually differentiated from reification (Versachlichung), which means the conversion of person into thing (Sache) on a relational level.

Now, we would like to explain the conceptual development of reification into thingification in terms of commodities. Marx grasps the capitalist economic system as a reified relation of producers, and formulates basic categories constitutive of reification in the theory of commodities. In *Capital*, Marx calls labor that produces commodities private labor. This means that labor must assume a social character because, although it is conducted without regarding others' labor, it must depend on others' labor as a constituent of the social division of labor; namely, each unit of labor must assume a social character in spite of being deprived of it. In order that each private labor may function as a member of a spontaneous system of social division of labor, it must assume the following double social character: First, each private labor as a special and useful one must satisfy special social needs. Second, each private labor must be valid and exchangeable as equal to another. However, it is not qualified to prove this double social character in its working action because it is done independently without regard to others' labor. Therefore, it cannot express its social character as a constituent of a social division of labor until its product is exchanged with another. Through the necessity that social relations between persons in their production indirectly appear as social relations between things [Sachen], the social character of private labor constituting a social division of labor must be objectified as properties of labor products, namely as dual material [dinglich] properties that represent use-value and value as two elements of a commodity.

What matters here is the specific character of being [Seinscharakter] of the value of a commodity because the use-value of a commodity is immediately embodied in a commodity as a thing [Ding]. Whether it can satisfy any special social needs in the spontaneous division of labor or not depends on the social quality it contains while, to the contrary, the value of a commodity is an invisible property in each commodity itself although the value forms itself as a material [dinglich] property immanent in a commodity. Therefore, the value requires a specific way of expression for itself. The task of the theory of value-form consists in explaining how this essentially invisible

value can be phenomenally expressed.

In *Capital*, Marx begins the analysis of the appearance (expression) of value-form with a well-known example: 20 yards of linen are worth 1 coat. Within this simple value-relation, 20 yards of linen represent a commodity whose value is expressed while 1 coat does nothing but offer the other commodity (20 yards of linen) a material for the value-expression. Marx calls the former commodity the relative value-form and the latter the equivalent form (or simply equivalent [Äquivalent]). In the simple value-relation, the linen first equalizes the coat as its own value-mirror (Wertspiegel) or value-body (Wertkörper) with itself. By value-mirror, Marx understands a mirror reflecting a value that exists as an invisible property in a commodity (the linen in this case) while the value-thing means a use-value (the coat in this case) that immediately in its concrete use-form embodies the value. In this way, a commodity playing as an equivalent (the coat) acquires a property of “direct exchangeability.” Through this detour in which a commodity playing as an equivalent is recognized as a valid value-body, the concrete useful labor (sewing in this case) that produces the coat is also factually reduced to common abstract human labor. Thus, the linen first gives the coat a competency to directly in its concrete form of use-value embody the value-character common to commodities. Then, the linen expresses its own value-character or exchangeability as far as it can be equalized with the coat. Weaving that produces the linen can also be recognized as abstract human labor as far as it objectifies value. This is the second detour in the expression of value.

The value of a commodity playing as a relative value-form (the linen) exhibits value as a social relation because this value must be expressed in a certain quantity of use-value of another commodity (the coat). On the other hand, the other commodity as an equivalent in its specific concrete form can be recognized as a tangible form of value, and phenomenally appears as having an inherent natural property of direct exchangeability. In the commodity as equivalent, the value-form is agglutinated with use-value and transformed into a property of a thing (Ding). Through this transformation, the equivalent appears to keep the property of direct exchangeability even outside the above-mentioned value-relation although this competency can be effective only in a value-relation in which the linen is related to the coat as an equivalent. Marx defines the social relation that causes a social natural property

[gesellschaftliche Natureigenschaft] as thingification [Verdinglichung] as will be considered below.

What characterizes the capitalist commodity society derives from the uniquely (indirectly) social character of private labor that, although totally dependent on each other, is deprived of socialness. In this society, the social relations of private laborers to each other do not appear as social relations in the dimension of labor but assume a converted [verkehrt] form of appearance as the social relations of things (Sachen) to each other. Thus, the conversion [Verkehrung] of social relations of persons to persons into social relations of things (Sachen) to things can be defined as reification (Versachlichung); this means a process that, in the dimension of social relations, switches from the person to the thing. Through this switch, furthermore, the social character of private labor appears as a socio- natural property (gesellschaftliche Natureigenschaft) inherent in a commodity as a thing (Ding). The commodity phenomenally appears to inherently acquire this natural property even outside the social relations of things (Sachen) to each other. The conversion of social relations of things (Sachen) into social natural properties of things (Dinge) and the following deepening of concealment and mystification of social relations can be defined as thingification (Verdinglichung), which Marx distinguishes from Versachlichung as the first stage of the mystification process.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Marx's theory of reification and thingification consists of three logical stages: (1) the conversion of relations between persons into those of Sachen (reification); (2) the conversion of reified relations of Sachen into the socio- natural properties of Dinge (thingification); and finally (3) the conversion of production relations among persons into the reified-thingified relations of things (Sachen- Dinge) that embody socio- natural properties (reification-thingification) . The following quotation from the first volume of *Capital* corresponds to the logical transition from the second stage to the third.

Das Geheimnisvolle der Warenform besteht also einfach darin, das sie den Menschen die gesellschaftlichen Charaktere ihrer eignen Arbeit als gegenständliche Charaktere der Arbeitsprodukte selbst, als gesellschaftliche Natureigenschaften dieser Dinge zurückspiegelt, daher auch das gesellschaftliche Verhältnis der Produzenten zur

Gesamtarbeit als ein auser ihnen existierendes gesellschaftliches Verhältnis von Gegenständen. Durch dies Quidproquo werden die Arbeitsprodukte Waren, sinnlich übersinnliche oder gesellschaftliche Dinge.

[The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labor themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labor as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labor become commodities, namely sensuously supersensible or social things.](MEW 23: 86)

There are three fundamental notions for the theory of thingification: (1) the socio-natural properties (gesellschaftliche Natureigenschaften) of Dinge; (2) substitution (Quidproquo); and (3) sensuously supersensible or social things (sinnlich übersinnliche oder gesellschaftliche Dinge). From the context, it is evident that "sensuously supersensible or social" in the third notion stands for having socio-natural properties. Therefore, sensuously supersensible or social things mean things (Dinge) that embody socio-natural properties.

One of the reasons why, in the long history of studies on Marx, researchers have paid little attention to the difference between reification and thingification is related to the fact that, in the original texts of *Capital*, reification is used no more than four times, and thingification only two times. As we have seen, this does not mean that such notions are of little importance for Marx's critique of the political economy.

Now, we are going to investigate how and in what context Marx uses them.

Der der Ware immanente Gegensatz von Gebrauchswert und Wert, von Privatarbeit, die sich zugleich als unmittelbar gesellschaftliche Arbeit darstellen muss, von besonderer konkreter Arbeit, die zugleich nur als abstrakt allgemeine Arbeit gilt, von **Personifizierung der Sache und Versachlichung der Personen**— dieser immanente Widerspruch erhält in den Gegensätzen der Warenmetamorphose seine entwickelten Bewegungsformen.

[There is an antithesis, immanent in the commodity, between use-value and value, between private labor that must simultaneously manifest itself as directly social labor, and a particular concrete kind of labor that simultaneously counts as merely abstract universal labor, between personification of thing and reification of persons; the antithetical phases of the metamorphosis of the commodity are the developed forms of motion of this immanent contradiction.] (MEW 23: 128)

Reification signifies the phenomenal conversion of the production relations among persons into those of things (Sachen) to each other. The reification of persons (or subjects) implies the personification (or subjectification) of things (or objects) and vice versa. To express this twofold conversion, Marx generally mentions reification and personification in pairs. This constitutes the essence of reification different from thingification that generally pairs with socio-natural properties. Reification is also conceptualized as “the reversal of subjects into objects” (MEGA II/4.1: 64) and at the same time as “the reversal between things and persons¹.”

In diesen zwei Formen des Mehrwerths [=Zins und industrieller Profit] ist also die Natur desselben; das Wesen des Capitals und der Charakter der capitalistischen Production vollständig nicht nur ausgelöscht, sondern ins Gegenteil verkehrt. Aber insofern auch der Charakter und die Gestalt des Capitals vollendet, als die Versubjectivirung der Sachen, die Versachlichung der Subjekte, die Verkehrung von Ursache und Wirkung, das religiöse quid pro quo, die reine Form des Capitals G-G', sinnlos, ohne alle Vermittlung dargestellt und

¹ “Der bestimmte *ökonomische* Charakter von *Lebensmitteln*, sich Arbeiter zu kaufen, oder von *Productionsmitteln*, von Leder und Leisten - Schustergesellen *anzuwenden*, diese Verkehrung zwischen Sache und Person, also der capitalistische Charakter ist mit dem stofflichen Charakter der Productionselemente so untrennlich verwachsen in der capitalistischen Production und daher in der Phantasie der politischen Oekonomen.” [The definite *economic* character of *means of subsistence* to buy laborers, or that of *means of production*, for example, of skins and lasts to *apply* shoemakers, this reversal between thing and person, therefore, the capitalist character is so inseparably conglutinated with the material character of the production elements in the capitalist production, and, therefore, in the phantasy of the political economists.] (MEGA II/4.1, S.82)

In this quotation, the ‘reversal between thing and person,’ which means the reversal of thing to person and of thing to person, namely subject, refers to reification while the inseparable conglutination ‘with the material character of the production elements’ refers to thingification.

ausgedrückt wird.

[In these two forms of surplus-value [=interest and industrial profit], therefore, the nature of surplus-value, the essence of the capital and the character of the capitalist production is completely not only deleted but also reversed into the opposite. However, as far as subjectification of things, reification of subjects, reversal of cause and effect, religious substitution, and the pure form of capital M[Money]- M'are described and expressed in a senseless way without any mediation, the character and the figure of capital is also completed.] (MEGA II/3.4, S.1494)

In the third volume of *Capital* we find one single sentence where reification and thingification are explained in a different context:

In Capital - Profit oder noch besser Capital - Zins, Grund und Boden - Rente, Arbeit - Arbeitslohn, in dieser ökonomischen Trinität als dem Zusammenhang der Bestandtheile des Werths und des Reichthums überhaupt mit seiner Quellen, ist die Mystification der capitalistischen Productionsweise, **die Verdingchung der socialen Verhältnisse und das unmittelbare Zusammenwachsen der stofflichen Productionsverhältnisse mit ihrer socialen Bestimmtheit** vollendet. Die verzauberte, verkehrte und auf den Kopf gestellte Welt, wo Monsieur le Capital und Madame la Terre als sociale Charaktere und zugleich unmittelbar als **blasse Dinge** ihren Spuk treiben. Es ist das grosse Verdienst der klassischen Oekonomie diesen falschen Schein, diesen Trug, Verselbstständigung und Verknöcherung der verschiedenen socialen Elemente des Reichthums gegen einander, **diese Personificirung der Sachen und Versachlichung der Productionsverhältnisse**, diese Religion of every day's life, aufgelöst zu haben.

[Capital - profit (or much better capital - interest), land - ground-rent, labor - wages, this economic trinity as the connection between the components of value and wealth in general and its sources, completes the mystification of the capitalist mode of production, **the thingification of social relations, namely the immediate coalescence of the material relations of production with their**

historical and social specificity: the bewitched, distorted und upside-down world where Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre, who are at the same time social characters and **mere things (Dinge)**, go on a ghostly spree. It is the great merit of classical economics to have dissolved this false appearance and deception, this autonomization and ossification of the different social elements of wealth vis-a-vis one another, **this personification of things and reification of the relations of production.**] (MEGA II/4.2: 852, MEW 25: 838)

In the above-quoted sentences we can see what reification means from this phrase: ‘this personification of things and reification of the relations of production.’ On the other hand, what distinguishes thingification from reification consists in the definition of thingification as ‘the immediate coalescence of the material relations of production with their historical and social specificity.’ In the quoted sentences, Marx treats the so-called economic trinity, according to which capital, ground, and labor automatically bear respectively interest, ground rent, and wages. Here, ‘the material relations of production’ refers to the technical functional relations of material elements constituting the production process like ground, the means of production and labor to each other while ‘their historical and social specificity’ refers to specific social determinations like ground rent, profit (interest), and wage that the above-mentioned elements of production create in capitalist production. By thingification Marx understands ‘the immediate coalescence of the material determinations of elements constituting the capitalist production process with their specifically social determinations,’ and, more generally, the inseparable coalescence between the socially determined and the naturally determined conditions of production elements (means of production, ground, labor, etc.). This coalescence causes the disappearance of specific social determinations in the capitalist mode of production in which, on the surface of capitalist production, nothing but the natural and material relations of production without any social-historical limitations appear. Thingification assumes its most complete form in the economic trinity. It already begins in the world of commodities. In this sense, the logic of *Capital* stands for the logical development of the deepening mystification of capitalist production from commodity and money through industrial, commercial, and interest-bearing capital to property on the ground.

As we have considered above, Marx characterizes natural determinations that, resulting from the coalescence of social and natural ones, veil the social ones in themselves in terms of properties (Eigenschaften). Things as Sachen still reserve the determinations of social relations of Sachen to one another or to persons while, on the contrary, things as Dinge are purged of any relational determinations and related to nothing but their own natural properties that are often characterized as properties immanent in things (Dinge).

das Ding nun als Capital und das Capital als **blosses Ding** erscheint, das gesammte Resultat des capitalistischen Productions- und Circulationsprocesses als **eine dem Ding inhärente Eigenschaft**.

[Now, the thing (Ding) appears as capital and capital as a **simple thing (Ding)**, the whole result of capitalist production- and circulationprocess as a **property immanent in the thing (Ding)**] (MEGA II/3.4: 1455).

In spite of the conceptual difference between these two notions, we should not comprehend them in an inflexible, fixed way because they both represent the inseparable double factors constituting the whole reversal of the capitalist system. Thingification neither exists without reification, nor does the latter function without thingification. Therefore, they neither contradict nor exclude each other at all. The conceptual difference consists in the difference of aspects focused upon or referred to in the context of the text. In the case of Ding, the focus is set on a specific relation of a thing to certain socio-natural properties while, in the case of Sache, the focus is placed on a specific reversal of relations of persons into those of things (Sachen)².

Based on the conceptual characteristics of both notions, we can discover a number of passages in Marx's texts in which he discusses them in a loaded way without

² "Ihr wechselseitiger Zusammenhang erscheint ihnen [=den Individuen] selbst fremd, unabhängig, als eine Sache. Im Tauschwerth ist die gesellschaftliche Beziehung der Personen in ein gesellschaftliches Verhältnis der Sachen verwandelt; das persönliche Vermögen in ein sachliches." [The mutual relations of individuals appear to themselves as alien, independent, namely as a thing (Sache). In exchange-value the social relation of persons is transformed into a social relation of things (Sachen), personal competency into a thing-like (sachlich) one.] (MEGA II/1.1: 90)

explicitly mentioning the notions. We should take all important passages of this type into consideration in order to adequately comprehend the entire implications of both notions. As an example, I like to introduce a very significant passage concerning thingification from the third volume of *Capital*:

Wir haben bereits bei den einfachsten Kategorien der capitalistischen Produktionsweise, der *Waare* und dem *Geld* den mystificirenden Charakter nachgewiesen, der die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse, denen die stofflichen Elemente des Reichthums in der Production als Träger dienen, in Eigenschaften dieser Dinge selbst verwandelt (*Waare*) und noch ausgesprochener die Produktionsverhältnisse selbst in ein Ding verwandelt. (*Geld*.) Alle Gesellschaftsformen, soweit sie es zur Waarenproduction und Geldcirculation bringen, participiren an dieser Verkehrung. Aber in der capitalistischen Produktionsweise und dem Capital, welches seine herrschende Kategorie, sein herrschendes Produktionsverhältniß bildet, entwickelt sich dieß viel weiter, diese verzauberte und verkehrte Welt.

[We have already shown in considering the simplest categories of the capitalist mode of production, and even commodity production in general, namely commodity and money, the mystifying character that transforms the social relations for which the material elements of wealth serve as bearers in the course of production into properties of these things [Dinge] themselves (commodity), and still more explicitly transforms the relation of production itself into a thing [ein Ding] (money). All forms of society are subject to this reversal, insofar as they involve commodity production and monetary circulation. In the capitalist mode of production, however, where capital is the dominant category and forms the specific relation of production, this bewitched and reversed world develops much further.] (MEGA II/4.2: 848-849, MEW 25: 835)

From the above-quoted passage, we can see that thingification involves three phases in its logical development: (1) the first phase is where certain determinations of social relations appear as certain properties of things (Dinge). This phase corresponds to the thingification in commodities with use-value and value as their socio-natural properties.

(2) The second phase refers to thingification (mystification) which transforms the production relation itself into one single thing (Ding). This phase corresponds to the thingification in money. (3) The third phase refers to thingification in capital, which further develops the reversal and mystification.

Thingification as the coalescence of social determinations with natural-material ones constitutes a base for fetishism in the everyday representations of bourgeois society and, therefore, in the bourgeois economy.

Daher auf Grundlage des capitalistischen Produktionsprocesses dieses *unzertrennliche Zusammenschmelzen der Gebrauschswerthe*, worin das Capital in der Form von *Productionsmitteln* existirt, und der Bestimmung dieser Productionsmittel, dieser *Dinge* als *Capital*, was sein bestimmtes gesellschaftliches Produktionsverhältnis ist, grade, wie innerhalb dieser Produktionsweise, den in ihr Befangnen *Product* an und für sich als *Waare* gilt. Dies bildet eine Basis für den Fetischismus der Politischen Oekonomen.

[Therefore, on the base of the capitalist production process, this *inseparable coalescence of use-values* in which capital exists in the forms of *means of production* with the determination of these means of production, namely these *things* (Dinge) as *capital*, which is itself a determined social production relation, is just the same as inside this mode of production a *product* in itself passes to the people captured in it for a *commodity*. This constitutes a base for fetishism of the political economists.] (MEGA II/4.1: 58-59)

However, thingification itself must be distinguished from fetishism because the latter is related to the reversed- distorted consciousness caused by the former while the former is related to the reversed reality of the economic system, which cannot be reduced to a reversed-distorted consciousness³.

The necessity of conceptually distinguishing thingification from fetishism does not become urgent until we fully comprehend the capital-thigification in terms of the

³ “...ist diese Verdrehung und Verkehrung eine *wirkliche*, keine *blos gemeinte*, blos in der Vorstellung der Arbeiter und Capitalisten existirende.” [This distortion and reversal is a real one, not merely a conceived one, not merely existing in the imagination of capitalists and laborers.] (MEGA II/1.2: 698)

production powers of capital [Produktivkräfte des Capitals] instead of reversed distorted consciousness. Capital in its real subsumption of labor under capital [reale Subsumtion der Arbeit unter das Capital] acquires a competency to continually revolutionize the production processes in accordance with capital's needs and requests.

III. *Fetishism and Personification of Things*

In commodity production, value appears as a socio-natural property of things, and the law of value (Wertgesetz) like a natural law holds sway over commodity producers. In this sense, commodities become sensuously supersensible or social things [sinnlich übersinnliche oder gesellschaftliche Dinge]. The social power acquired by labor products as things derives from the necessity that the labor of producers, although totally dependent on each other, are nevertheless unable to immediately obtain social competence in the dimension of labor as action so that they must totally transfer their own social characteristics to their own products.

Marx defines a thing equipped with this social power (to rule over persons or subjects) as fetish. This fetishism means the consciousness of producers and other economic agents that accept the fetish as a self-evident social fact. In societies producing commodities, social relations of productions appear as relations of things equipped with socio-natural properties and, as a result, products must appear as fetishes. These relations are themselves objective ones. The producers involved in them are conscious of them as self-evident relations. Fetishism is a reversed consciousness as long as it falls victim to reification and thingification. In this sense, it can be criticized in a scientific way as Marx did in his critique of political economy. However, this consciousness itself is inevitably formed as "natural" consciousness in societies producing and exchanging commodities.

As we have seen, in the capitalist economic system, the social relations of productive subjects appear as those of things (Versachlichung der Person), and things acquire the social power to decide the fate of productive subjects. However, things such as commodities, money, and capital cannot move about in the market of their own accord. In order to socially function as things, they require specific agents that move them about. In this way, the further development of reification establishes subjects that

subjectively represent the functions of things and satisfy their demands. Marx calls this process the personification of things (Personifizierung der Sachen). Capitalism can function as an economic system only because producers accept the social functions of things by their own subjective will and actively act as faithful agents to things.

Le capitaliste n'a aucune raison d' être sociale, qu' autant qu' il fonctionne comme capital personnifié. Le capitaliste n' est respectable qu' autant qu' il est le capital fait homme. Sa volonté et sa conscience ne réfléchissant que les besoins du capital qu' il représente.

[Except that the capitalist functions as capital personified, he has no reason for social existence. The capitalist is respectable only as far as he is capital made human. His will and consciousness reflect nothing more than the needs of the capital he represents.] (French Edition of *Capital*, MEGA II/7: 514)⁴

What is said of the capitalist in the above quotation is applicable to all forms of personification of things: i.e., a commodity producer as commodity personified, a money holder as money personified, and a laborer as labor personified. The personification of things explains that the action performed by persons, although they act of their own free will, is nothing but the function of things provided with will and consciousness in persons as bearers of things. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the independent subjectification (Subjektivierung) of things is based upon specific subjective activity on the part of subjects. Commodity exchange is not possible without spontaneous interaction of commodity holders that have a concrete desire for commodities. In this exchange relation, they recognize each other as free and equal commodity holders only in terms of personified commodity. In the production process of capital, the capitalist and the laborer actively behave only as personified capital and personified labor respectively. Although the subjects act of their own free will, they act in such a way that the capital as independent and self-valorizing value is transformed

⁴ “Nur soweit der Kapitalist personifiziertes Kapital ist, hat er einen historischen Wert und jenes historische Existenzrecht. Nur als Personifikation des Kapitals ist der Kapitalist respektabel.” [Except as capital personified, the capitalist has no historical value and no right to that historical existence. Only as a personification of capital is the capitalist respectable.] (MEW 23: 618)

into a dominant subject in the production process. Thus, the reified economic system is maintained by the action of human subjects with the reified consciousness under the sway of the reified system.

IV. Thingification of Capital in the Capitalist Production Process

1. Thingification of Capital as Subsumption of Labor under Capital

Marx's theory of reification and thingification begins with reification and thingification of commodities and develops through those of money into those of capital. One of the reasons why his notion of thingification has attracted little attention of Marxian scholars is the fact that they have reduced thingification to fetishism. Marx's theory of thingification is applicable to dual theoretical fields: one field refers to the explanation of fetishism, while the other refers to the development of thingification of capital. It is just on the stage of capital-thingification that capital as a special relation of production not only transforms itself into properties coalescent with use-value such as value or equivalent on the stage of commodity-thingification but also coalesces (thingifies itself) with machinery, sciences, and technology so that capital can create the productive forces unique to capitalism.

Now, let us consider the development of thingification in the capitalist production process.

As soon as capital formally subsumes an existing production process under itself, the production process assumes a double character as a labor process in general as well as a self-valorizing process. In terms of the former, it represents a consciously controlled activity by which the laborer as a productive subject processes labor material with labor means. However, because this process is performed for purpose of self-valorizing capital, a reversal of the subject and the object in the production process takes place. In this reversal, it is not the laborer that applies the means of production but it is the means of production (objectified or dead labor) that applies him. In this case, the means of production functions as an absorber [Einsauger] (MEGA II/4.1: 63) that absorbs as much living labor as possible. Living labor done by the laborer is exploited only as a means to capitalize the advanced value.

Und erscheinen grade deswegen wieder die Produktionsmittel eminent der lebendigen Arbeit gegenüber als Dasein des *Capitals*, und zwar jetzt als Herrschaft der vergangnen, todten Arbeit über die lebendige.

[And just for this reason the means of production opposed to living labor again eminently appears as the existence of *capital*, and now as the sway of the past, dead labor over the living one.] (MEGA II/4.1: 63)

Marx defines thingification in the capitalist production process as the coalescence of the capital as a determined production relation with the means of production itself in the following way:

Auf Grundlage der capitalistischen Produktion erscheint diese Fähigkeit der vergegenständlichten Arbeit sich in *Capital* zu verwandeln, als ihnen [den Produktionsmitteln] an und für sich zukommend. Diese erscheinen daher an und für sich als *Capital* und das *Capital* daher, welches ein *bestimmtes Produktionsverhältnis* ausdrückt, als ein Ding.

[On the basis of capitalist production, this competency of objectified labor to transform itself into *capital* appears as inherent in the means of production itself. Therefore, it appears eminently as *capital* and, therefore, capital appears as a thing although it represents a *determined relation of production*.] (MEGA II/4.1: 63-64)

Thus, thingification in the capitalist production process can be defined as a process that makes capital representing a specific relation of production appear as inherent in the means of production as things. It is the labor of laborers that valorizes capital. The reason why this labor does not manifests itself as a creative activity to the laborer himself is that, in the capitalist production process, the labor of laborers is beforehand subsumed under capital and merges into it as a process of consumption of labor forces bought by capital.

2. The Real Subsumption of Labor under Capital

The formal subsumption [die formelle Subsumtion] of labor under capital Marx

defines as a process of formally transforming a production process provided with existing productive facilities and techniques into a capitalist mode of production simply by introducing wage labor.

On the other hand, the real subsumption [die reale Subsumtion] of labor under capital is defined as a process in which the capitalist relation of production is able to create a completely new mode of production and productive forces that can never be developed without the capitalist mode of production. These historically new productive forces which are unique to the capitalist mode of production are called the productive forces of capital. The predominance of the economic relation of capital to wage labor is not yet a condition sufficient enough to define such an economic system as a capitalist mode of production in the strict sense. The production relation of capital to wage labor cannot be fully characterized as capitalistic until this relation is equipped with productive forces unique to capitalism.

Marx defines the real subsumption of labor under capital as a capitalist mode of production that makes the production of relative surplus-value possible. This production depends upon the following two presuppositions:

First, through the concentration of a large number of laborers into a large-scale factory and the introduction of rational planned organization, capital continuously develops the social productive forces of labor [gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft der Arbeit] and transforms them into the productive forces of capital alienated from working individuals.

Unter allen Umständen ist die spezifische Produktivkraft des kombinierten Arbeitstags gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft der Arbeit oder Produktivkraft gesellschaftlicher Arbeit. Sie entspringt aus der Kooperation selbst. Im planmässigen Zusammenwirken mit andern streift der Arbeiter seine individuellen Schranken ab und entwickelt sein Gattungsvermögen.

[Under all circumstances, the special productive force of the combined working day is the social productive force of labor or the productive force of social labor. This originates from cooperation itself. In the systematically planned cooperation with other laborers each laborer grows out of his own individual limits and develops his genus ability.] (MEW 23: 349)

Thus, each laborer develops in planned cooperation his own genus ability [Gattungsvermögen]. However, it is not the laborer himself but the capital that develops this genus ability. Therefore, this ability does not appear to be the productive force of the laborer but of capital.

Second, by introducing machinery into the production process, capital frees it from the physical and mental limitations of human beings. At the same time, capital causes continuous revolution of the technological bases in the production process by applying sciences to it.

Mit der realen Subsumtion der Arbeit unter das Capital findet eine völlige [und sich beständig fortsetzende und wiederholende] Revolution in der Produktionsweise selbst statt, in der Productivität der Arbeit und im Verhältnis von Capitalist und Arbeiter.

[Together with the real subsumption of labor under capital, a complete [and constantly continuing and repeated] revolution takes place in the mode of production itself, in the productivity of labor and in the relation between capitalist and laborer.] (MEGA II/4.1: 105)

The mode of production unique to capitalism is defined by Marx as a mode of production that enables capital as a special relation of production to constantly cause technological revolution in the production process. Capital owes it to thingification that capital obtains such power to intervene in the natural material world that this world constantly becomes transformed in a capitalist-technological way. The coalescence of social elements with material- natural ones in capital thingification enables capital to fundamentally change material- natural processes by manipulating social elements. Capital has created a production system in which it subsumes the sciences under itself, accommodates them to the requirements of capital and constantly applies any scientific achievements to the production process. In this sense, the theory of the real subsumption of labor under capital must theoretically cover that of the sciences under capital. Capitalist production no longer depends on the skill of laborers but mainly on the application of the sciences to production. In this sense, capitalism transforms

technique into technology that represents scientifically supported and organized techniques. Technology, therefore, stands for a system of knowledge, information, and techniques that develop the sciences as thingified capital motivated by profit and connects them with the capitalist production process.

Die Produktivkräfte direkt *gesellschaftlicher, vergesellschafteter* (gemeinsamer) Arbeit, durch die Cooperation, die Theilung der Arbeit innerhalb des Ateliers, die Anwendung der Maschinerie, die *Anwendung der Wissenschaft*, dieses *allgemeinen* Products der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung, auf den *unmittelbaren Productionprocess*, diess alles stellt sich dar als *Productivkraft des Capitals*, nicht als Productivkraft der Arbeit, oder nur als Productivkraft der Arbeit weder des einzelnen Arbeiters, noch der im Productionprocess combinirten Arbeiter. Die Mystification, die im Capitalverhältnis überhaupt liegt, wird jetzt viel weiter entwickelt, als es bei der nur formellen Subsumtion der Arbeit unter das Capital der Fall war und sein konnte. Andererseits tritt hier auch die historische Bedeutung der capitalistischen Production, eben durch die Umwandlung des unmittelbaren Productionprocesses selbst und die Entwicklung der gesellschaftlichen Productivkräfte der Arbeit erst hervor.

[The production forces of directly social, *socialized (common)* labor by means of cooperation, the division of labor within the workshop, the application of machinery, the application of science, this *general* product of social development, to the immediate *production process*, all of these manifest themselves as productive force of capital, not as productive force of labor neither of the particular laborer nor of the laborers combined in the production process. The mystification that lies in the relation of capital in general is now much more developed than it was or could have been in the merely formal subsumption of labor under capital. On the other hand, here, the historical meaning of capitalist production also for the first time appears just through the transformation of the immediate production process itself and the development of the social productive forces of labor.] (MEGA II/4.1: 95f.)

3. Sciences as a Productive Force of Capital

In the dimension of the productive forces of capital, the productive forces (the material elements generally applicable to different historical forms) and the relation of production (the historic-socially determined elements) are inseparably combined with each other and coalesce into one entity. Capital not only introduces into the capitalist relation of production sciences and technologies that spontaneously develop independently of capital (formal subsumption) but also takes the initiative in creating completely new sciences and technologies. In this sense, sciences and technologies in the capitalist era are imprinted with the capitalist character. They embody thingified capital. At the same time, they enable the capitalist production system to intervene in the natural ecology and the body and soul of human beings on an unprecedented scale.

This is a reason why production technologies developed in capitalism can hardly be transferred into countries and regions void of capitalist relations of production that create and secure them, as many examples of failure to introduce advanced technologies to the developing countries demonstrate. This is also a reason for the tragic history of former socialist countries that, under the slogan of scientific technological revolution, in vain pursued super-historical scientific technologies intended to be capitalist productive forces without capitalist relations of production while, in the introduction of technologies originally developed in the capitalist system, they created a monstrous production system that was functionally similar to the capitalist system. Any sciences and technologies, like nuclear weapons, atomic power generation and genetic recombination and modification, which endanger the preservation of the natural ecology and the survival of human beings, have been discovered and invented through the reified productive forces of capital. The sciences are the most influential form of fetishism in modern capitalism. They seem to be general intellectual achievements of human beings free from any capitalist determinations. Even many Marxist scholars that recognize themselves to be free from economic fetishism are deeply enmeshed by the notion of sciences as neutral products without any capitalist restraints. If the constant revolution of capitalist production essentially depends upon the development of social productive forces of capital by applying the sciences to production, their development itself must deeply be determined by the requirements of capital for this application to production. This is persuasively illustrated by the tremendous progress of various kinds of technologies and applied sciences from the nineteenth century. Even the pure natural

sciences like mathematics, physics, and chemistry could have capitalist power relations built in although they appear to be general achievements of scientists. So-called scientific socialism that a priori distinguishes the sciences as such from their capitalist use and regards the defense of scientific truth as one of the driving forces to overcome capitalism is a typical form of fetishism in capitalism; this is because the scientific socialism disregards thingification of sciences and regards nothing but their form of truth and generality in the phenomenal sphere.

Erst die kapitalistische Production verwandelt den materiellen Produktionsprozess in Anwendung *der Wissenschaft auf die Production* - science mise en pratique [Capitalist production for the first time transforms the material production process into the application of science to production - namely science put into practice] (MEGA II/3.6: 2065).

Wie der Produktionsprozess zur *Anwendung der Wissenschaft*, wird umgekehrt die Wissenschaft zu einem Factor, so zu sagen zu einer Function des Produktionsprocesses. Jede Entdeckung wird Basis neuer Erfindung oder neuer verbesserter Methoden der Production. Erst die kapitalistische Produktionsweise macht die Naturwissenschaften dem unmittelbaren Produktionsproceß dienstbar. *Exploitation der Wissenschaft*, des theoretischen Fortschritts der Menschheit. Das Capital schafft die Wissenschaft nicht, aber es exploitirt sie, eignet sie dem Produktionsproceß an. Damit zugleich *Trennung der Wissenschaft*, als auf die Production *angewandter Wissenschaft von der unmittelbaren Arbeit*.

[As the production process is transformed into the *application of science*, science is, on the contrary, transformed into a factor of the production process, so to speak, to a function of it. Each discovery becomes a base for a new invention or a new improved method. Capitalist production for the first time makes natural sciences serve the immediate production process. *the exploitation of science*, of the theoretical progress of humanity. Capital does not create science but exploits it, adapts it to the production process. Together with this, *the separation of science as science applied to production from immediate labor*] (MEGA II/3.6: 2060).

Marx in his various versions of *Economic Manuscripts* often underlines the application of science to production as an essential moment for the mode of production unique to capitalism. The relation of the sciences to capitalism for Marx is clearly expressed in the following sentence: capital does not create science but exploits it, adapts it to the production process. As far as capital does not create sciences, they must be created in fields relatively independent of the capitalist relation. When Marx places ‘natural science and its application’ in ‘the field of mental activity’ (MEGA II/4.2: 159), or characterizes ‘scientific work’ as ‘general work,’ or, furthermore, classifies scholars and inventors as ‘unproductive laborers,’ he regards another aspect of sciences that develop outside the capitalist production. However, as long as capital subordinates them to the capitalist production process, they must be more or less characterized as thingified capital. Although it is conceptually possible to distinguish science itself from its capitalist application, a highly complicated analysis is required to identify this distinction in a concrete way. On the other hand, if we dare to reduce all sciences to capitalist ones, we thoughtlessly disregard the real relations between the sciences and capitalism full of contradictions and tensions. We are unable to comprehend these relations until we take the whole range of relations of material and mental production in different historical periods into consideration. At all events, the theory of thingification is essential for elucidating how far sciences have been determined or transformed by the capitalist system because, through thingification, the sway of capitalism over sciences does not appear as such in the phenomenal dimension.

4. Rift in the Metabolism between Nature and Human Beings

In *Capital*, Marx gives a detailed account of a process in which the metabolism between nature and human being has been disturbed through the transformation of productive forces into those of capital in the tenth section of the thirteenth chapter of the first volume of *Capital*: Modern Industry and Agriculture.

Häuft die kapitalistische Produktion einerseits die geschichtliche Bewegungskraft der Gesellschaft [in grossen Städten], stört sie andererseits den Stoffwechsel zwischen Mensch und Erde, d.h. die Rückkehr der vom Menschen in der Form von Nahrungs- und Kleidungsmiteln vernutzten Bodenbestandteile zum Boden, also

die ewige Naturbedingung dauernder Bodenfruchtbarkeit.

[Capitalist production, on the one hand, concentrates the historical motive power of society [in great cities] while, on the other hand, it disturbs the metabolism between man and soil, namely prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing. It therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil.] (MEW 23: 528)

Jeder Fortschritt der kapitalistischen Agrikultur ist nicht nur ein Fortschritt in der Kunst, den Arbeiter, sondern zugleich in der Kunst, den Boden zu berauben. Die kapitalistische Produktion entwickelt daher nur die Technik und Kombination des gesellschaftlichen Produktionsprozesses, indem sie zugleich die Springquellen alles Reichtums untergräbt: die Erde und den Arbeiter.

[Any progress in capitalistic agriculture is progress in the art, not only of robbing the laborer, but of robbing the soil. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combination of the social production process only by sapping the original sources of all wealth, namely the soil and the laborer.] (MEW 23:529-530)

Marx concludes that the development of capitalist production saps the original sources of all wealth, namely the soil and the laborer. In the last phase of the writing of *Capital*, in 1864 to 1865, he intensively studied such agricultural chemists as Justus von Liebig (*Die Chemie in ihrer Anwendung auf Agricultur und Physiologie*. 7. Auflage, Braunschweig 1862) and James Finlay Weir Johnston (*Notes on North America, agricultural, economical, and social*. Vol.1, London 1851). By adopting the latest achievements in contemporary agricultural chemistry, he gained the new perspective that capitalist agriculture is essentially incompatible with the preservation of the soil and natural ecology. Thus, he opens up a new scientific field that is now called ecology. A huge number of extracts from the history of technology, physiology, geology, mineralogy, pedology, agricultural chemistry, inorganic and organic chemistry and the other natural sciences are contained in the excerpt notebooks by the latest Marx, especially in those in MEGA IV/23,26, and 31. Recent studies on Marx have made it clear that one of the main interests in the last phase of writing *Capital* lies in

elucidating a contradictory relation between capitalism and the soil (nature).

V. *The Relation of Alienation to Reification-thingification*

Unfortunately, Marxist scholars and researchers of the last half of the twentieth century could not develop Marx's theory of alienation sufficiently enough to go beyond achievements already done up to 1960s. Althusser played an important role in discrediting Marx's concept of alienation as presupposing humanistic essentialism and at the same time contaminated with Hegelian idealism that had profoundly influenced the young Marx. According to Althusser, giving up the concept of alienation must be a necessary step towards the scientific Marx that culminates in *Capital*.

Moreover, since 1970s, the dominance of the so-called "post- modern" thinking had almost completely swept away any sincere attempts to deal with Marx's concept of alienation in a philosophical and scientific way. Under the sway of "post- modern" thoughts, any serious philosophical projects to introduce the subject (or subject- object relations) as an indispensable key concept for comprehending the human society and history had simply been ignored or treated as still contaminated with an obsolete "modern" way of thinking. In Japan, Wataru Hiromatsu had, much influenced by Althusser, criticized the idea of alienation in the young Marx and characterized the development on Marx's thoughts as the transformation from the theory of alienation to that of reification. By this transformation hypothesis, he had much contributed to the propagation of such interpretation among Marxist scholars as to think that the theory of alienation and that of reification are incompatible with each other.

Now, we like to examine the validity of Marx's theory of alienation. For this purpose, firstly, we like to textually analyze the use of alienation as an economic category in Marx's economic manuscripts preparing *Capital*.

The following passage in *Grundrisse* helps us consider alienation in relation to reification-thingification:

..... die Existenz des Geldes die Versachlichung des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhangs voraussetzt; Hier sagen die Oekonomen selbst, daß die Menschen der Sache (dem Geld) das Vertrauen schenken, was sie sich nicht als Personen schenken. Aber warum schenken sie der Sache das Vertrauen? Doch

offenbar nur als *versachlichtem Verhältniß* der Personen unter einander; als versachlichtem Tauschwerth und Tauschwerth ist nichts als eine Beziehung der produktiven Thätigkeit der Personen unter einander. Geld nützt ihm nur als "*Faustpfand der Gesellschaft*", aber solches Faustpfand ist es nur wegen seiner gesellschaftlichen (symbolischen) Eigenschaft; und gesellschaftliche Eigenschaft kann es nur besitzen, weil die Individuen ihre eigne gesellschaftliche Beziehung als Gegenstand sich entfremdet haben.

[The existence of money presupposes the reification of social relationship. Here, the economists say that people put their trust in the thing (money) that they do not in themselves as persons. But why do they put their trust in money? Certainly, they lay their trust in money only because it is just the *reified relation* of persons to each other, or just the reified exchange value, and exchange value is just a relationship of people's productive activity to each other. Money serves as a "*mortgage of society*," but money is such mortgage only because of its social (symbolic) property; and it can get such social property only because individuals alienate their own social relationship as an object from themselves.] (MEGA II/1.1: 93)

In the above quoted passage, reification consists in the reification of social relationship of persons to each other (in the first sentence). In the fourth sentence, the thing (Sache) consists of the following two elements: (1) the thing as the reified relation of persons to each other, and (2) the thing as the reified exchange value; The first element corresponds to reification in the narrow sense of the meaning while the second element to thingification, namely exchange value as a 'socio- natural property' created by the coalescence of the social determination with the natural material determination. The exchange value is related to reification as long as it is defined as a 'relationship of people's productive activity to each other' while it is related to thingification as long as it appears as a 'socio- natural property' belonging to a certain amount of precious metals. Lastly, in the last sentence, the reason for reification and thingification is explained in terms of alienation that 'individuals alienate their own social relationship as an object from themselves.' By alienation Marx understands the activity of individuals to alienate their own social relationships in the form of objects, in

opposition to themselves, from themselves. Here, we are able to discover that alienation share the same logical framework with reification-thingification; in other words, reification-thingification as a process in which the social relationships of individuals are, in the form of alien objects, distanced from, and made independent of them can be reformulated as alienation when this process is redefined in terms of the activity of individuals to relate to the action itself and its objects as alien to themselves. As long as objects to which laborers relate their alienated labor are in essence their own thingified social relationship, alienation by definition presupposes reification-thingification. On the other hand, as long as reification-thingification as a social relationship detached from persons and transformed into a ‘socio-natural property’ is ultimately based upon the activity of laborers to relate to objects and products of labor, and even to labor itself, as alien and opposed to themselves, reification-thingification is logically founded upon alienation.

Therefore, alienation and reification-thingification are the back and the front of the same coin. Marx had, already from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1843-44, understood both concepts as two aspects of the same social structure. Regarding that, in the above quoted passage, alienation refers to money, we can understand that alienation has a broad range of conceptual validity, and must not be reduced to the alienated labor in the capitalist production process as is often the case in the conventional Marx literature.

(1) Alienation Presupposes Reification-thingification

In this section, we like to establish the meaning of alienation for the mature Marx by examining the use of this term in texts in which the conceptual difference between Sache and Ding is introduced⁵.

As already shown, the most basic meaning of alienation in *Economic Manuscripts* preparing *Capital* can be described as such circumstance that the objective conditions of

⁵ In the First Volume (the Second Edition) of *Capital* (1872), Marx uses alienation (Entfremdung) and alienated (entfremdet) four times: MEGA II/6: 417, 527, 558, 588 (MEW23: 456, 596, 635, 674) . In the First Manuscript to the Third Volume of *Capital*(1864-65), he does five times: MEGA II/4.2: 119, 120, 337, 649, 846, 851. These terms are not found in the Second Volume of *Capital* edited by Engels.

labor⁶ (instruments of labor, objects of labor and means of subsistence) made independent as ‘alien objects’ of, opposed to, and dominant over laborers. Therefore, they are not only alienated from means of production but also from means of subsistence.

Die der Arbeit *entfremdete*, *verselbstständigte* und *verwandelte* Gestalt der Arbeitsbedingungen, worin also die *producirten Productionsmittel* zum *Capital* und die *Erde* zum Privateigenthum, zur *monopolisirten* Erde wird, zur *Grundgeeigneten*, fällt daher zusammen mit dem Dasein und der Function der *producirten Productionsmittel* und der *Erde* im Arbeitsproceß, Productionsproceß überhaupt.

[Therefore, the form of conditions of labor, *alienated* from labor, *made independent* and *transformed*, in which, therefore, the *produced means of production* becomes *capital*, the *ground* private property, namely *monopolized ground*, or *ground property*, becomes congruent with the existence of, and the function of the *produced means of production* and the *ground* in the labor process, the production process in general.] (MEGA II/4.2: 846)

We have to notice that means of production alienated from laborers are not such simple things as machines, raw materials or foods but those in which the social relationship of producers are thingified as ‘socio- natural properties.’ The labor products alienated from laborers under the rule of capital are not simply things but those as thingified social relationships of individuals to each other. As a bearer of thingified social relationships means of production and of subsistence are able to gain a ‘social power’ not only over laborers but also over capitalists.

Das Capital zeigt sich immer mehr als *gesellschaftliche Macht* (deren Functionär der Capitalist ist und die in gar keinem möglichen Verhältnisse mehr zu dem steht, was die Arbeit eines einzelnen Individuums schaffen kann), aber als *entfremdete*, *verselbstständigte gesellschaftliche Macht*, die als *Sache* - und als Macht des

⁶ Marx includes in the objective conditions of labor “Grund und Boden, Rohmaterial, Lebensmittel, Arbeitsinstrumente, Geld [ground, raw material, means of subsistence, instrument of labor, money]” (MEGA II/1.2: 406).

Capitalisten durch diese Sache - der Gesellschaft gegenübertritt.

[The capital more and more shows itself as *social power*, (whose executive the capitalist is, and that has no longer any possible relation to what the work of a particular individual can create), but as *alienated, independent social power* that, as thing (Sache) – and as power of the capitalist through this thing (Sache) – becomes opposed to society.] (MEGA II/4.2: 337)

From the above quoted passage, we can understand why alienation must be interpreted in the theoretical framework of reification-thingification. Some Marxian scholars have criticized the theory of alienation as taking into consideration nothing but a subject-object theory without regarding aspects of social relations. They have described so-called ‘alienated labor’ as a particular labor process isolated from the social division of labor in which a capitalist takes what a laborer produces. The most serious mistake in such interpretation on alienation lies in their incompetence to comprehend objects alienated from subjects as reified-thingified social relations. All of the means of production used by laborers in a labor process, the means of subsistence consumed by them and the products made by them are in essence the embodiment of reified social relations, and nevertheless, as a result of thingification (the coalescence of the social determination with the natural- material determination), appear as simple natural things (Dinge) in which any moments of social relations disappear.

Consequently, it follows that the theory of alienation and that of reification can be mediated by thingification. This will inevitably lead us to a new interpretation about the concept of ‘alienated labor’ in the First Manuscripts of *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44*.

No small numbers of Marxian scholars have been dissatisfied with the description of ‘alienated labor’ by the young Marx because (1) he analyzes nothing but a subject-object relation of a subject of labor to its object while he has not yet taken the aspects of mutual social relations of a subject to another subject (der gesellschaftliche Verkehr) into consideration; (2) the theory of alienation still remains too much ‘subjectivist’ as long as it presupposes ‘not- alienated,’ ‘authentic’ human essence so that the theory of alienation should be given up and replaced by the theory of reification focused upon social relations.

Now, we like to demonstrate that such criticism and interpretation are incompatible with Marx's texts in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44*.

Marx says: Wir gehn von einem Nationalökonomischen, *gegenwärtigen* Factum aus. [We start from a national-economic, *present* fact.] (MEGA I/2: 364) The concept of 'alienated labor' theoretically presupposes a society in which the full-scale commodity exchange and the capitalist production take place, the price of commodity consists of wages, profit (interest) and ground rent, and the rule of value in the production and the exchange of commodities prevails; circumstances that serve as the theoretical starting point for the political economy since Adam Smith serve as a stage for alienation.

Dieß Factum drückt weiter nichts aus, als : Der Gegenstand, den die Arbeit producirt, ihr Product, tritt ihr als ein *fremdes Wesen*, als eine, von d[em] Producenten *unabhängige Macht* gegenüber. Das Product der Arbeit ist die Arbeit, die sich in einem Gegenstand fixirt, sachlich gemacht hat, es ist die *Vergegenständlichung* der Arbeit. Die Verwirklichung der Arbeit ist ihre Vergegenständlichung. Diese Verwirklichung der Arbeit erscheint in dem nationalökonomischen Zustand als *Entwirklichung* des Arbeiters, die Vergegenständlichung als *Verlust des Gegenstandes* und *Knechtschaft unter dem Gegenstand*, die Aneignung als *Entfremdung*, als *Entäusserung*. In der Bestimmung, daß der Arbeiter zum *Product seiner Arbeit* als einem *fremden* Gegenstand sich verhält, liegen alle diese Consequenzen. Die *Entäusserung* des Arbeiters in seinem Product hat die Bedeutung, nicht nur, daß seine Arbeit zu einem Gegenstand, zu einer *äussern* Existenz wird, sondern daß sie *ausser ihm*, unabhängig, fremd von ihm existirt und eine selbstständige Macht ihm gegenüber wird, daß das Leben, was er dem Gegenstand verliehn hat, ihm feindlich und fremd gegenübertritt.

[This fact expresses no more than that the object produced by labor, namely its product is opposed to labor as an *alien entity*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labor is a labor that is fixed in an object, namely is reified. The *realization* of labor is the objectification of labor. This realization of labor, in the national-economy situation, appears as the *deprivation of reality* of the laborer, the objectification as the *loss of object* and *subordination* of the laborer to

the object, the acquisition as alienation, as externalization. all of these consequences lie in the determination that the laborer relates to the product of his labor as an alien object. The externalization of the laborer does not only signify that his labor becomes an object, namely an external existence, but also that it exists outside him, independent of, and alien to him and becomes in opposition to him an independent power, that the life he has given to the object becomes opposed to him in a hostile and alien way.] (MEGA I/2: 364-365)

Descriptions similar to the above quoted passages from *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44* are repeatedly found even in the *Economic Manuscripts* preparing *Capital*. Here, we have to notice that an object, opposed to the laborer, as ‘an alien entity’ (ein fremdes Wesen), as ‘a power independent’ is not a labor product as a barely natural thing but an object as thingified social relation. ‘A labor that is fixed in an object, namely is reified’ is a product equipped with such determinations as value, money and capital. A product to which a laborer relates as ‘an alien object’ can function as a social power to subjugate him just because it embodies the total social relations of laborers to each other in a thingified way. The genus-social character of laborers’ activity is thingified into the social property of labor products. Thus, we can fully understand Marx’s following significant sentence:

Indem daher die entfremdete Arbeit dem Menschen den Gegenstand seiner Production entreißt, entreißt sie ihm sein *Gattungsleben*, seine wirkliche Gattungsgegenständlichkeit.

[Therefore, the alienated labor, by snatching from the human being the object of his labor, snatches from him his *genus life*, in other words, his real genus objectivity.] (MEGA I/2: 370)

In sum, Marx’s concept of alienation presupposes thingification of production relations in the ‘national-economic circumstance.’ Thingification results from reification. Thus, Marx links the theory of alienation and that of reification together through thingification.

(2) Max's Concept of Capital --- Capitalist Results from Capital

Now, we like to return to *Economic Manuscripts* preparing *Capital*.

What distinguishes Marx from other economists consists in his unique concept of capital, according to which capital is not derived from capitalist but, to the contrary, capitalist is derived from capital. According to non-Marxist economics, the capitalist is firstly presupposed, and at the second step goods and money that he invests for the sake of profit are called capital. As is the case in the controversy on the productive and unproductive labor, commodities and money, resulting from saving by capitalists, reserved for the productive investments are defined as capital. This is a sort of definition of capital derived from the capitalist. To the contrary, Marx defines capital as independently self-valorizing value (*der verselbsändigte, verwertende Wert*) so that the definition precedes that of capitalist.

Die objektiven Bedingungen des lebendigen Arbeitsvermögens sind vorausgesetzt als ihm gegenüber selbstständige Existenz, als die Objektivität eines von dem lebendigen Arbeitsvermögen unterschiednen und ihm selbstständig gegenüberstehenden Subjects; die Reproduktion und *Verwerthung*, d. h. die Erweiterung dieser *objektiven Bedingungen* ist daher zugleich die Reproduktion und Neuproduction ihrer als des Reichthums eines fremden Subjects, dem Arbeitsvermögen gleichgültig und selbstständig gegenüberstehend. Was reproducirt und neu producirt wird ist nicht nur das *Dasein* dieser objektiven Bedingungen der lebendigen Arbeit, sondern *ihr Dasein als selbstständiger, d. h. einem fremden Subject angehöriger Werthe, gegenüber diesem lebendigen Arbeitsvermögen*. Die objektiven Bedingungen der Arbeit erhalten subjektive Existenz gegenüber dem lebendigen Arbeitsvermögen - aus dem Capital wird der Capitalist.

[The objective conditions of the living labor-ability (Arbeitsvermögen) are presupposed as the existence independent of it, as the objectivity of a subject different from it and independently opposed to it; the reproduction and *valorisation* (Verwerthung), namely the expansion of this *objective conditions* is therefore at the same time the reproduction and new production of them as the

wealth of an alien subject indifferent to, and independently opposed to the labor-ability. What is reproduced and newly produced is not only the *existence* of these objective conditions of living labor but also *the existence of them as values independent, namely belonging to an alien subject in opposition to this living labor-ability.*] (MEGA II/1.2: 370)

Die *Production von Capitalisten und Lohnarbeitern ist also ein Hauptproduct des Verwerthungsprocesses des Capitals* ⁷. Indem in diesem Process die vergegenständlichte Arbeit zugleich als *Nichtgegenständlichkeit* des Arbeiters, als Gegenständlichkeit einer dem Arbeiter entgegengesetzten Subjectivität gesetzt ist, als *Eigenthum* eines ihm fremden Willens, ist das Capital nothwendig zugleich *Capitalist* Im Begriff des Capitals ist gesetzt daß die objektiven Formen der Arbeit - und diese sind ihr eignes Product - ihr gegenüber *Persönlichkeit* annehmen, oder was dasselbe ist, daß sie als Eigenthum einer dem Arbeiter fremden Persönlichkeit gesetzt sind. Im Begriff des Capitals ist der Capitalist enthalten.

[*Therefore, the production of capitalists and wage laborers is a main product of the valorizing process (Verwerthungsprozess) of capital.* Since in this process the objectified labor is at the same time established as the *non-objectivity* of the laborer, as the objectivity belonging to a subjectivity opposed to the laborer, as the *property* of a will alien to him, the capital is inevitably at the same time *capitalist*. It is established in the concept of capital that the objective forms of labor - although they are its own products – assume *personality* in opposition to labor, or what is the same, that they are set as property belonging to a personality alien to the laborer. The capitalist is included in the concept of capital.] (MEGA II/1.2: 414-415)

In order to precisely comprehend Marx's concept of capital that is summed up in the

⁷ It follows from this sentence that the mutual personal contractual relationship between a capitalist and a laborer (as the starting point) does not cause the self-valorizing capital as a result but, on the contrary, the relationship between the both persons is secondarily as a main product of the self-valorizing process of capital. This procedure corresponds to the theory of reification-thingification in which the logical transition from a thing (Sache) to a person as a personification of the former takes place.

proposition: capitalist results from capital, we should not directly regard ‘an alien subject independently opposed to the labor- ability’ in the above quoted passages as a capitalist. In Marx’s economic texts, a subject does not always stand for a personal subject. Firstly, the objective conditions of labor, separated from the living labor-ability, working as independently self-valorizing value are established as ‘an alien subject,’ because the capital itself principally appears as a subject⁸. Secondly, from the capital as an original subject is derived the capitalist, who personally represents the subjectivity of capital as an original alien subject, opposed to the living labor-ability. This refers to Marx’s concept of subjectification (Subjektivierung) – personification (Personifizierung) of capital that consists of the following two elements: (1) the capital itself subjectifies-personifies itself as things (the objective conditions of labor) opposed to the laborer; (2) the capitalist as a person that represents the alien subjectivity of the subjectified-personified thing. In this circumstance, things (the objective conditions of labor) do not hold a social power over laborers because they belong to the capitalist but because they embody the thingified social relations that enable capital to valorize itself.

The German adjective fremd (alien) that is frequently used as an important technical word in *Capital* and *Economic Manuscripts* has very often been interpreted as of the other person or belonging to the other person. By such careless interpretation the exquisite logical implication that Marx gives to such categories as reification-thingification and personification has simply been ignored. As is above shown, Marx firstly posits the object and the product of labor as a subjectivity alien to the laborer, and secondly derives from this the other person or man as a personal bearer or representative of this alien subjectivity. If we would directly assign the German adjective fremd to the other person, the personal character of the subjectivity in an alien object, which should first be treated in terms of personification of capital in the second phase, would be introduced from the beginning; as a result, it would turn out that Marx’s concept of capital could no longer be different from the non- Marxian economics according to which capital results from capital.

⁸ “Das Capital seinerseits erscheint daher als das übergreifende Subject und Eigenthümer *fremder Arbeit*.” [Therefore, the capital itself appears as the overall governing subject and proprietor of *alien labor*.] (MEGA II/1.2: 378)

(3) The Concept of Alienation in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44* --- Alienation and Private Property

It has already been explained that if we reformulate, from the aspect of labor, a process in which capital establish itself as an alien subjectivity opposed to the laborer, this process is determined as the ‘alienated labor.’

In the First Manuscript of *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44*, the ‘alienated labor’ is firstly determined as (1) the activity of the laborer to relate to the objects of his own labor (means of production and those of subsistence) as an ‘alien objects,’ secondly as (2) the activity of the laborer to relate his own labor itself as an ‘alien labor.’ From these two determinations Marx derives the third one: namely (3) the activity of the laborer to relate his own ‘genus life’ (Gattungsleben), or ‘his own genus being’ (Gattungswesen), as an ‘alien entity.’

If we were not allowed to refer to Marx’s writings other than those written in the First Manuscript, this restriction could cause various interpretations and involve researchers into an endless dispute. However, as long as we notice that, in Marx’s *Economic Manuscripts*, the object or the product always stands for a specific form of thingified social relations, we can reasonably comprehend that the first determination refers to the ‘alien object’ as the thingified social relations, the second refers to the labor as an ‘alien activity’ that causes the thingification of social relations; Based upon these considerations, Marx comes to comprehend the thingified social relations themselves in terms of various determinations of genus such as genus entity (Gattungswesen), genus life (Gattungsleben), genus activity (Gattungstätigkeit) or genus character (Gattungscharakter). As long as we keep reification and thingification in the capitalist production process in mind, there is no theoretical difficulty in the logical transition in the First Manuscript. Of course, there is still one question remaining: if a concept like genus that Marx borrows from Feuerbach would be suitable to theoretically express the reified und thingified social relations in the ‘national-economic’ circumstances or not? As a matter of fact, it is not a valid or effective concept. This might probably be the reason why Marx, in *Capital* and *Economic Manuscripts*, gave up genus as a key-word to express the reified-thingified

social relations. However, Marx's argument to treat the reified-thingified social relations as such in the third determination is acceptable and reasonable.

Die *Theilung der Arbeit* ist der nationalökonomische Ausdruck von der *Gesellschaftlichkeit der Arbeit* innerhalb der Entfremdung. Oder, da die *Arbeit* nur ein Ausdruck der menschlichen Thätigkeit innerhalb der Entäusserung, der Lebensäusserung als Lebensentäusserung ist, so ist auch die *Theilung der Arbeit* nichts andres als das *entfremdete, entäusserte* Setzen der menschlichen Thätigkeit als einer *realen Gattungsthätigkeit* oder als *Thätigkeit d[es] Menschen als Gattungswesen*. Ueber das *Wesen der Theilung der Arbeit* d. h. über diese *entfremdete und entäusserte Gestalt der menschlichen Thätigkeit als Gattungsthätigkeit* sind die Nationalökonomien sehr unklar und sich widersprechend.

[The *division of labor* is the national-economic expression of the *socialness of labor* within alienation. Or, since the *labor* is nothing but an expression of the human activity within externalization, namely of the manifestation of life as the externalization of life, the *division of labor* is also nothing but the *alienated, externalized* way to posit a human activity as a *real genus activity*, or as an *activity of the human being as genus entity*. About the *essence of the division of labor* namely about this *alienated and externalized form* to posit the *human activity* as a *genus activity* the national-economists are very confused and contradict each other.] (MEGA I/2: 429)

Comprehending the division of labor as 'the *alienated, externalized* way to posit a human activity as a *real genus activity*' dates back to Adam Smith. Following the above quoted passage, Marx quotes the following sentences from Adam Smith:

..... die *verschiednen Producte* jeder ihrer respektiven Industriezweige, vermittelt dieses allgemeinen Hangs zum Handel und Austausch, sich so zu sagen, in eine gemeinschaftliche Masse geworfen finden, wo jeder Mensch nach seinen Bedürfnissen kaufen gehn kann irgendeinen Theil des Products der Industrie d[er]

ändern. — Weil dieser Hang zum *Austausch der Theilung der Arbeit* ihren Ursprung giebt, so ist folglich das *Wachsthum dieser Theilung* immer beschränkt durch die *Ausdehnung der Fähigkeit auszutauschen* oder in andern Worten durch die *Ausdehnung des Marktes*.

[..... the *various products* of each of the different industrial sectors, through this general inclination to trade and exchange, are found to be thrown, so to speak, into a common stock, where each human being, according to his needs, is able to go and buy a certain part of the industrial products of the other people. Since this inclination to the *exchange* originates in the *division of labor*, the *increase of this division* is always constrained by the *expansion of the competence to exchange* or, in other words, by the *expansion of the market*.] (MEGA I/2: 430)

Die Betrachtung der *Theilung der Arbeit* und des *Austausches* ist vom höchsten Interesse, weil sie die *sinnfällig entäusserten* Ausdrücke der menschlichen *Thätigkeit* und *Wesenskraft*, als einer *Gattungsmässigen* Thätigkeit und Wesenskraft sind.

[The consideration about the *division of labor* and the *exchange* is enormously interesting because they are the *sensorially externalized* ways to express the human *activity* and *essential power* as an activity and essential power *suitable to genus*.] (MEGA I/2: 433)

(4) Alienation in *Exzerpte aus James Mill: Éléments d'économie politique*

If the division of labor and the exchange are social relations to realize the social character of human labor in an alienated or externalized way, in other words, they embody the reified social relations; these reified relations are, furthermore, corporeally condensed into a matter, which is money. Money is a product of the thingification of the social relations. In *Exzerpte aus James Mill: Éléments d'économie politique*, Marx analyzes (1) trade and exchange as reification of the social relations, and (2) money as thingification of the social relations.

We like to consider how, in *Exzerpte aus James Mill: Éléments d'économie politique*, the logical transition from (1) to (2) is explained:

Der *Tausch* oder der *Tauschhandel* ist also der gesellschaftliche, der Gattungsakt, das Gemeinwesen, der gesellschaftliche Verkehr und Integration der Menschen innerhalb des *Privateigentums* und darum der äusserliche, der *entäusserte* Gattungsakt.

[The *exchange* or the *trade* are, therefore, the social action, the genus action, the community, the social intercourse and integration of people within *private property*, and, consequently, the *externalized* genus action.]

(MEGA IV/2: 454)

Die Nationalökonomie nun faßt das *Gemeinwesen* des *Menschen*, oder ihr sich bethätigendes Menschenwesen, ihre wechselseitige Ergänzung zum Gattungsleben, zum wahrhaft menschlichen Leben unter der Form des *Austausches* und des *Handels* auf. Man sieht, wie die Nationalökonomie die *entfremdete* Form des geselligen Verkehrs als die *wesentliche* und *ursprüngliche* und der Menschlichen Bestimmung entsprechende *fixirt*.

[Now, the national-economy comprehends the *community* of the *people*, or their working entity of the mankind, their mutual complement to a genus life, namely to a authentically human life, under the form of *exchange* and *trade*. We see how the national-economy *in a fixed way* grasps the *alienated* form of the social intercourse as the one that is *essential* and *initial*, and corresponds to the mission of the mankind.] (MEGA IV/2: 453)

(1) Firstly, Marx grasps private property in terms of the division of labor and the trade, and characterizes it as ‘the externalized genus action’ [der entäusserte Gattungsakt], or ‘the alienated form of the social intercourse’ [die entfremdete Form des geselligen Verkehrs]. This phase constitutes the alienation=externalization in the dimension of social relations, and, consequently, corresponds to reification: namely private property as reified social relations. Then Marx goes forth to the second phase, introducing money in the following way:

Das Wesen des Geldes ist zunächst daß die *vermittelnde Tätigkeit* oder Bewegung, der *menschliche*, gesellschaftliche Akt, wodurch sich die Producte des

Menschen wechselseitig ergänzen, *entfremdet* und die Eigenschaft eines *materiellen Dings* ausser dem Menschen, des Geldes wird.; die *Beziehung* selbst der Sachen, die menschliche Operation mit denselben, wird zur Operation eines Wesens ausser dem Menschen und über dem Menschen. Daß dieser *Mittler* nun zum *wirklichen Gott* wird, ist klar, denn der Mittler ist die *wirkliche Macht* über das, womit er mich vermittelt. Dieser *Mittler* ist daher das sich selbst abhanden gekommne, entfremdete *Wesen* des Privateigenthums, das sich selbst äusserlich gewordne, *enttäusserte* Privateigenthum, wie es die *enttäusserte Vermittlung* der menschlichen Production mit der menschlichen Production, die *enttäusserte* Gattungsthätigkeit des Menschen ist. Alle Eigenschaften, welche dieser in der Production dieser Thätigkeit zukommen, werden daher auf diesen Mittler übertragen.

[The essence of money is, firstly, that the *mediating activity* or movement, namely the *human*, social action through which the products of the human being mutually complement each other has got *alienated*, and becomes the property of a *material thing* (Ding) outside of the human being, namely that of money.; the relationship itself of the things, the human operation towards them is transformed into the operation of an entity (Wesen) outside of and over the human being. It is evident that this *mediator* now becomes the *actual God* for the mediator is the *actual power* ruling over things with which he mediates me. Therefore, this *mediator* is the lost, alienated *essence* of private property, the *externalized* private property that has become exterior to itself in the same manner as private property is the *externalized mediation* of the human production with the human production, namely the *externalized* genus activity of the mankind. Consequently, all properties that, in the production of the genus activity, belong to this activity are transferred into this mediator.] (MEGA IV/2: 447-448)

(2) The second phase is characterized as the transformation of ‘the human, social action through which the products of the human being mutually complement each other’ into ‘the property of a material thing (Ding) outside of the human being.’ This material thing is named money as the mediator of the trade and the exchange. The relationship of things to things in terms of Sachen or the operation of the human beings in relation to

things is transformed into ‘the operation of an entity (Wesen) outside of and over the human being.’ This transformation constitutes the second phase of the alienation=externalization of private property, which stands for the reversal of social intercourse to the property of a thing. Money as the ‘externalized private property’ corresponds to thingification. We have to notice that the young Marx had already recognized the two-fold transformation of alienation=externalization, namely (1) in terms of the externalized relation, and (2) in terms of the property of a thing. And he regarded categories like a thing and a property as key words for the second phase, namely thingification⁹.

Having determined private property as the two-fold transformation of alienation=externalization, Marx further discuss about the theoretical relation between (1) and (2) in the following way:

Warum muß das Privateigentum zum *Geldwesen* fortgehn? Weil der Mensch als ein geselliges Wesen zum *Austausch* und weil der Austausch — unter der Voraussetzung des Privateigentums — zum *Werth* fortgehn muß. Die vermittelnde Bewegung des austauschenden Menschen ist nämlich keine gesellschaftliche, keine menschliche Bewegung, kein *menschliches Verhältniß*, es ist das *abstrakte Verhältniß* des Privateigentums zum Privateigentum, und dieß *abstrakte* Verhältniß ist der *Werth*, dessen wirkliche Existenz als Werth erst das *Geld* ist. Das metallne Dasein des Geldes ist nur der officielle sinnfällige

⁹ “Das *Geld*, indem es die *Eigenschaft* besitzt, alles zu kaufen, indem es die Eigenschaft besitzt, alle Gegenstände sich anzueignen, ist also der *Gegenstand* im eminenten Besitz. Die Universalität seiner *Eigenschaft* ist die Allmacht seines Wesens; es gilt daher als allmächtiges Wesen. Das Geld ist der *Kuppler* zwischen dem Bedürfniß und dem Gegenstand, zwischen dem Leben und dem Lebensmittel d[es] Menschen. Was mir aber *mein* Leben vermittelt, das *vermittelt mir* auch das Dasein d[es] andern Menschen für mich. Das ist für mich der andre Mensch.” [Since *money* possesses the *property* to buy everything, since it possesses the property to acquire all objects, it is, consequently, also the *object* of eminent possession. The universality of its *property* is the omnipotence of its essence; therefore, it is regarded as omnipotent entity..... Money is the *procurer* between the need and its object, between the life and the means of subsistence of the human being. However, what mediates *my* life to me also *mediates to me* the existence of the other man for me. It is the other human being for me.] (MEGA I/2: 435) Marx twice underlines the word: property. This witnesses that the young Marx had already paid attention to the property as a key word for defining thingification. Last but not least, the last sentence in the quotation: money is the other human being for me is well worth consideration because, in the market society, money represents the other person for each person, and embodies in its material form the human relations.

Ausdruck der Geldseele, die in allen Gliedern der Productionen und Bewegungen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft steckt.

[Why must the private property advance to the *money system*? Because the human being as a social entity must advance to the *exchange*, and because the exchange must – under the presupposition of private property – advance to the *value*. The mediating movement of the exchanging human being is, namely, no social movement, no human movement, no *human relation*; it is the *abstract relation* of the private property to the private property, and this *abstract relation* is the *value*, whose first real existence as value is money. The metallic existence of money is only the official sensory expression of the money soul that is contained in all parts of productions and movements of the civil society.] (MEGA IV/2: 448-449)

From the above quoted passage we can see that (1) the exchange as ‘the mediating movement of the exchanging human being’ is regarded as ‘the abstract relation of the private property to the private property’ (private property as a relation), and (2) this abstract relation is transformed into a property of a commodity, whose first germinal form is value; and (3) the first visible and official form of value is money while value contained in commodities still remains invisible and, consequently, publicly unrecognizable. Thus, money is an officially acceptable visible manifestation of value (‘money soul’) of commodities. The stage (1) refers to reification, the stage (2) refers to the first phase of thingification (on the stage of commodities), and the last stage (3) refers to the second thingification (on the stage of money). Therefore, money is a more developed form of thingification on the stage of commodities in the form of value or equivalent¹⁰.

¹⁰ “Im **Geld**, der vollständigen Gleichgültigkeit sowohl gegen die Natur des Materials, gegen die spezifische Natur des Privateigentums, wie gegen die Persönlichkeit des Privateigentümers, ist die vollständige Herrschaft der entfremdeten Sache **über** den Menschen in die Erscheinung getreten. Was als Herrschaft der Person über die Person, ist nun die allgemeine Herrschaft der **Sache** über die **Person**, des Products über den Produzenten. Wie schon im **Aequivalent**, im **Werth** die Bestimmung der **Entäußerung** des Privateigentums lag, so ist das **Geld** das sinnliche, selbst gegenständliche Dasein dieser **Entäußerung**.” [In *money*, as the complete indifference to the nature of material, to the special nature of private property as well as to the personality of private proprietor, the complete dominion of the alienated thing *over* the human being has been manifested. What existed as the dominion of person over person is now the general dominion of the *thing* over the *person*, in other words, of the products over the producer. In the same way as already in the *equivalent*, in the *value* the determination of the

At the last phase of consideration on private property, Marx reformulates the alienation=externalization of private property in terms of the alienation=externalization of labor, which is expressed as the ‘labor to earn money (die Erwerbsarbeit)’:

Das Verhältniß des Tausches vorausgesetzt, wird die *Arbeit* zur *unmittelbaren Erwerbsarbeit*. Dieß Verhältniß der entfremdeten Arbeit erreicht seine Höhe erst dadurch, daß 1) von der einen Seite die *Erwerbsarbeit*, das Produkt des Arbeiters in keinem *unmittelbaren* Verhältniß zu seinem Bedürfniß und zu seiner *Arbeitsbestimmung* steht. Das Product wird als *Werth*, als *Tauschwerth*, als *Aequivalent*, nicht mehr seiner unmittelbaren persönlichen Beziehung zum Producenten wegen producirt. In der *Erwerbsarbeit* liegt: 1) Die Entfremdung und Zufälligkeit der Arbeit vom arbeitenden Subjekt; 2) die Entfremdung und Zufälligkeit der Arbeit vom Gegenstand derselben; 3) die Bestimmung des Arbeiters durch die gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnisse, die ihm aber fremd und ein Zwang sind, dem er sich aus egoistischem Bedürfniß, aus Noth unterwirft. 4) daß dem Arbeiter die Erhaltung seiner individuellen Existenz als *Zweck* seiner Thätigkeit erscheint und sein wirkliches Thun ihm nur als Mittel gilt; daß er sein Leben bethätigt, um Lebensmittel zu erwerben.

[As soon as the relation of exchange is presupposed, the *labor* is transformed into the *direct labor to earn money*. This is the relation of the alienated labor, and this relation reaches its climax only when, on the one hand, the *labor to earn money* or the product of the laborer bears no *direct* relation to his need or his *purpose of labor*. As *value*, as *exchange value*, as *equivalent*, the product is no longer produced because of its direct personal relationship to the producer. What is implied in the *labor to earn money* is 1) the alienation and contingency of labor from the laboring subject; 2) the alienation and contingency of labor from the object of labor; 3) the determination of the laborer by social needs, which are, however, alien to him and a coercion to which he is subject due to his egoistic need or want. 4) that the maintenance of his individual existence appears to the laborer as *purpose* of his activity and his actual action is regarded by him only as

externalization of private property existed, the money is the sensory, objective existence of this *externalization*.] (MEGA IV/2: 456)

means.] (MEGA IV/2: 455)

To sum up, the alienated labor is the labor to earn money (die Erwerbsarbeit), and this is a labor that creates value. Therefore, the theory of alienation consists in a series of transformation: (1) the transformation of relations of persons to persons in the production into those of things to things (the first phase of the alienation=externalization of private property, namely reification), (2) the transformation of relations of things to things into material properties of labor products (the second phase of the alienation=externalization of private property, namely thingification), and (3) the transformation of the property of a thing from value or equivalent to money, and further to capital. The last transformation is characterized as an increase of the dominion of the things or products over the laborer or the labor.

This is just the reason why the theory of alienation at first leaves the existence of the capitalist out of consideration in order to comprehend the relation of the laborer to the capital as his own activity to relate himself to the objective conditions of labor as alien objects. Only under such theoretical setting, we are able to grasp the labor process under capital as a process in which things in the forms of means of production absorb the labor of laborers as value, namely as the self-valorizing process of value (Verwertungsprozess). This is the reason why the theory of alienation, in principle, does not regard the relation of the capital to the labor as a process in which the capitalist as a person exploits the surplus-labor from the laborer as the other person. This theory at first grasps the dominion of the capital over the labor as the one of the thing (Sache-Ding) over the person, and afterwards, as an inevitable consequence of the principal dominion, establishes the dominion of the capitalist over the laborer (the capitalist as personification of capital).

It follows from this that the theory of alienation does not place any theoretical rupture between the alienation in the form of money and that in the form of capital because this theory focuses our attention on the increasing independence of the things from the laboring subjects. Money is regarded as the first completed form of the independence of value as alienated from commodities while capital is principally defined as the independently self-valorizing value. Money and capital stand for the different phases of the same developmental process of the alienation and the

independence of the value from the laboring subjects. This is the reason why Marx had consistently applied the concept of alienation to the determination of money as well as that of capital.

On the contrary, as soon as we identify the alienation of labor with the exploitation of surplus-labor, this indispensable connection between money and capital must be cut off. The incredible theoretical confusion and a great amount of absurd interpretations result from this.

(5) Alienation in the First Manuscript of *the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44*

We have already confirmed the theoretical setting and framework of alienation. Based upon these preparations, we are finally able to correctly interpret the concept of alienation in the First Manuscript of *the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44*

We are ready to accept that Marx had achieved a series of significant theoretical developments from the First to the Second, and further to the Third Manuscript. However, we do not agree to such interpretation as to suppose as if there were a theoretical rupture among three manuscripts so that, while writing the First Manuscript, Marx could not have taken into consideration what he wrote in the Second and Third Manuscripts. Now, what we should do is to, by means of text hermeneutics, determine in what manner theoretical achievements that he acquired in the later manuscripts are already in an immature form anticipated in the First Manuscript.

A world where the alienated labor prevails is a ‘national-economic circumstance,’ namely a society where the social division of labor and the overall exchange of products as commodities take place; this is a society of reified-thingified production relations. As we have already seen, the theory of alienation presupposes reification-thingification of production relations, and at the same time provides the logical foundation for reification-thingification in terms of the activity of the laboring subject.

No small number of researchers have discovered in the First Manuscript theoretical defects or flaws while, on the other hand, they have often highly estimated descriptions in the Second and the Third Manuscripts; this could easily lead them to a rather popular supposition about the above mentioned theoretical rupture among three manuscripts.

A popular type of the misunderstanding of the First Manuscript comes from such interpretation as to immediately identify the alienated labor with the relation of capitalist to laborer that, as a relation of a person to a person, enables the capitalist to exploit surplus-labor. In this type of interpretation, the reason why Marx only in the fourth determination of the alienated labor introduces the capitalist and considers the personal relation of the capitalist to the laborer, and why he up to the third determination leaves the relation between the capitalist and the laborer as that between different classes out of consideration.

This misinterpretation is really closely connected with another misinterpretation, according to which the adjective: fremd (alien) as a most important key word for the concept of the alienated labor is simply as of the other person or belonging to the other person. If we interpreted the term: fremd to be of the other person, then we would introduce the capitalist as a person alien to the laborer to the consideration on the first determination, which would reduce the theory of alienation to that of surplus-labor.

Die Entfremdung erscheint sowohl darin, daß *mein* Lebensmittel eines *andern* ist, daß dieß, was *mein* Wunsch der unzugängliche Besitz eines *andern* ist, als daß jede Sache selbst ein *andres* als sie selbst, als daß meine Thätigkeit ein *andres*, als endlich, — und dieß gilt auch für den Capitalisten — daß überhaupt die *unmenschliche* Macht her[rscht.]

[Alienation appears not only in the fact that my means of life belong to *something else*, that which *I* desire is the inaccessible possession of this *something else*, but also in the fact that everything is itself *something different* from itself—that my activity is *something else* and that, finally (and this also applies to the capitalist), the sway of *inhuman* power in general prevails.]
(MEGA I/2: 426)

In the above quoted passage, it is evident from the context that ‘eines andern’ (the genitive case) does not refer to ‘ein anderer’ (the nominative case of the masculine) but to ‘ein andres’ (the nominative case of the neuter), which, consequently, does not mean someone else but something else. This something else (ein andres) as an impersonal and inhuman power not only holds sway over the laborer but also even over the capitalist.

However, in the existing translations, this distinction between ‘ein andres’ (something else) and ‘ein anderer’ (someone else) that is crucial for correctly comprehending alienation has simply been disregarded. For example, the translator of the *Marx Engels Collected Works, Volume 3* translates ‘eines andern’ as ‘belong to someone else’ or ‘of another,’ which distorts the understanding of alienation.

Estrangement is manifested not only in the fact that *my* means of life belong to *someone else*, that which I desire is the inaccessible possession of *another*, but also in the fact that everything is itself something *different* from itself—that my activity is *something else* and that, finally (and this applies also to the capitalist), all is under [the sway] of *inhuman* power. (*The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, MECW 3: 314)

Now, we continue to quote some passages from the First Manuscript in order to confirm where, why and how the misinterpretation of the texts is liable to happen.

Der Arbeiter wird um so ärmer, je mehr Reichthum er producirt, je mehr seine Production an Macht und Umfang zunimmt. Der Arbeiter wird eine um so wohlfeilere Waare, je mehr Waaren er schafft. Mit der *Verwerthung* der Sachenwelt, nimmt die *Entwerthung* der Menschenwelt in direktemVerhältniß zu. Die Arbeit producirt nicht nur Waaren; sie producirt sich selbst und d[en] Arbeiter als eine *Waare* und zwar in dem Verhältniß, in welchem sie überhaupt Waaren producirt. [The more wealth the laborer produces, in other words, the more his production increases in power and size, the poorer he becomes. The more commodities he creates, the cheaper a commodity he becomes. In direct proportion to the *value-increase* of the thing world does the *value-decrease* of the human world advance. The labor not only produces commodities; it produces itself and the laborer as a *commodity*, and, moreover, in the relation in which the labor in general produces commodities.] (MEGA I/2: 364)

When Marx writes: The more wealth the laborer produces, the poorer he becomes, he does not mean by this that the poorer the laborer becomes, the richer the capitalist

becomes. What is in direct proportion to the value-decrease (Entwerthung) of the human world is the value-increase (Verwerthung) of the thing world (die Sachenwelt). Consequently, the value-increase does not stand for the increase of the surplus-labor in this context¹¹.

Here comes the most important proposition in the First Manuscript:

In der Bestimmung, daß der Arbeiter zum *Product seiner Arbeit* als einem *fremden* Gegenstand sich verhält, liegen alle diese Consequenzen.

[All these consequences are implied in the determination that the laborer relates himself to the *product of his labor* as an *alien* object.] (MEGA I/2: 365)

As we have already mentioned, ‘an alien object’ does not immediately mean an object that belongs to the capitalist. Up to the third determination, the capitalist as a person must not come on the stage of theoretical consideration while, as a person, only the laborer is permitted to appear on the scene.

Die Nationalökonomie verbirgt die Entfremdung in dem Wesen der Arbeit dadurch, daß sie nicht das unmittelbare Verhältniß zwischen dem Arbeiter, (der Arbeit) und der Production betrachtet..... Das unmittelbare Verhältniß der Arbeit zu ihren Producten ist das Verhältniß des Arbeiters zu den Gegenständen seiner Production. Das Verhältniß d[es] Vermögenden zu den Gegenständen der Production und zu ihr selbst ist nur eine Consequenz dieses ersten Verhältnisses.

[By not regarding the direct relation between the laborer (the labor) and the production, the national-economy conceals the alienation in the essence of labor.

..... The direct relation of the labor to its products is the relation of the laborer to the objects of his production. The relation of the man of means to the objects of the

¹¹ “Die Aneignung des Gegenstandes erscheint so sehr als Entfremdung, daß je mehr Gegenstände der Arbeiter producirt, er um so weniger besitzen kann und um so mehr unter die Herrschaft seines Products, des Capitals, geräth.” [The acquisition of the object appears so much as alienation that the more objects the laborer produces, the less he can possess, and the more he falls under the dominion of his product, namely of capital.] (MEGA I/2: 365) Here, the alienation does not refer to the dominion of the capitalist but to that of the product of the laborer as capital.

production and to the production itself is nothing but a consequence of this first relation.] (MEGA I/2: 366)

In the above quoted passage, ‘the direct relation between the laborer (the labor) and the production’ that the national-economy does not regard means taking into consideration the relation between the laborer (or labor) and the capital directly, namely without the interposition of the capitalist, as a relation of the laboring subject to his objects. Only under this theoretical setting, we can separate out the concept of alienation as a special mode of behavior of the laborer to relate himself to his activity as an alien one, which causes the increasing dominion of the thing over the laboring subject.

The following passage might be the most famous but at the same time most often misunderstood one in the discussion on the alienated labor:

Worin besteht nun die Entäusserung der Arbeit? Erstens, daß die Arbeit dem Arbeiter *äusserlich* ist, d. h. nicht zu seinem Wesen gehört, daß er sich daher in seiner Arbeit nicht bejaht, sondern verneint, nicht wohl, sondern unglücklich fühlt, keine freie physische und geistige Energie entwickelt, sondern seine Physis abkasteit und seinen Geist ruinirt. Der Arbeiter fühlt sich daher erst ausser der Arbeit bei sich und in der Arbeit ausser sich. Seine Arbeit ist daher nicht freiwillig, sondern gezwungen, *Zwangsarbeit*. Sie ist daher nicht die Befriedigung eines Bedürfnisses, sondern sie ist nur ein *Mittel*, um Bedürfnisse ausser ihr zu befriedigen.

[What does the externalization of labor consist in? Firstly, the labor is *exterior* to the laborer, namely does not belong to his essence, and, consequently, during his labor he does not affirm but denies himself, does not feel himself happy but unhappy; he does not develop his physical and spiritual energy but inflicts pain upon his body and breaks down his spirit. Therefore, the laborer feels himself at home only outside the labor and lost during the labor. Therefore, his labor is not voluntary but forced, namely *forced labor*. Therefore, it is not the satisfaction of a need but is nothing but the *means* to satisfy needs exterior to it.] (MEGA I/2: 366)

A lot of researchers have regarded those descriptions in the above quoted passage must connote the labor in the capitalist production process under the control of the capitalist. However, as long as we take the whole context in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44* into consideration, the externalized labor by definition signifies the labor in general to create value, namely the labor to earn money (die Erwerbsarbeit). We can recollect that, in *Exzerpte aus James Mill: Éléments d'économie politique*, Marx characterizes the Erwerbsarbeit, namely a labor that produces its product as a commodity to earn money, in the similar way:

Dieser **Mittler** ist daher das sich selbst abhanden gekommene, entfremdete **Wesen** des Privateigentums, das sich selbst äusserlich gewordene, **entäusserte** Privateigentum, wie es die **entäusserte Vermittlung** der menschlichen Production mit der menschlichen Production, die **entäusserte** Gattungsthätigkeit des Menschen ist. Alle Eigenschaften, welche dieser in der Production dieser Thätigkeit zukommen, werden daher auf diesen Mittler (= Geld) übertragen. Der Mensch wird also um so ärmer als Mensch, d. h. getrennt von diesem Mittler als dieser Mittler **reicher** wird.

[Therefore, this *mediator* is the lost, alienated *essence* of private property, the *externalized* private property that has become exterior to itself in the same manner as private property is the *externalized mediation* of the human production with the human production, namely the *externalized* genus activity of the mankind. Consequently, all properties that, in the production of the genus activity, belong to this activity are transferred into this mediator. Therefore, the *richer* this mediator becomes, the poorer the human being as the mankind becomes.] (MEGA IV/2: 448)

Es ist daher ein identischer Satz, daß der **Mensch** sich selbst entfremdet, und daß die **Gesellschaft** dieses entfremdeten Menschen die Carikatur seines **wirklichen Gemeinwesens**, seines wahren Gattungslebens sei, daß daher seine Thätigkeit als Qual, seine Eigne Schöpfung ihm als fremde Macht, sein Reichthum als Armuth, das **Wesensband**, was ihn an den andern Menschen knüpft, als ein unwesentliches Band und vielmehr die Trennung vom andern Menschen als sein wahres Dasein,

daß sein Leben als Aufopferung seines Lebens, daß die Verwirklichung seines Wesens als Entwirklichung seines Lebens, daß seine Production als Production seines Nichts, daß seine Macht über den Gegenstand als die Macht des Gegenstands über ihn, daß er der Herr seiner Schöpfung als der Knecht dieser Schöpfung erscheint.

[Consequently, it is an identical proposition that the *human being* alienates himself, and that the *society* of this alienated human being is a caricature of his *actual community*, or of his authentic genus life, that, therefore, his activity appears as torment, his own creature to him as an alien power, his wealth as poverty, the *essential bond* that ties him to the other human being as an insignificant one, or rather the separation from the other human being as his true existence, that his life appears as sacrifice of his life, that the realization of his essence appears as the loss of reality of his life, that his production appears as production of his nothing, that his power over the object appears as the power of the object over him, that he (the master of his creature) appears as the slave of this creature.] (MEGA IV/2: 452-453)

dein eigener Gegenstand ist dir nur die *sinnliche Hülle*, die *verborgne Gestalt* meines Gegenstandes; denn seine Production *bedeutet*, will *ausdrücken*: den *Erwerb* meines Gegenstandes. Also bist du in der That für dich selbst zum *Mittel*, zum *Instrument* deines Gegenstandes geworden, dessen *Knecht* deine Begierde ist, und du hast Knechtsdienste gethan.

[Your own object is for you no more than the *sensory cover*, the *concealed form* of my object, as the production of the object *means*, or will *express* the *earning* of my object. Therefore, you are really for yourself transformed into a *means* of, or an *instrument* of your object, whose *slave* your desire is, and you have done slave services.] (MEGA IV/2: 466)

Unter der Voraussetzung des Privateigentums ist meine Individualität bis zu dem Punkte entäussert, daß diese *Thätigkeit* mir *verhaßt*, eine *Qual* und vielmehr nur der *Schein* einer Thätigkeit, darum auch eine nur *erzwungene* Thätigkeit. Daher erscheint sie [= meine Arbeit] nur noch als der gegenständliche, sinnliche

angeschaute Ausdruck meines *Selbstverlustes* und meiner *Ohnmacht*.

[Under the presupposition of private property, my individuality is externalized to such a point that this *activity* is *hated* by me, a *torment* and rather nothing but a pretense of an activity, and, consequently, only a *forced* activity. Therefore, my labor appears as no more than the objective, sensorially observed expression of my *self-loss* and my *helplessness*.] (MEGA IV/2: 466)

From The Third Manuscript, we can quote the following passages:

Jeder sucht eine *fremde* Wesenskraft über d[en] andern zu schaffen, um darin die Befriedigung seines eigenen eigennützigen Bedürfnisses zu finden. Mit der Masse der Gegenstände wächst daher das Reich der fremden Wesen, denen der Mensch unterjocht ist. Der Mensch wird um so ärmer als Mensch, er bedarf um so mehr des *Geldes*, um sich des feindlichen Wesens zu bemächtigen und die Macht seines *Geldes* fällt grade im umgekehrten Verhältniß als die Masse der Production, d. h. seine Bedürftigkeit wächst, wie die *Macht* des Geldes zunimmt.

[Each person tries to create an *alien* power of essence ruling over the other person in order to in this way his satisfy own egoistic needs. Therefore, together with masses of the objects the realm of the alien entities increases, to which the human being is subjugated. [the richer this realm becomes,] the poorer the human being as the mankind becomes, the more *money* he requires to seize the hostile entity, and the power of his *money* decreases just in inverse proportion to the mass of production, namely his scarcity increases in proportion as the *power* of money increases.] (MEGA I/2: 418-419)

Je weniger du *bist*, je weniger du dem Leben äusserst, um so mehr *hast* du, um so grösser ist dein *entäussertes* Leben, um so mehr speicherst du auf von deinem entfremdeten Wesen. Alles was dir der Nationalökonom an Leben nimmt und an Menschheit, das alles ersetzt er dir in *Geld* und *Reichthum*. Und alles das, was du nicht kannst, das kann dein Geld.

[The less you *are*, the less you manifest to the life, the more you have, the greater your *externalized* life is, the more of your alienated essence you store up.

Everything that the national-economist deprives you in terms of life and humanity he replaces for you by *money* and *wealth*. And everything that you cannot do your money can do.] (MEGA I/2: 421)

In all quotations from *Exzerpte aus James Mill: Éléments d'économie politique* as well as the Third Manuscript, descriptions concerning alienation exclusively refer to money and commodity market. There are no manifest descriptions concerning the capitalist production process. The sway of the capitalist over the laborer as a relation of a person to another person is nowhere discussed. From this we can reasonably infer that, in the First Manuscript as well, Marx mainly discusses about alienation through money and the value-creating labor in terms of the sway of the object or the thing over the labor or the laboring subject while he intentionally in the first three determinations of alienation leaves the existence of the capitalist out of consideration. We have already discussed enough to understand the reason for it.

Now, we come to discuss about the fourth determination. For the first time in this last determination the other human being (der andere Mensch) is as a category introduced and the alienation of the human being from the human being (die Entfremdung des Menschen von dem Menschen) is discussed. However, even here, we have to notice that we must not directly identify the other human being with the capitalist.

Ueberhaupt der Satz, daß dem Menschen sein Gattungswesen entfremdet ist, heißt daß ein Mensch d[em] andern, wie jeder von ihnen dem menschlichen Wesen entfremdet ist. Die Entfremdung d[es] Menschen, überhaupt jedes V[er]hältniß, in dem der Mensch zu sich selbst steht[,] ist erst verwirklicht, drückt sich aus in dem Verhältniß, in welchem der Mensch zu d[em] andern Menschen steht. Also betrachtet in dem Verhältniß der entfremdete[n] Arbeit jeder Mensch d[en] andern nach dem Maaßstab und dem Verhältniß in welchem er selbst, als Arbeiter sich befindet.

[In general, the proposition that from the human being his genus entity is alienated means that a human being is alienated from the other one in the same way as each of them is alienated from the human essence. The alienation of the human being, in

general, any relation in which the human being relates to himself is only realized, expressed in the relation in which he is to the other human being. Therefore, in the relation of alienated labor, each human being regards the other according to the standard and the relation in which each find himself.] (MEGA I/2: 370-371)

From the context of the above quoted passage, ‘the other’ does not refer to the capitalist but to any other laborer that also works to earn money. The capitalist for the first time comes on the stage just after Marx presents the following question:

Wenn meine eigne Thätigkeit nicht mir gehört, eine fremde, eine erzwungne Thätigkeit ist, wem gehört sie dann? Einem *andern* Wesen als mir. Wer ist dieß Wesen?

[If my own activity does not belong to me, namely is an alien activity, a forced one, to whom/what does it then belong? To another entity [Wesen] other than me. Who is this entity?] (MEGA I/2: 371)

As already explained, alienation must in principle be formulated in terms of the sway of the thing over the person. As long as we are engaged in the fundamental determination of alienation, we do not need to pose a question: to whom a thing that, alienated from the human beings, holds sway over them belongs to because the thing does not owe its own competence to rule over the people to a certain person while a person that is assumed to be a holder of the thing must be under the sway of the thing. Consequently, the question: to whom the thing belongs, must not be a primary one for providing the foundation of the concept of alienation but a secondary one, which could be raised after the fundamental determinations of alienation are given. According to the mature Marx, capitalist results from capital, but not vice versa. The young Marx as well applies this principle to the analysis on alienation.

Also durch die *entfremdete, entäusserte Arbeit* erzeugt der Arbeiter das Verhältniß eines der Arbeit fremden und ausser ihr stehenden Menschen zu dieser Arbeit. Das Verhältniß des Arbeiters zur Arbeit erzeugt das Verhältniß d[es] Capitalisten zu derselben.

[Therefore, through the *alienated, externalized labor* the laborer produces the relation of a man alien to labor and standing outside it to this labor. The relation of the laborer to his labor produces the relation of the capitalist to the labor.] (MEGA I/2: 372)

We have to notice the second sentence in the above quoted passage: the relation of the laborer to his labor produces the relation of the capitalist to the labor, but not vice versa. By the fourth determination, the theory of alienation attains a new theoretical dimension; namely comprehending the personal relation between the capitalist and the laborer as personification of the thing. On this final phase we could adequately discuss about the exploitation of the laborers by the capitalist.

Wir haben die eine Seite betrachtet, die *entäusserte Arbeit* in Bezug auf d[en] *Arbeiter* selbst, d. h. das *Verhältniß der entäusserten Arbeit zu sich selbst*. Als Produkt, als nothwendiges Resultat dieses Verhältnisses haben wir das *Eigenthumsverhältniß des NichtArbeiters zum Arbeiter und der Arbeit* gefunden. Das *Privateigenthum*, als der materielle, resumirte Ausdruck der entäusserten Arbeit umfaßt beide Verhältnisse, das *Verhältniß des Arbeiters zur Arbeit und zum Product seiner Arbeit* und zum *Nichtarbeiter* und das Verhältniß des *Nichtarbeiters, zum Arbeiter, und dem Product seiner Arbeit*.

[We have considered the one side: the *externalized labor* in relation to the *laborer* himself; namely the relation of the externalized labor to itself. We have found as a product of, or as an inevitable result of this relation the property relation of the non-laborer to *the laborer and the labor*. *Private property* as a material, summarized expression of the externalized labor comprises both relations: namely *the relation of the laborer to the labor, to the product of his labor* and to the *non-laborer* as well as the relation of the *non-laborer to the laborer* and to the product of his labor.] (MEGA I/2: 374)

We have to notice that for the first time in the final phase the concept of the property relation of the non-laborer to the laborer and the labor (das Eigenthumsverhältniß des NichtArbeiters zum Arbeiter und der Arbeit) comes on the

stage of theoretical consideration. It follows from this that, as far as we follow Marx's method, we must not start to analyze the capitalist production system from the property relation of the capitalist as a theoretical presupposition, which, on the contrary, must be derived as an inevitable consequence from the independence of value alienated from and opposed to the laborer.

(6) Alienation and Perspective on the Change of the Capitalism

We have in detail discussed the inseparable relation of the theory of alienation to that of reification-thingification. In this chapter, we are going to throw light on a specific implication that Marx assigns to alienation. Marx often mentions revolts of the laborers against the reified-thingified economic system when introducing alienation as a category. By considering this aspect of alienation, we can clarify a new aspect of the theory of alienation, different from that of reification-thingification, as a special kind of the theory of the building of subjects that are competent to change the capitalist system.

As we have seen, the labor process appears as a self-valorizing process of capital because laborers must be related to their own labors and products as "alien to themselves." In this case, they act as personification of the labor force as a commodity. As a result of the subsumption of labor force under capital, value as a thing is transformed into a self-valorizing value through the specific behavior of laborers that relate themselves to the things created by them as alien to themselves.

Diese *Wertherhaltende* und *Neuwerth* schaffende Kraft ist daher die Kraft des Capitals und jener Prozess erscheint als der Process seiner *Selbstverwerthung*, und vielmehr der Verarmung des Arbeiters, der den von ihm geschaffnen Werth zugleich als *ihm selbst fremden* Werth schafft.

[This power to *maintain value* and create *new value* is therefore the power of capital and that process appears as that of *self-valorization*, and rather as that of impoverishment of the laborer that creates the value as a value *alien to himself*.]

(MEGA II/4.1: 63)

Thus, the process of self-valorizing value can be regarded as a self-impoverishing process for laborers. By impoverishment, Marx understands not only impoverishment in

living standards of laborers but also a more fundamental reversal in the labor subsumed under capital through which self-creating activities take place as a self-deprivation process for laborers.

In his manuscript entitled *Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses*, Marx explains the inseparable interrelation between reification and alienation in the following way:

Die Herrschaft des Capitalisten über den Arbeiter ist daher die Herrschaft der Sache über den Menschen, der todten Arbeit über die lebendige, des Products über den Producenten. Es ist diess ganz *dasselbe* Verhältnis in der materiellen Production welches sich auf dem ideologischen Gebiet in der *Religion* darstellt, die Verkehrung des Subjekts in das Objekt und umgekehrt. *Historisch* betrachtet erscheint diese Verkehrung als der notwendige Durchgangspunkt, um die Schöpfung des Reichthums als solchen, d.h. rücksichtslosen Produktivkräfte der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit, welche allein die materielle Basis einer freien menschlichen Gesellschaft bilden können, auf Kosten der Mehrzahl zu erzwingen. Es muss durch diese gegensätzliche Form durchgangen werden, ganz wie der Mensch seine Geisteskräfte zunächst sich als unabhängige Mächte gegenüber religiös gestalten muss. Es ist der *Entfremdungsprozess* seiner eigenen Arbeit. Insofern steht hier der Arbeiter von vorn herein höher als der Capitalist, als der letztere in jenen Entfremdungsprozess wurzelt und in ihm seine absolute Befriedigung findet, während der Arbeiter als sein Opfer von vorn herein dagegen in einem rebellischem Verhältniss steht und ihn als Knechtungsprozess empfindet. [The sway of the capitalist over the laborer is consequently that of the thing over the human being, of dead labor over living labor, of the product over the producer. This is just *the same* relation in material production that is exhibited in the ideological field, in *religion*, namely the reversal of the subject into the object and vice versa. *Historically* considered, this reversal appears as the inevitable transit point in order to force the creation of wealth as such, namely of such ruthless productive forces of social labor that can only form the material basis for a free human society at the cost of the majority of people. The human being must go through this antagonistic form in the same way as he must build his own spiritual

forces first as independent powers opposed to him in the form of religion. This is the *alienation process* of his own labor. Here, the laborer from the start stands higher than the capitalist as far as the latter is rooted in that alienation process and finds his absolute satisfaction in it while, to the contrary, the laborer as a victim of it bears a rebellious relation to it and suffers it as an enslavement process.] (MEGAII/4.1: 63)

Since the capitalist is personified capital, “the sway of the capitalist over the laborer” is essentially that of the means of production as thingified capital over human being. The sway of the thing (reification-thingification) comprises the following double reversal: firstly, the reversal of object to subject, according to which the means of production is reversed to a subject ruling over the laborer, and, secondly, the reversal of subject to object, according to which the laboring subject becomes reversed to an object from which the means of production absorbs as much labor as possible. This rule of the thing is founded on the above mentioned impoverishment or alienation of the laborer. The alienation of labor means that the self-creation of the laborer is performed as his self-deprivation or self-enslavement. In this sense, the theory of reification and that of alienation have inseparable relations with each other because in the theory of reification the same relations are investigated in terms of a reified social system that in the theory of alienation is investigated in terms of specific relational activity of laboring subjects.

However, as is seen in the above-mentioned quotation, Marx places a higher epistemological value on the concept of alienation than reification because the concept of alienation opens up a dimension of negative experiences of the laborer in which he behaves towards his own labor as ‘a value alien to himself’ and, as a result, this concept leads to a recognition of the historical limits of the capitalist production system. The capitalist roots himself in the alienation process and finds absolute satisfaction in it while, to the contrary, the laborer as a victim of this alienation process must revolt against it.

Die verselbständigte und entfremdete Gestalt, welche die kapitalistische Produktionsweise überhaupt den Arbeitsbedingungen und dem Arbeitsprodukt gegenüber dem Arbeiter gibt, entwickelt sich also mit der Maschinerie zum

vollständigsten Gegensatz. Daher mit ihr zum erstenmal die brutale Revolte des Arbeiters gegen das Arbeitsmittel.

[Hence, the independent and alienated form that the capitalist mode of production in general gives to the conditions of labor, and the product of labor, in opposition to the laborer, develops into the most complete antagonism with the advent of machinery. It is therefore when machinery arrives on the scene that the laborer for the first time revolts savagely against the instruments of labor] (MEGA II/6: 417)

Die Erkennung des Products als seines eignen, und die Beurtheilung der Trennung von den Bedingungen seiner Verwirklichung als eines Unrechts - *Zwangsverhältnisses*- ist ein enormes Bewußtsein, *selbst das Product der* kapitalistischen Produktionsweise und sehr das knell to its doom, wie mit dem Bewußtsein des Sklaven, daß er *nicht das Eigenthum eines Dritten sein kann*, die Sklaverei nur noch künstlich fortvegetirt, und aufgehört hat als Basis der Production fortzu dauern zu können.

[For the laborer to recognize the product as his own, and to judge his separation from conditions of his realization as a wrong – a *relation of coercion* – is an enormous consciousness, which is *itself the product of* the capitalist mode of production and, nevertheless, the knell to its doom in the same way as, as soon as a slave has a consciousness that he *cannot be the property of a third person*, the slavery still lasts in an artificial way, and has ceased to be able to maintain itself as a base of production.] (MEGA II/3.6: 2287)¹²

Consequently, the concept of alienation plays a significant role in bridging the theory of reification with historical prospects to overcome the reified economic system.

Besides, the above quotation testifies to the continuity of the theoretical framework of the young Marx in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1843-44* into the mature Marx. The analogy between the alienation of labor and that of religion had been playing an important role from the young to the older Marx¹³.

¹² Almost the same passage is found in the *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* of 1857/58 (MEGA II/1.2: 371).

¹³ „Wie der Mensch in der Religion vom Machwerk seines eignen Kopfes, so wird er in der kapitalistischen Produktion vom Machwerk seiner eignen Hand beherrscht.“ [Just as

Marx first drew up the theory of alienation in the *Manuscripts of 1843-44* and further developed it into a more comprehensive theory of reification-thingification-alienation from the *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* of 1857/58 onward. We have already seen that Marx for the first time in the *Grundrisse* introduces reification as a significant concept for characterizing the capitalist economic system. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx understands by reification reified social relations as well as thingification as transformation of them into the property of a thing. Although Marx has not yet conceptualized thingification, he pays close attention to the two different phases of reification in the following way:

In allen diesen Bezeichnungen scheint es (=das Capital) bloße Sache zu sein und ganz mit der Materie, in der es besteht, zusammenzufallen. Es ist so, selbst den Oekonomen klar, daß Geld nichts Handgreifliches ist; sondern daß dieselbe Sache bald unter der Bestimmung Capital, bald unter einer andren und entgegengesetzten Bestimmung subsumirt sein kann und danach Capital *ist* oder *nicht ist*. Es ist offenbar so ein *Verhältniß* und *kann nur ein Produktionsverhältniß* sein.

[In all these descriptions, capital seems to be a bare thing and completely identical with a matter in which it exists. Thus, it is, even to the economists, clear that capital is nothing tangible but the same thing can now be subsumed under the determination of capital, now under another and contrary determination, and, consequently, the same thing is capital or not capital. Capital is evidently in this way a *relation*, and *can be nothing but a production relation*.] (MEGA II/1.2: 415)

Capital consists in (1) a specific production relation in a reified form while, on the other hand, (2) it appears to be a thing or completely identical with a matter of which it consists. Marx in the *Grundrisse* knows that reification consists of these two phases but has not yet intentionally conceptualized these phases in terms of reification and thingification so that, in *Grundrisse*, the term Ding has not played any differentiated

the human being is, in religion, governed by the products of his own brain, so, in capitalist production, he is governed by the products of his own hand.] (MEW 23: 649)

role although the term *Sache* with regard to reification has played a significant role. It is during the time when Marx was writing the final manuscripts for *Capital* in 1864-65 that he deliberately differentiates as significant analytical concepts *Ding* from *Sache*, and thingification from reification. Texts of this period like *Manuscripts for the Third Volume of Capital* and *Results of the Immediate Production Process* witness the completed phase of the theory of reification-thingification-alienation.

In comparison with the theory of reification, the theory of alienation has the following special methodological aspects: (1) Firstly, it opens up a negative-practical dimension in which the laborer must relate himself negatively (rebelliously) to the conditions of production and his own products. (2) Secondly, it is demonstrated in this theory that the sway of things alienated from the laborer establishes itself as an economic system that ruthlessly pursues the creation of 'forces of production of social labor.' (3) Thirdly, the second aspect leads to the last and the most important aspect according to which the capitalist economic system is recognized as a historically limited economic system that plays a role as a historical transition to a free human society, namely a society based upon the association of laborers.

Almost all significant categories discussed in this paper like reification-thingification, personification, alienation and externalization, their logical interrelation and their implications in relation to the historical character of the capitalist economic system are in a condensed way summed up in the following passage from the *Grundrisse*:

die objectiven Bedingungen der Arbeit eine immer colossalere Selbstständigkeit gegen die lebendige Arbeit annehmen, und der gesellschaftliche Reichthum in gewaltigern Portionen als fremde und beherrschende Macht der Arbeit gegenübertritt. Der Ton wird gelegt nicht auf das *Vergegenständlichtsein*, sondern das *Entfremdet*-, *Entäussert*-, *Veräussertsein* - das Nicht-dem-Arbeiter-, sondern den personificirten Productionsbedingungen-, i. e. dem-Capital-Zugehören der ungeheuren [ver]gegenständlichten Macht, die die gesellschaftliche Arbeit selbst sich als eins ihrer Momente gegenübergestellt hat. Soweit auf dem Standpunkt des Capitals und der Lohnarbeit die Erzeugung dieses gegenständlichen Leibes der Thätigkeit im Gegensatz zum unmittelbaren

Arbeitsvermögen geschieht - dieser Process der Vergegenständlichung in fact als Process der Entäusserung vom Standpunkt der Arbeit aus oder der Aneignung fremder Arbeit vom Standpunkt des Capitals aus erscheint – ist diese Verdrehung und Verkehrung eine *wirkliche*, keine *blos gemeinte*, blos in der Vorstellung der Arbeiter und Capitalisten existirende. Aber offenbar ist dieser Verkehrungsprocess blos *historische* Nothwendigkeit, blos Nothwendigkeit für die Entwicklung der Productivkräfte von einem bestimmten historischen Ausgangspunkt aus, oder Basis aus, aber keineswegs eine *absolute* Nothwendigkeit der Production; vielmehr eine verschwindende und das Resultat und der Zweck (immanente) dieses Processes ist diese Basis selbst aufzuheben, wie diese Form des Processes. Die bürgerlichen Oekonomen sind so eingepfercht in die Vorstellungen einer bestimmten historischen Entwicklungsstufe der Gesellschaft, daß die Nothwendigkeit der *Vergegenständlichung* der gesellschaftlichen Mächte der Arbeit ihnen unzer trennbar erscheint von der Nothwendigkeit der *Entfremdung* derselben gegenüber der lebendigen Arbeit. Mit der Aufhebung aber des *unmittelbaren* Characters der lebendigen Arbeit, als blos *einzelner*, oder als blos innerlich, oder blos äusserlich allgemeiner, mit dem Setzen der Thätigkeit der Individuen als unmittelbar allgemeiner oder *gesellschaftlicher*, wird den gegenständlichen Momenten der Production diese Form der Entfremdung abgestreift;

[The objective conditions of labor increasingly assume a more and more colossal independency against the living labor, and social wealth as an alien and dominant power in more and more massive measure confronts with labor. The emphasis is not placed on *being objectified* but on being *alienated*, externalized, and transferred, namely on it that the tremendous objectified power that the social labor has confronted as one of its own moments with itself does not belong to the laborer but to the personified conditions of production, namely capital¹⁴. As long as, from the viewpoint of capital and wage labor, the creation of this objective body of activity takes place in opposition to the direct labor ability - this same process of objectification in fact appears as a process of externalization from the viewpoint of

¹⁴ Here, we have to pay attention to the two phases of personification of capital: namely (1) capital as personified conditions of production is itself personification in the first phase, and then (2) capitalist is personification of capital in the second phase.

labor, or as a process of acquisition of alien labor from the viewpoint of capital¹⁵ - , this reversal and inversion is a *real* one, not *barely* a *supposed* one, not barely existing in the imagination of laborers and capitalists. However, this process of reversal is evidently barely a historical necessity, barely necessity for the development of production forces from a certain historical starting point or basis, but not an absolute necessity of production; is rather a disappearing necessity and its result and (immanent) purpose of this process is to abolish this basis as well as this form of process. The bourgeois economists are so much crammed with the ideas of a limited historical phase of development of society that the necessity to *objectify* the social powers of labor appears to them to be inseparable from the necessity to *alienate* these powers from the living labor. However, together with the abolition of the *direct* character of living labor as barely *particular* one, or as barely internally, or barely externally universal one, in other words, together with the positing of the activity of individuals as directly universal or *social* one, this form of alienation becomes removed from the objective moments of production.] (MEGA II/1.2: 698)

The ‘historical meaning of capitalist production’ in the above-quoted passage refers to an ‘inevitable transition’ to a ‘free human society’ that presupposes the development of social productive forces; capitalist production historically enforces it at the cost of a large number of people. We have mentioned that value represents reification of the social relations of private labor and that money as value-body (Wertkörper) functions as a thingified community (Gemeinwesen) in a totally commodity-producing and exchanging society. The ensuing consideration now leads us to capital (as self-valorizing value), which monopolizes the function of the community in the direct production process in opposition to laborers by means of organization of large-scale cooperative production.

¹⁵ This passage supports our interpretation of reification-thingification and alienation=externalization; namely a process that, from the viewpoint of capital, is seen as the intensifying independence of objective conditions of production in opposition to the living labor, which means reification-thingification is, from the viewpoint of living labor, regarded as alienation=externalization.

Es ist nachgewiesen worden das “Gesellschaftliche” etc. seiner Arbeit dem Arbeiter nicht nur fremd, sondern feindlich und gegensätzlich, und als im Capital vergegenständlicht und personificirt gegenübertritt.

[It has been demonstrated that the “social,” etc. of the labor of the laborer does not only stand against him in an alien way but also in a hostile and antagonistic way, and as objectified and personified in the form of capital.]
(MEGA II/4.1: 95f.)

The sway of things develops the socialization of the whole society through the marketization of society as well as the socialization of any particular workplace. However, at the same time, capital devastates nature in terms of objective nature as well as human nature because it pursues the development of social productive forces in a limitless way merely for the purpose of self-valorizing value. Thus, Marx ultimately derives the power to resist the sway of things from material nature ruined and devastated by capital.

As far as reification and alienation as two closely interrelated methodological concepts in Marx’s critique of the political economy are concerned, we could summarize them in the following way: The theory of alienation refers to the method by which the automatic process of the reified system can be reformulated into the living activity (*Lebenstätigkeit*) of individuals; in other words, reification as the theory of the process with the system as a subject can be converted into alienation as the theory of action with individuals as subjects. Here, process-like moments in the reified system can be reinterpreted as the active moments of individuals. The theory of alienation refers to the multiple modes of the formation of subjects within the reified system and deals with such themes as the split between life, consciousness and cultivation of competence of individuals to socialize themselves in a multiple way.

In conclusion, the method of Marx’s critique of the political economy consists of reification-thingification and alienation as inseparably combined methodological elements in which the former stands for the analysis of objects (as a reified system), and the latter for the analysis of subjects alienated under the power of things.

The production forces of capital has in a worldwide scale been depriving the human beings of the means of production, destroying diverse modes of inherited

self-supporting subsistence economy, and bringing more and more people that are completely dependent upon market economy and precarious labor. This is a universal impoverishment of the mankind caused by the production forces of capital. However, at the same time, people that are involved in the reified-thingified economic system have inevitably been educated, trained, disciplined, and equipped with IT technology, communication skills, and various kinds of intelligence brought by the system. In this sense, alienation also contributes to forming some agents that are qualified to socially and politically confront the capitalist system, or at least to revise the system. The means and resources of resistance and criticism they learn and acquire from their everyday experiences of the alienated labor under the sway of capital. Thus, the theory of alienation opens up a broad range of political and sociological dimensions where people transform their own negative experience under the sway of the reified-thingified system into resources and potentials for them to change the capitalist system. In this sense, the theory of alienation serves as a theory of the formation of cultivated political subjects through the alienated life experience.

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Abbreviation

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MEGA: Marx/ Engels Gesamtausgabe, Dietz Verlag oder Akademie Verlag, Berlin.

MECW: Marx- Engels- Collected Works, International Publishers, New York

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