MARX'S ACTIVE MATERIALISM

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(From *Marx and Rational Freedom* by Peter Critchley).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will build upon Marx's incorporation of citizenship into social and individual relationships, as introduced in the last chapter, to argue that Marx's materialism generalises 'citizenship' by revaluing the moral and political significance of the full range of human activity. [1] Having shown in the last chapter how Marx overcomes the public-private dualism, this chapter will focus upon how Marx overcomes the other dualism undermining 'rational freedom', the reason-nature dualism. The contention in this chapter will be that Marx's materialism, deepening his critique of the state-civil society dualism, represents a radical epistemological shift from the ethical and political theories of modernity.

Focusing upon the way Marx restructures 'rational' principles to attain an embodied, situated freedom within the interaction of individuals, this chapter shows the novel way in which Marx constitutes the self. Unlike the •rational' tradition, Marx has no need to denature individuals in order for them to realise their 'true' selves. This chapter shows how Marx subverted the central category of liberal modernity - the autonomous rational subject - through an active materialism which revalues the political and moral character of the full range of human activity. In the process, Marx exposes the potentially repressive character of a 'rational freedom' which presumes, in abstraction from empirical reality to institutionalise and legislate the good for others. This chapter thus examines the ontological and anthropological roots of Marx's critical appropriation and development of 'rational' freedom on the material terrain of lived experience. [2]

This chapter shows how Marx's materialism challenges the way that the 'rational' tradition comes to be actualised in terms of the autonomy and externality of the rational over the natural, separating the key value of freedom from human experience and, anticipating chapter 6, imposing an instrumental rationality over a substantive rationality. Marx's materialism exposes the paradoxical character of a 'rational' tradition whose democratic principle of self-legislation prepares the ground for the submission of individuals to the dictates of instrumental rationality within capitalist

forms. Integrating reason and nature, Marx subverts the rationalised structures of an alienated social life. This chapter constructs Marx's concept of the human essence as creative self-realisation so as to envisage a 'true' mode of life which corresponds to the ontology of human beings rather than, as with capitalism, contradicts it. This achieves a genuine coincidence between individual and communal well-being. The unity of the freedom of each and the freedom of all - the basic principle of 'rational freedom' expressing human mutuality, interaction and reciprocity - becomes integral to social existence and no longer exists, as in the 'rational' tradition, as an abstract code, an impossible or impotent 'ought-to-be' raised above the real natures of individuals. 'Rational' principles are invested in the everyday life of real individuals. Affirming a fuller sense of material life in terms of what it means for individuals to realise their 'true' selves, Marx is able to conceive a genuine reciprocity, interaction and exchange located within a communal *modus vivendi*.

This chapter shall consider these related topics in order, dealing first with Marx's social conception of citizenship as beyond 'rational' dualism (section 1) and the Foucaultian critique of reason as repressive (section 2) before proceeding to Marx's location of the philosophical ideal in real life (section 3), his ideas about the creative human essence (section 4), and with the democratic implications of his 'active' materialism (section 5). The purpose is to establish Marx's anthropological and ontological foundations for transcending 'rational' dualisms, rescuing the normative component of 'rational freedom' from within an alien realisation under the state and capital and identifying it with the realisation of the communal human essence. The rational 'ought-to-be' is thus rooted in the real, creative, unfolding natures of individuals.

The first section possesses something of an intermediary character, relating to the incorporation of citizenship in social relationships discussed in the last chapter in relation to Marx's critique of Hegel's state-civil society dualism, but also introducing Marx's materialism as pertinent to contemporary attempts to challenge the 'rational' terms of modern politics. This introductory section identifies the political and moral implications of Marx's reworking of the rational tradition, relating the 'active' conception of citizenship as a social movement to the materialist basis of Marx's transformation of 'rational' philosophy. Marx is shown to dissolve the institutional-

systemic apparatus of state and capital raised above real society by revaluing the sensuous practicality of human experience. He challenges the way that the 'rational' tradition invests politics and morality in the state in abstraction from the real life activities of real individuals (section 1).

In seeking to define Marx's communism as actualising an ideal community of ends drawn from the tradition of 'rational freedom', this thesis is careful to show Marx as addressing the repressive tendencies of 'rational freedom'. Marx is shown to remove the basis for raising public over private, reason over nature. In arguing that Marx's appropriation of 'rational' themes explicitly dissolves the 'totalitarian' possibilities of reason institutionalised as the state, law and bureaucracy, particular use is made of Foucault's critical stance on the relation of reason and freedom. Section 2, therefore, discusses certain aspects of Foucault's work in order to set Marx's appropriation and transformation of 'rational freedom' within a critical framework which stresses the emancipatory as against the repressive tendencies of reason. Foucault is important in delineating Marx's reworking of 'rational' themes. With freedom emerging as a practise embedded in social life, Foucault is compared to Marx in developing an alternative to the abstract-institutional realisation of reason in the state.

Having set the argument within an interpretative grid which highlights the dual character of reason, the chapter proceeds to show how Marx realised the emancipatory potential of reason against its repressive tendencies. Proceeding from the view that Marx didn't so much break with 'rational' philosophy as define a normative materialist immanence which socialised the ideal (section 3). Marx is shown to define an ontology of self-creation as the basis of politics as expressing a mode of life which realises human nature and satisfies human needs (section 4). The rational is united with the natural. The ideal community of ends implicit in rational freedom obtains a materialist-ontological basis here. Further, by locating the revolutionary force in the transformative praxis of the *demos*, Marx is shown to be able to realise the emancipatory and normative principles of 'rational freedom' without having to resort to an educational dictatorship, whether this dictatorship is exercised through the 'illusory' general will of the state and law (anticipating the argument of chapter 6) or through the 'revolutionary' party (section 5). In short, Marx's materialism is shown to be crucial in integrating the dualisms of public-private and reason-nature so as to realise the 'rational' ideal community of ends in everyday society.

5-1 MARX'S SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

This section returns to the unresolved problems of 'rational freedom' so as to support the claim that Marx's materialism realises the emancipatory themes of 'rational freedom' whilst subverting the repressive or totalitarian implications of a 'higher' unitary morality and politics, institutionalised, codified and imposed from above through the alien state. Power ceases to be institutionalised force, a coercive order of legality, and becomes a more intimate phenomenon, operating within the person through the self. The intention is to show how Marx, in pursuing a substantive concern with reason, exposes the threat to individual identity from specific forms of social existence. Emphasising how capitalist modernity has been shaped in the guise of an alien form of rationality and power, Marx is shown to open up a theoretical space for a politics of difference which recovers identity from within the oppressive, homogeneous forms of the state and capital. Putting reason on a material basis, Marx outlines a critical project in which individuals invest more in their relationships rather than having to subordinate individuality to identities subject to externally imposed ends as economic or legal persons, as *bourgeois* or *citoyens*.

Marx has been connected in this respect with a form of postmodernism in challenging the modern subject and its key characteristics of autonomy, separateness, rationality, disembodiment (Coward and Ellis 1977:61).

The connection between Marx and Foucault as radically affirmative thinkers, opposing all forms of moralizing doctrine that conceive virtue in terms of passive obedience to a set of ethical injunctions, will be made in the next section.

Poster attempts to establish a connection between marxism and Foucaultian pluralism so that marxists are more responsive to a 'discontinuous and unsynchronised' multiplicity of forces in an 'age of information' (Poster 1984:88 164). Poster's argument is, however, vitiated by the way that he uncritically accepts the postmodernist caricature of marxism as producing a 'Leviathan of Reason' based on the myth of 'the labouring subject' (Poster 1984:57 73). This thesis argues that there are other ways of constructing reason in Marx. Marx himself exposes the way that 'rational freedom', confined within capitalist relations, is institutionalised in the

state as a system of internalized checks and interdictions. As a result of this institutionalisation, reason is abstracted from nature and comes to lose its affirmative power.

The specific focus of this introductory section is to develop the implications of Marx's active conception of citizenship as a social movement subverting the state, as defined in the last chapter. Developing the materialist basis of Marx's critique of public-private dualism meets Hirst's demand for a 'complex multifocal polities' undermining the state. Hirst is critical of the 'new republican' current on the Left, based on 'majoritarian democracy' and a 'common ideal of citizenship' as 'ill-suited to a pluralistic society': 'Citizens need a political community that will enable them to be different, and not one that exhorts them to be the same' (Hirst 1994:13/4). It is in this sense that Taylor criticises the homogenising tendency of a unitary 'rational' citizenship. Where there is the 'aligning of equal freedom with the absence of differentiation1, 'the margin to recognize difference is very small' (Taylor 1992:51/2).

It is crucial to argue, then, that Marx's appropriation of the 'rational' tradition avoids any such homogenising tendency by locating reason in the everyday life world of real individuals. Marx's political morality is defined as a practice embodied in relationships, rather than as an institutionalised code administered over individuals. This responds to the Foucaultian critique of the 'rational' concern to generate public institutions as a rationalisation of the all-pervasive domination of the centralised state, subjugating otherness and difference (Dallmayr 1993:9/10). [3]

The Foucaultian critique questions the existence of an emancipatory dimension in the 'rational' tradition. The pursuit of the emancipatory ideal implicit in the project of 'rational freedom' has to be critically aware of the repressive tendencies of reason in the modern world. Foucault has drawn attention to the 'other, dark side' of the 'formally egalitarian juridical framework' in the form of the development and generalisation of 'disciplinary mechanisms' (Foucault 1977:222/3). In exposing the soldier behind the citizen and the 'military dream' behind democracy, Foucault's 'rational freedom' is a critical concept, looking 'not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility' (Foucault 1977:169).

For Connolly, Marx's and Hegel's modernist 'quest for a perfectly ordered self and a perfectly ordered world' is part of a 'drive to force everyone and everything into slots

provided by a highly ordered system', pretending that 'the result is self-realisation, the achievement of reason, the attainment of the common good'. 'Rational' thinkers thus become 'unwitting allies of technocratic agencies of social control', suppressing 'otherness' (Connolly 1989:14). The faith invested in reason results in social life being penetrated more and more by coercive power and subjected to detailed regulation. Like Foucault, Connolly refers to the 'docility' achieved through replacing 'faith in a common God with a common faith in the civilizing power of citizenship' (Connolly 1989:39/40).

Marx's 'citizenship' is not to be found here. Marx taps into the classical notion of the public sphere as a place in which free and equal citizens may actively deliberate upon and determine their common affairs. This thesis has sought to show, through the evolution of 'rational freedom', how Aristotle's active and social idea of citizenship came to be replaced by a passive liberal conception which protects the person, property and liberty of the individual within the formal equality and legality of the modern state. Marx's critique of 'bourgeois' society and state showed that whilst the rhetoric of citizenship flourished within the modern nation state, the actuality was quite different - a passive citizenship within the abstract state associated with what Riesenberg has called a 'slack non-participatory democracy' (Riesenberg 1992:xxiv).

Though the ideal of the public as a sphere of citizen interaction and discourse determining common affairs has been only very imperfectly realised in both the classical world and the bourgeois world this thesis argues that Marx is able to realise this ideal, but in a radically new sense. As the last chapter demonstrated, Marx demanded the incorporation of 'abstract state citizenship' (CHDS 1975:195) into individual relationships as an integral part of his definition of human emancipation, restituting all power and relationships to the social body (OJQ 1975:234). With Marx, the attempt to realise an active and participatory citizenship is thus developed as a social movement from below, implying both the abolition of the state and the extension of public spaces. Marx's view in this respect is pertinent to the contemporary re-emergence of a civic culture (McLennan 1989:122). Marx offers a critique of the attempt to neutralize class relationships by bringing all within the orbit of what Mann refers to as the 'sham political citizenship' of the liberal state (Mann 1987:345).

Marx's project, in reworking the political and the moral terrain of liberalism beyond the division of social space as blocking citizenship as an active designation,

savours a little of contemporary developments concerning the creation of new mechanisms and structures in and outside the forms of liberal political subjectivity (see e.g. Keane 1984 ch5; Melucci 1989 ch 8; Young 1990 ch 6). Some go so far as to argue the 'refusal of a unitary construct of citizenship as exhaustive of the political tasks of the present' (McClure 1992:123). But although postructuralism has problematised the autonomous subject as the central category of liberal thought, as the source of political and legal authority (Barron 1993:80), Marx took the first steps. And, whereas contemporary 'post- liberal' theorists like Keane maintain the classic liberal separation of the state and civil society as a condition of democracy and freedom. Marx subverts the whole dualistic basis of liberal politics.

This chapter develops Marx's materialism as challenging the way that liberal moral philosophy, exemplified in Kant's categorical imperative and Rawls' original position abstracts from the experience of situated individuals to postulate a universal and absolute moral realm. The tendency of this tradition has been to define a unitary morality within an abstracted public realm, excluding all other forms lying outside this realm as neither truly moral nor political.

In displacing morality to a supernatural world, Kant abstracts rational will from the empirical world and prioritises it over human inclination and hence over the possibility of self-fulfilment. Moral worth is invested in a noumenal self raised above empirical individuals. This dualism devalues the real world of individual interaction by making the abstracted public realm alone the realm of rationality and universality. As Rawls states the principle, 'it is as a rational person, as pure will, abstracted from the empirical conditions of lived experience', that one is 'capable .. of a sense of justice' (Rawls 1971:12) and hence entitled to a political voice.

Rawls' 'veil of ignorance' metaphorically expresses the boundary separating the 'public' from the 'private' and exhibits the totalising character of liberal political and legal thought in instituting a closure around 'the political', dividing the individual identity between that allotted in law and that in lived experience. The split between the public identity assigned to the individual as a citizen and the lived experience of this individual defines liberal universal citizenship as a mechanism of exclusion, closing off the categories of the public sphere to the social and natural qualities of individuals.

5-2 FOUCAULT - REASON AND REPRESSION

Foucault sheds an alternative light upon the approach this thesis takes to Marx's reworking of 'rational' themes. In going beyond the autonomous modern subject, Foucault affirms other ways of constituting subjectivity than that contained in the 'rational' tradition. This section is particularly interested in Foucault's view of freedom as a way of living between individuals as opposed to being an abstract ideal or an institutionalised moral code. This makes the point that freedom is a practice embedded in social life.

The central argument of this thesis is that Marx realised the emancipatory dimension of a 'rational' tradition concerning how human beings should live. Foucault questions the very notion of emancipation in exposing the absence of a non-coercive conception of the 'good' society. Whether this absence is the impossibility or the unavailability of 'the good' is a question this thesis addresses. Marx's realisation of the emancipatory dimension of 'rational freedom' beyond the abstracted legal-institutional sphere cannot simply be presented, as Levine presents it, as 'the internalized compulsion of reason' (Levine 1987:14). Foucault's critical perspective on reason shows a need to be aware of the repressive potentialities of 'rational' norms, authority and political institutions.

Foucault's critical approach severs the coincidence of reason and freedom in the project of modernity. Whereas, for the modern subject, knowledge promises to free people from power, for Foucault, knowledge, subjectivity, and power are irrevocably connected (Foucault 1980:52). 'The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of relations of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces' (1980:74). Foucault here opens the possibility that there are other ways of conceiving agency than that implied by the modernist subject. The world is not filled with autonomous, self-legislating moral subjects but with subjects who are scripted by relations of power (Foucault 1991:70). The subject is constituted through practices of subjection and of liberation (Foucault in Rajchman 1991:110).

What this implies is that the modern, Kantian subject is predetermined within the rigid boundaries that define it. Abandoning the modernist conception, Foucault's subjects cease to be social dupes and instead create themselves. Subjectivity is less a truth to be deciphered but a potential to be actualised (Donzelot in Burchel, Gordon and Miller eds 1991:271). Foucault's theory of power makes resistance to power more accessible in that 'one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance,

producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remoulding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds' (Foucault 1978:96).

Power is no longer located in structures or institutions at a single point of origin but circulates through the mobile and unstable interrelations of force at local levels. Power is 'everywhere' as 'the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (Foucault 1981:93). Power is not external to and causally related to other relations like economic processes but is generated immanently from below, from within the multiple force relations operating in the apparatuses of production, families and institutions constituting the social body.

Foucault's rejection of the 'rational' meta-narratives of the Enlightenment (Kantian, Hegelian, Marxist) is complete. His detailed 'micrological' analysis shows how individuals are recruited, disciplined, and subjected to various forms of institutional control through the operation of a pervasive 'power/knowledge' which extends to every aspect of private and public life (Foucault 1980; Rabinow ed. 1985). For Foucault, the problem is not of the domination of class interest or the state as a class machine but of multiple, decentred 'discourses' which circulate without any clear point of origin, 'technologies of the self that do not require punitive sanctions since they are voluntarily embraced by subjects pursuing self-knowledge. Foucault's critical observations make it clear that Marx's freedom beyond rules and codes cannot simply be presented as the internalisation of reason leading to the moral coordination of human affairs. Reason emerges in Foucault's perspective as a product of a pervasive 'will-to-truth' subjugating the body to various disciplinary regimes. [4]

Foucault's critical perspective makes it important to underline how Marx realises an internal as against an external conception of reason, how he assimilates reason subjectively, socially and materially without it taking the form of an internalised moral and social compulsion.

In treating the link between ethics and the subject as a central theme in Western thought, Foucault denies that to argue that power is everywhere implies that it is nowhere and hence that there is no freedom (Foucault 1987:124). Power entails not merely domination but resistance to domination. Foucault invokes the Greek notion of 'ethos' in arguing that ethics is always a practice, a way of being. A good ethos would

be the practise of freedom (1987:117). Foucault thus upholds a view of freedom as a way of living between individuals rather than an abstract ideal or institutionalised moral code, a 'practice of freedom' embedded in the social life of individuals (1987:114). This creates possibilities for a 'politics of difference' (Connolly 1991) which holds that individuals can be united politically without having to posit an abstract common identity instituted through the state (Young 1990; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Brittan and Maynard 1984). As such, it compares with Marx's social conception of citizenship as a movement from below. Foucault characterizes his method as the 'freeing of difference', embracing divergence, the nomadic and dispersed multiplicity that is not confined by the constraints of similarity (Foucault 1977:185).

As radically affirmative thinkers, Marx and Foucault are both concerned less to abandon morality than to articulate it as a 'practise of freedom'. Both are alive to the way in which morality is divorced from a way of life and institutionalised as a 'rational' system of internalized checks and interdictions. The question concerns how each proposes in their different way to overcome this predicament.

Foucault's genealogical analyses reveal the repressive, irrational and iniquitous aspects of the architectonic conception of 'rational freedom'. The problem for Foucault is not that the project of emancipation has been deflected or obstructed but that in being realised its true nature has been revealed in the form of the panopticon society (Turner 1993:118 127). The Panopticon emerges as the ideal mechanism of power, a diagram of power (Deleuze 1986), providing the model for correctional institutions subjecting individuals to constant surveillance. This system of physical control entails a mental re-education through the total discipline of the body in a rationally managed architectural space (Foucault 1973 1977). Where reason once promised emancipation from coercive and arbitrary rule, it is now shown to bring an expansion in the technologies of power, surveillance and control.

To the extent that Foucault's intention is to question and rethink the categories and practices within which individuals live, making individuals more self-aware, his project helps subvert 'the grip which the human sciences currently exercise over the self-understanding of the subject of the modern state' (Philp in Miller ed 1991:159/60). And Foucault is not as dissimilar to Marx on reason and subjectivity as one might imagine, particularly with respect to Marx's concern to defetishise the social world and to realise the human potential for self-definition through their life

activity. The rest of this chapter develops this aspect of Marx. Foucault, moreover, is concerned to claim that his critical 'ontology of ourselves' (Foucault 1988:95) continues the spirit of the Enlightenment, particularly Kant (Foucault 1986).

Marx, nevertheless, is more nuanced. He thinks both within and against the modern 'rational' public sphere. He does not regard reason as a wholly delusive notion which serves to legitimize a powerful apparatus for the surveillance and control of individuals. Whereas Foucault ignores the differences between various forms of the modern (post-feudal) state and civil society (Walzer 1986:51/68), Marx recognises the modern 'bourgeois' state as a political emancipation presaging human emancipation in general. And whereas Marx's distinction between 'descending' exploiting classes and 'ascending' exploited classes capable of embodying progressive goals, Foucault's concepts of "war", "resistance", "power" and "the social" 'encourages us to conflate all struggles in one universal struggle, rename it social warfare and leave it at that' (Neocleous 1996:86). Foucault's power/knowledge risks becoming a modern version of the Hobbesian thesis that the pursuit of naked self-interest is the motivating force in human affairs, so that state authority is merely the outcome of a contract entered into for the sake of limiting its more destructive effects. This is a step back from the 'rational' tradition in that it fails to explain or resolve the problem of perpetual war within the social order.

The problem lies with the way that Foucault's genealogical project rejects philosophical anthropology. There is no constant human subject in history for Foucault, no 'true' or essential human nature (Foucault 1977:153). History is permanently subject to contingency and possesses no intrinsic meaning. Human beings are condemned to struggle to avoid domination, yet struggle cannot guarantee freedom since power is an ineradicable feature of social relations (Foucault 1980:52).

Foucault denies the possibility of human emancipation and has to since, on these premises, he can offer no rational basis as to why a future society would be preferable to an existing society. This thesis has sought an alternative in locating Marx in a 'rational' tradition which makes an anti-authoritarian case for public authority through the voluntary assent of citizens who agree to give up their natural freedom in order to obtain civil freedom and a communal modus vivendi. Should ethics be translated directly into politics and absorbed into social relationships it would be possible to dispense with the need for forms which institutionalise self-assumed collective restraint. Marx can make this crucial switch within the 'rational' tradition since he

does possess a philosophical anthropology. Marx is thus able to fill the abstracted noumenal or moral realm in the tradition of 'rational freedom' with the creative human species essence and its realisation.

As this chapter will show, Marx did more than radicalise reason to theorise the end of the state. He switched the focus from the state and the abstracted institutional world, in which the principle of 'rational freedom' was invested, to the everyday social world, in which reason was to be embodied. Marx had already taken 'Foucaultian' steps to avoid the repressive aspects of reason as an institutionalised and systematised form suppressing individuality. But, in proceeding from a philosophical anthropology, he could do more than Foucault. Against accusations of the assimilation of otherness (Connolly 1989:132), Marx developed a liberatory conception of 'rational' freedom through a detailed presentation of human needs, relationships, self and social identity within a 'social' and materially embodied conception of citizenship.

The inadequacies of Foucault's own perspective, particularly with respect to asserting the permanence of power as struggle, reaffirms the value of Marx's pursuit of the 'rational' project to replace coercion with morality in human affairs. By locating the repressive tendencies of reason in the dualisms of public-private and reason-nature, and by resolving these dualisms, Marx, unlike Foucault, can realise the democratic and emancipatory implications of the 'rational' principles of reciprocity, interaction and solidarity, putting them on a materialist basis which emphasises everyday society and real natures.

The novel element of Marx's conception lies in the way that he reworks the self. In the 'rational' tradition, the autonomous self is given in the context of a division between reason and nature which excludes crucial aspects of human nature from the moral and public realm. With the assertion of public identity in the form of reason over nature, Kant's moral person is characterised by will, devaluing the bodily and affective aspects of social existence. Marx's materialism will be developed as subverting this hierarchical conception by reinstating the multidimensionality of human life activity, revaluing the moral and political significance of the various intensities of human activity.

Such a view presupposes a philosophical anthropology and a notion of the 'good'. Beginning with a discussion of how Marx transcended rather than repudiated 'rational' philosophy, the ontological basis of Marx's position as in and against the 'rational' tradition is the subject of what follows. In showing praxis to be at the core of Marx's 'good' society as the 'true' public life, this chapter is concerned to revalue the everyday world of individual interaction, reciprocity and solidarity against the abstracted and external institutional-systemic world. Marx's critique of alienated social conditions in favour of a materialist embodiment gives practical force to Kant's categorical imperative (Marx CHPR I EW 1975:251).

5-3 MARX AND THE REALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY

The underlying argument of the reconstruction of the tradition of 'rational freedom' in this thesis is that Marx adopts a situated, relational conception of freedom primarily because of his disillusionment with the philosophical approach to the problem of determining the relation of reason to the world. But Marx does not so much abandon philosophy as socialise it. By attaching philosophy to the forces and agencies of social transformation, Marx discerns a way of empowering the 'rational' 'ought to be', of realising philosophy. This section proposes to argue that Marx does not suppress philosophy but incorporates the philosophical ideal within a normative materialist immanence.

Certainly, Marx argues that one has to 'leave philosophy aside', 'leap out of it' in order to study actuality (GI 1999:103). But this view is consistent with the repudiation of the speculative character of philosophy as abstracted from the actual world rather than of philosophy as such. The questions Marx continued to pursue remained philosophical questions in the deepest sense, concerning human flourishing, the good life, the nature of human beings. The difference is that the philosophical is now buttressed by the ontological and anthropological and is located socially and historically.

Marx explained his future direction in the 1843 Introduction. 'You cannot transcend philosophy without realizing if' (CHPR:I 1975:250). The transformation of philosophical into social critique means that, with communism, philosophy - and specifically 'rational' philosophy - was not so much abandoned as made a reality.

In resolving philosophical questions within the terrain of material reality, Marx expresses his disillusionment with the attempt to establish the relation between the ideal and the real in the 'rational' tradition, particularly the way that the normative dimension came to be established in an abstract realm apart from real life. Marx thus criticises the 'German Ideology' for the way that it detaches communism from 'real movement', forcing communist systems into 'arbitrary connection with German philosophy'. This 'true' 'German philosophical consciousness' transforms relations between real individuals into 'relations of "Man"'. Marx, in contrast, opposes the 'realm of real history' to the 'realm of ideology' (GI 1999:119). Marx's concern that the philosophical ideal should be part of social life led him to emphasise the normative significance of dynamic social practices and human activities.

This section, therefore, traces Marx's relationship with philosophy, reading his concern to realise the philosophical ideal as grounding the normative dimension of 'rational freedom' within real society. Marx's claim concerning the realisation of philosophy and the transformation of the world has significant consequences. In the first place, the philosophical ideal is no longer detached from the real world as an impotent 'ought to be', located in an abstracted noumenal realm or ethical state.

Philosophy becomes worldly in galvanizing and energizing those social forces which possess the structural capacity to transform existing reality. In the second place, this transformed reality signifies the end of philosophy as something apart from the affairs in the world. Philosophy is realised when its ideal becomes real.

Marx's preoccupation with overcoming the dualism of the 'is' and the 'ought to be' represents an attempt to resolve the tension between politics and morality as the most salient characteristic of the 'rational' tradition as 'purely idealistic' (MECW I 1975:11 12). Marx focuses directly on the dual character of 'rational freedom' as a lawful freedom, real in there being actual laws which punish, coerce, or regulate individuals and as 'exemplified by the state'; abstract in that the principles grounding these laws are detached from real life (MECW I 1975:12).

Marx proceeded beyond this ideal-real dualism to locate morality within the real world. In pursuing an immanentist position, Marx rejects Kant and Fichte for Hegel, 'seeking the idea in reality itself (MECW I 1975:18). But Marx became 'ever more firmly bound to the modern world philosophy' (MECW I 1975:19) in identifying the

ought-to-be as a radical potentiality within reality, abandoning the speculative premise that the ideal exists in a realm separate from the real.
Philosophy is conceived by Marx as a radical activity which normatively confronts an unphilosophical reality as an act of critical judgement upon it, measuring 'individual existence by the essence, the particular reality by the Idea' (MECW I 1975:85). In the process, 'as the world becomes philosophical, philosophy also becomes worldly' (MECW I 1975:85). Addressing its own defects as the defects of the real world, philosophy could go in two directions, entering the real world, which is the 'turn about of philosophy, its transubstantiation into flesh and blood', or further distancing itself from the real world, retreating to a transcendental, religious position.

> The act of the first side is critique, hence precisely that turning-towards-the-outside of philosophy; the act of the second is the attempt to philosophize, hence the turning-in-towards-itself of philosophy. This second side knows that the inadequacy is immanent in philosophy, while the first understands it as inadequacy of the world which has to be made philosophical.
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> MECW I 1975:86

Taking the first course, Marx defines his position in terms of the realisation of philosophy, emphasising its role as a critical and normative activity which generates the demand that the unphilosophical world be made philosophical. For Marx, 'philosophy does not exist outside the world' (MECW I 1975:195). The time must come when philosophy 'comes into contact and interaction with the real world of its day... it becomes the philosophy of the contemporary world' (MECW I 1975:195/6).

In arguing that philosophy must encounter the real world of everydayness, Marx seeks to give philosophy a more creative and transformative relationship with the world. In engaging with the real world of power and conflict, philosophy becomes active and political, 'secularised' by being drawn into struggle. Marx develops the radical implications of normative 'rational' philosophy into a demand for the 'ruthless criticism of the existing order, ruthless in that it will shrink neither from its own discoveries nor from conflict with the powers that be' (Marx 1975:207).

The philosopher becomes a social critic able to develop 'the true actuality out of the forms inherent in existing actuality as it ought to be'. Political questions obtain a normative dimension as philosophical criticism becomes 'a criticism of politics'. Entering into and identifying with 'real struggles' does not mean confronting the world with 'new doctrinaire principles' but developing new principles 'from the existing principles of the world' (Marx 1975:208). The political character of philosophy becomes apparent in the identification of possibilities for transformation, making these possibilities 'conscious' in relation to the 'real struggles' people are engaging in, revealing the forces which shape and mould the 'is' (Marx 1975:208/9).

In moving from philosophical to sociological critique, seeking to 'establish the truth of this world' (CHPR:I 1975:244), Marx addresses the normative concerns of 'rational' philosophy to the alienated forms of human activity. The 'immediate task of philosophy' is to unmask 'human self-estrangement', religious criticism turning into the criticism of law and politics (CHPR:I 1975:251).

Marx explicitly targets 'rational freedom' as invested in the state as an ideal agency, demanding its realisation in actual life.

> the political state .. contains the postulates of reason in all its modern forms, even where it has not been the conscious repository of socialist requirements It consistently assumes that reason has been realised and just as consistently it becomes embroiled at every point in a conflict between its ideal vocation and its actually existing premises. This internecine conflict within the political state enables us to infer the social truth.
>
> Marx to Ruge 1975:208

Marx's discovery of the roots of diremption, antagonism and egoism in the very structures and relations of real society made it clear to him that the 'rational' attempt to build this framework as an ideal realm removed from the empirical world had to be modified. Rational freedom's moral framework existed as an ideal, abstract, realm exercising moral judgment apart from the immoral world incapable of changing that world, only imposing morality in external fashion as the command of duty.

Marx attacks Germanic 'rational freedom' directly. Challenging German 'illusions' about the State, particularly the way that 'the State built itself up into an apparently independent force' (GI 1999:98), Marx goes so far as to describe Kant as 'whitewashing spokesman' of the German burghers (1999:99). He explains the 'moral' and 'disinterested' character of German 'rational freedom' by German economic underdevelopment: political forms corresponding to a developed bourgeoisie were accepted 'merely as abstract ideas, principles valid in and for themselves ... Kantian self-determinations of the will and of the people, such as they ought to be' (1999:99). For Marx, the German idea of freedom is constituted apart from the material relations of production. Kant 'separated this theoretical expression [will] from the interests which it expressed', thus making 'the materially motivated determinations of the will of the French bourgeois into pure self-determinations of "free will", of the will in and for itself, of the human will, and so converted it into purely ideological conceptual determinations and moral postulates' (1999:99).

Marx strikes at the heart of 'rational freedom' as a lawful freedom instituted under the state by exposing the way that the general interest becomes an 'illusory' community or communal life in the form of State and law divorced from real individuals (GI 1999:53 83 88). For Marx, this power 'can only be broken by revolution' (1999:88). (This will be developed fully in chapter 6).

With Marx, philosophy is no longer simply critical but activist and engaged, proceeding to 'tasks which can only be solved in one way - through practice [Praxis]' (CHPR:I 1975:251). In energizing the forces and agencies of social transformation, philosophy becomes political and practical: 'material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory also becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses' (CHPR:I 1975:251).

Philosophy issues in social revolution as rationality is embodied through connection with human needs. Marx identifies this radical demand with the proletariat, the 'class with radical chains' representing the universal interests of society. The proletariat is the universal class not simply on account of its material futurity but also its ability to embody universal ideals. The proletariat constitutes a class which is compelled to overthrow the dehumanised social order and establish human emancipation 'by its immediate situation, by material necessity and of its chains themselves'. The proletariat is the universal class since it 'cannot emancipate

itself without emancipating itself from - and thereby emancipating - all the other spheres of society' (CHPR.-I 1975:256).

Marx breaks through from philosophic to practical social critique, then. But proletarian praxis embodies the philosophical ideal: 'Philosophy cannot realize itself without the transcendence of the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot transcend itself without the realisation of philosophy' (CHPR:I 1975:257). Marx confirmed this synthesis of the proletariat and philosophy as the interdependence of theory and practice in the *Theses on Feuerbach*.

Marx repudiates the 'rational' attempt to found the moral order upon 'higher' human characteristics abstracted from the world of experience, from natural inclinations as irrational and from civil society as a diremptive sphere.

Arguing that the interchange between human beings and nature serves as the ground for history denies the existence of immutable moral foundations for human freedom. A 'self-sufficient philosophy loses its medium of existence': 'when things are seen this way, as they really are and happened, every profound philosophical problem is resolved . . quite simply into an empirical fact' (MECW 5 1975:39).

In placing a heavy emphasis upon the concept of *Verkehr* or *Verkehrsform*, meaning traffic, association, communication, commerce or intercourse (Marx GI 1999:42/3nl), *The German Ideology* is a key text, underlining how Marx relocated the key principles of the tradition of 'rational freedom' - reciprocity, interaction and intersubjectivity - from the abstracted institutionalised world (as the embodiment of reason) to the everyday social world (as the natural world of experience for real individuals). This idea of 'intercourse' is valuable in showing Marx's direction away from a 'rational' interaction between self-legislating moral agents in an ideal realm towards a material interaction between real individuals in an associational social reality. The relational aspect of 'rational freedom' is thus located not in an abstracted moral realm but in 'the intercourse of individuals with one another' (1999:42).

Marx defines a critical and emancipatory project oriented to the understanding of 'rational freedom' from the perspective of the material activities and social needs of real individuals. Thus the 'production of material life itself generates new needs which provides the foundation upon which any examination of the actual life process of society must rest (1999:47). The mediation between reason and nature comes through the production of material life. Marx relates the history of humanity to 'the history of

industry and exchange', focusing upon the 'materialistic connection of men with one another', 'determined by their needs and their mode of production' (1999:50).

Marx criticises the 'German Ideology' (Feuerbach, Bauer and Stirner) for its belief in the power of ideas and concepts to change the world (1999:37). This belief, in exaggerating the power of the intellectual in abstraction from the real, issues in a false conception of what human beings are and, as a result, is blocked from a fuller conception of what human beings could become. The 'German' inflation of the power of ideas and concepts precludes attempts to realise the radical implications of the concept of human nature precisely because it abstracts from the real world of needs and interests, of material life and social production. This material sphere forms the basis of Marx's reworking of the 'rational' tradition of philosophy.

Referring to 'the illusions of The German Ideology' (GI 1999:39) and accusing German criticism of 'mystification' in never leaving the realm of philosophy (1999:40), Marx's object is to 'debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality' (1999:37). Marx criticises Stirner's view that 'concepts should regulate life, concepts should rule' as mistaking 'spirit' for real life (GI 1999:26). Instead of examining real relations, Stirner takes the distorted ideological expressions of these relations to be the real substances of history, changing his concepts but leaving the world unaltered (GI 1999:26/7).

In contradistinction to the abstract, ahistorical approach, Marx stresses the 'real movement' of history. Freedom is achieved in relation to the 'real basis' of existing productive forces, emphasising the 'real practice' of the people satisfying their needs as against Stirner's ideal concept of man and his 'idea' of the people (GI 1999:59 60). Freedom is the universal satisfaction of needs beyond 'exclusion of one class from development'. The 'positive expression "human" corresponds to the definite conditions predominant at a certain stage of production and to the way of satisfying needs determined by them' (1999:116).

The intercourse and interaction of real individuals realises the 'rational' principles of intersubjectivity, cooperation, and communality in material life. Marx proceeds not from the self-seeking monad or the spiritual 'Man' independent of the process of real development but from the real individual as a sociable and objective being located in a social context (1999:40 83 93/4).

5-4 ONTOLOGY - PRAXIS, POWER AND NATURE

Following Marx's incorporation of philosophy within the real mode of life of individuals, this section defines Marx's ontology of self-creation as supplying the material content for rational freedom's ideal community of ends. Marx's project of realising philosophy is thus connected with the realisation of human nature.

As has been argued, with its dualistic framework, separating reason and nature, the 'rational' ideal is abstracted from a real world which manifestly does not embody a community of ends. Under capitalism, relations of competition, exploitation, and domination are the rule rather than the exception. Thus, the idea of a universal human community of interacting moral agents drawn from 'rational' philosophy exists merely as a regulative ideal: individuals should relate to each other as though such a community existed. The fate of the 'rational' realm of ends was to be institutionalised in the state and law regulating the commercial relations of capitalist modernity. By attacking this flawed historical realisation at its roots, Marx brought the 'rational' community of ends into existence as a community of everyday life, a true democracy of ends. As against the abstract community of state and capital, Marx will be shown in this section to identify the 'true' community with the realisation of human need.

Post-modern thought is anti-foundationalist in rejecting any objective ground for the existence of human beings as an arbitrary fiction. Marx is Aristotelian in establishing the ground of existence to be 'species being'. This concept involves a view not only of what human beings are but also, on account of inherent potentials, what they ought to be. Human beings are naturally social, dependent upon each other. Marx argues this point not only as an anthropological fact but as a political value, implying an end state in which species essence would be fully realised.

For Marx, the 'rational' notion of a universal human community is implicit in the real natures of individuals. Integrating the rational and natural, public and private, lives of individuals through his concept of universal species being, Marx's critical appropriation of the 'rational' ideal of a community of ends develops principles of reciprocity, interaction and solidarity beyond the abstracted moral sphere into the real lives of individuals.

Since Marx's conception of human nature is most fully articulated in the *Paris Manuscripts*, this section makes this text central in illuminating the democratic character of Marx's anthropology and ontology. The prime object of Marx's ontology

is labour as the process through which freedom, as essential human nature, is realised (Marx EPM EW 1975:284/314; Miller 1982:ch3). This section argues that Marx is able to realise the rational life in a richer form than is possible in the tradition of 'rational freedom'. Communism, as the freedom-embodying community for each and all, realises freedom through realising the species character of all individuals as free, conscious activity (Marx EPM EW 1975:328; McCarney 1990:156/7).

The basic argument of this section is that praxis, as the core of Marx's materialist ontology, [5] possesses clear moral and political implications, connecting the good as human well being and flourishing with freedom as self-determination (Lefebvre 1972:38/9). Freedom as self-determination implies emancipation from external and internal constraints imposed by natural and social necessity. The individual engages in material praxis to humanise nature and in socio-political praxis to create a social order which corresponds to human nature. Human well-being, as the telos of praxis, is thus defined in terms of the capacity to define and realise needs (Parekh 1982:188).

Laclau and Mouffe accuse Marx of upholding 'the anthropological assumption of a "human nature"', determined *a priori* (Laclau and Mouffe 1990:153 152 116 177). Geras has shown conclusively, however, that Marx's concept of human nature is not an hypostatised ideal essence but is based upon common needs and cannot be conceived in abstraction from human self-creation in the historical process (Geras 1983:27/58 63 82/4 90). If Laclau and Mouffe have read the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, they have not understood it. The point is important in making it clear that the imperative to change reality in Marx derives not from some abstractly moral 'rational' perspective but from the evolving needs and natures of human beings.

Marx's philosophical anthropology (Schmidt 1971; Markus 1978; Axelos 1976; Bernstein 1972) is not, then, abstract or static. Marx's 'normative usage' of human nature allows him to criticise social conditions which fail the intrinsic and common needs of humankind (Geras 1983:71). This 'moral indictment' presupposes a conception of human needs and nature (Geras 1983:83/4; West 1991:43) but does not imply an anthropological mode of critique which invites moralism through the hypostatisation of essential human nature. Rather, Marx examines the social order for repressed potentialities for social and personal development (Miller 1982:28).

These points are crucial in developing Marx's resolution of 'rational' dualisms as the realisation of a genuine public life. The conception of communism which emerges

from the Paris Manuscripts gives a central place to a materialism in which human self-realisation proceeds through the integration of reason and nature. Identifying inner need as an ontological necessity constitutes the moral case for communism, recovering the self from within the rationalised forms and codes set by the autonomous moral and political systems. Marx develops a materialist account of the noumenal realm through the connection between power, identity, freedom, and needs.

The concept of species being is crucial here. Species being contains potentialities that can be realised only through the joint development of human nature and human society (Meikle 1985:59/60).

For Marx, human beings only realise themselves as human beings to the extent that essential powers are objectified. Marx thus proceeds to put 'rational freedom' on a materialist basis since such objectification is possible only in relation with others. Individuals cannot become truly human by remaining at the level of immediacy and subjectivity but must give essential powers objective form (Marx EPM 1975:327/9). This process of objectification of essential being is undertaken through labour (Marx EPM 1975:329).

Self-realisation as the end of species-being forms the content of Marx's morality and requires no independent moral justification in a set of ends postulated beyond it. The process of unfolding is simply part the common nature of human beings. But this morality conflicts with the instrumental rationality of modern class society in which individuals exist for the sake of a goal external to them. Marx establishes a direct connection between means/ends rationality - which reduces human beings to means - with a capitalist society in which 'labour, life activity, productive life itself appears to man only as a means for the satisfaction of a need, the need to preserve physical existence1. Species life 'appears only as a means of life' (EW 1975:328). Within class relations, the individual is compelled to convert the end of self-realising species-being into the means of survival.

The point is not that Marx denies instrumental rationality. A rational society requires the appropriate fitting of means to ends. Instrumental rationality would, that is, be put in its true place as facilitating and coordinating human action and intercourse in a realised society in the individual is able to flourish as ends in themselves.

Society is thus critically evaluated according to the extent to which it enables human beings to realise their essential powers and the extent to which it constrains,

distorts or destroys these powers. 'Free, conscious activity is man's species character' and, as a result, alienative relations are the denial of the species character of human beings (Marx 1975:329/31; Walton and Gamble 1976:6).

> The real, active relation of man to himself as species being, or the realisation of himself as a real species being, i.e. as a human being, is only possible if he really employs all his species-powers - which again is only possible through the cooperation of mankind and as a result of history - and treats them as objects, which is at first only possible in the form of estrangement.
>
> Marx EPM 1975:386

Alienation, implying the possibility of a better human condition through an appeal to inherent human qualities (West 1991:44), is crucial. Whereas human self-realisation ought to be an end in itself, under capitalism it becomes purely instrumental to external ends: 'This fact simply means that the object that labour produces, its product, stands opposed to it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer' (EW 1975:324). Through their labour, the workers actually strengthen the condition of their domination: 'the more the worker exerts himself in his work, the more powerful the alien, objective world becomes which he brings into being over against himself ... the life which he has bestowed on the object confronts him as hostile and alien' (EW 1975:324). Labour becomes something repugnant to the worker, a 'loss of reality', a 'bondage' (EPM 1975:324 329), reducing the worker to idiocy and cretinism (EPM 1975:326) - the consequence of the division of labour (EPM 1975:369/74; Walton and Gamble 1976:13/4; Ollman 1976:135/6). The alienation of labour is the estrangement of the producer from the product and of human beings from each other (EPM 1975:329/30 331), imposing a mode of life upon individuals which denies their essential species attributes (EPM 1975:328). In consequence, human potentiality is unactualised and 'conscious life activity', 'species life', becomes a mere means for existence (EPM 1975:328).

Marx, therefore, makes the abolition of alienation an ontological necessity. Since individuals are creatures of needs, well-being is the satisfaction of these needs through the human interaction with nature (EPM 1975:358ff). Communism is the

positive resolution of the various dualisms which have characterised human history - man-man, man-nature, individual-species, freedom-necessity - so that individuals may live a realised life (EPM 1975:348; Miller 1982:26; Meikle 1985; Meszaros 1970; Ollman 1976). Marx puts power and needs at the heart of politics as a mode of life expressing an ontology of self-creation. [6]

Marx takes his leave of 'rational' dualism and the powerful influence it exerted over the ways in which human fulfilment has come to be conceived. His notion of the individual as a species being is crucial to this recasting of the ideal universal community of 'rational freedom' as a real community:

> Man is a species being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species - both his own and those of other things - his object, but also - and this is simply another way of saying the same thing -because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a universal and therefore free being.
>
> EPM 1975:327

For Marx, the activity of the individual forms an organic part of species life as an interconnected whole. The concept of 'species being' enables Marx to show how, through 'conscious life activity', human beings can choose what they want to do or be (EPM 1975:328/9). In engaging actively with the material world, human beings demonstrate their 'conscious species being', producing free from the constraints of 'immediate physical need' (EPM 1975:329) so that they may affirm their true essence through creative labour. The world is 'the creation of man through human labour', proof of a 'self-mediated birth' (EPM 1975:357 329).

The self-creation of humanity is a process in which the transformative, sensory, aesthetic and cognitive powers of individuals are transformed and expanded and, with them, the structure of human need (EPM 1975:349/50). Central to this notion is the idea that self-realisation comes to be the object of need. Marx refers to what might be called 'self-realisation' needs, criticising 'absence of needs as the principle of political economy' (EPM 1975:363). These are 'radical needs' insofar as individuals, conscious of their alienation, seek a satisfaction that cannot be realised in existing society

(Heller 1976:94/5; Elliott in Panichas ed 1985:51/102). Marx's materialism, therefore, is able to get to the roots of rational freedom's transformation into a repressive rationalisation by addressing capitalism's alienated system of production.

Marx's ontology, demanding an internal relation to the world as opposed to the external imposition of identities, is 'radical' in showing how the ontology of human beings is contradicted by capitalist society. Marx criticises the way that 'social needs' impact negatively upon the individual in being determined by them as 'alien to him and which act upon him with compulsive force' (JM 1975:269). The individual submits to this force of 'social need ... from egoistic need, from necessity' (JM 1975:269).

Individuals relate to each other not as human beings but merely as means to the end of satisfying their 'egoistic needs'. They 'subordinate' themselves to the 'alien substance' of money, the 'estranged essence of man's work and existence' (OJQ 1975:241 249). Money becomes the 'real need' of all in a society governed by private property (EPM 1975:358 375).

The satisfaction of 'human needs' is possible only under communism, the 'true community' as the 'essence of man' which 'arises out of the need and the egoism of individuals' (JM 1975:265) and which expresses the 'real, conscious and authentic existence' of man's 'species activity' and 'species spirit' through 'social activity and social enjoyment' (JM 1975:265). Marx's 'true' community challenges alien community, the alienation of the social bond, under capitalism. With private property, 'community appears in the form of estrangement' (JM 1975:265). To achieve 'true' community, the form that 'human need' takes under capitalism as 'egoistic need' must be replaced by a genuine form of 'human need'.

Within the realm of private property, however, the need to realise the human essence confronts the individual 'as the de-realisation of his life' (JM 1975:266 269). The abolition of this 'de-realisation' is a moral imperative since 'man' is 'in need of a totality of vital human expression; he is the man in whom his own realisation exists as inner necessity, as need' (EPM 1975:356; McCarney 1990:159/60).

Given the social character of species essence, this self-development takes place in relation to others within community (West 1991:58 59/60). With self-realisation, the individual experiences 'his greatest wealth - the other man - as need' (JM 1975:267), recognising other individuals as the 'source' of their own life (JM 1975:267). Individuals no longer experience social relationships as an external imposition. No

longer does reciprocity have to be projected to an ideal, noumenal world abstracted from real life. In these circumstances, when the individual is 'in his most individual existence he is at the same time a communal being' (EPM 1975:347). The social character of species essence - human nature as true communal life - defines 'rational freedom' as social, proceeding between individuals in their everyday relations. 'The human essence of nature exists only for social man; for only here does nature exist for him as a bond with other men' (EW 1975:349).

In integrating reason and nature, Marx identifies the normative dimension of reason with the creative self-realisation of essential human nature. The abolition of private property, moreover, enables individuals to establish a proper, 'inner relation' to their objects. In the 'true community', where individuals produce as human beings, labour, as 'conscious life activity', exists as a form of self-affirmation through objectifying individuality (JM 1975:277). Here, 'human need' replaces 'egoistic need', the production of an object now 'corresponding to the needs of another human being' (JM 1975:277). Marx demands a 'real and true' relationship of human beings to their mutual objects of production as the instrument of 'mutual needs' (JM 1975:276)). As the 'free expression and hence the enjoyment of life', labour would be 'authentic, active, property' (JM 1975:278). Marx's social freedom consists in the mutual ownership of products as an expression of need whereas alienation entails private property (Marx EPM 1975:331/4; West 1991:47/8).

This argument goes some way towards answering MacGregor's accusation that Marx lacks a fully explicated theory of property, something which makes state ownership inevitable and leaves the individual defenceless against the encroachment of the state (MacGregor 1998:166). The way Marx affirms productive activity in terms of human self-development forms the basis of a positive conception of property. With human appropriation, objects are no longer experienced as external or estranged but become 'the particular, real mode of affirmation' (EPM 1975:353).

By criticising alienation as 'forced labour imposed .. not through an inner necessity but through an external arbitrary need', Marx affirms labour as the 'free expression' and 'enjoyment of life' (JM 1975:278). Only under communism will 'need or enjoyment' lose their "egoistic nature' and nature lose its 'mere utility in the sense that its use has become human use' (EPM 1975:352). The individual is at home in a world which represents the 'objectification of himself as a realisation of his 'essential

powers' (EPM 1975:352/3), 'the creation of man through human labour, and the development of nature for man' (EPM 1975:357).

On these premises, the rationality of social forms, and the whole organisational and institutional framework that goes with them, is to be evaluated according to the extent to which they expand or deny essential human powers. This employs the wider definition of praxis as embracing the full range of human activities. True, Marx identifies industrial production as 'the open book of the essential powers of man' (EPM 1975:354). But he goes on to argue that, through estrangement, 'this history has not been grasped in its connection with the nature of man, but only in an external utilitarian aspect' (EPM 1975:354). Marx thus determines to uproot the economic reductionism of capitalism as responsible for the transformation of reason into a rationalisation repressive of the human ontology. Relating the 'extended wealth of human activity' to 'common need' (EPM 1975:354), human growth and development will be complete only through a transcendence of the fragmentation of human activities under capitalist relations.

For Marx, social existence, the everyday life world of real individuals, is the sensuous material terrain for embodied experience, providing the basis for dissolving those abstract forms divorced from human life. Marx's case for communism as a uniquely human mode of relationship to natural conditions of life argues that the human interaction with the 'sensuous external world' (Marx EPM 1975:325) is crucial to the formation and maintenance of personal identity. The conception of wealth 'as something outside man and independent of him .. is abolished': 'its external and mindless objectivity is abolished inasmuch as private property is embodied in man himself and man himself is recognised as its essence' (EPM 1975:342).

Marx is seeking the de-commodification of human existence so as to emancipate the wealth of sensuous human growth from the domination of exchange value: 'The supersession of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and attributes' (EW 1975:352).

Production, for Marx, signifies self-realisation but is reduced to economics under capitalism. Far from making the domination of the economic factor eternal, Marx asks 'when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc, created through universal exchange?' (Gr 1973:488). Marx defines 'wealth' as the 'absolute working out' of 'creative potentialities', 'the development of all human powers as such

the end in itself (Gr 1973:488). Production, then, is grounded in species being as naturally creative, concerned with the unfolding of human powers through the transformation of the world: 'man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need' (EW 1975:328/9).

For Marx, human beings are most human when producing freely, beyond direct material need. But this freedom requires certain material conditions enabling the assertion of self-determining human rationality over predetermined nature. What distinguishes human beings from animals is consciousness in producing the means of life (GI 1999:42). The unity of social being and consciousness occurs most explicitly for Marx in language as 'practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well' and which 'only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men' (GI 1999:51).

Language originates in need, as necessary to collective life, but is not tied to necessity. Human interaction embodies meaning, intention, imagination: 'Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges' (EW 1975:328).

This materialism is far richer than the economism with which Marx has been associated. For Marx, the 'mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals' but as 'a definite form of activity of these individuals', 'expressing their life', a 'definite mode of life on their part' (GI 1999:42).

Marx's stress on an affirmative mode of life emphasises the ontological basis of politics and recovers the normative dimension of the full range of human activity. Human beings produce materially and mentally (GI 1999:42 64/8). The essence of human beings is expressed in creative activity, the production of the social world and everything in it from language to institutions. Power thus operates through the promotion of subjectivity and is thus a more intimate phenomenon than that conception which concentrates upon its institutionalised forms in the state and economy. Since 'religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only particular modes of production', the 'positive supersession of private property', as the 'appropriation of human life', is 'the positive supersession of all estrangement, and the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc., to his human, i.e. social existence' (EPM 1975:349).

All of which offers a basis for the transformation and socialisation of the politics and morality of 'rational freedom', rooting it in a 'true' mode of life that corresponds to the human ontology as opposed to investing it in a 'higher' institutional realm apart from real society and real individuals in their empirical existence.

'Rational freedom' is thus dissolved into the real social life of individuals. With practical reappropriation and reorganisation, power does not act on individuals in a remote fashion but acts on the interior of the person. Marx's communism is thus a mode of participation within social existence. Communism 'is at once real and directly bent towards action' (EPM 1975:349), demonstrating 'what significance the wealth of human needs has' and creating a 'new mode of production' as a 'fresh confirmation of human powers and a fresh enrichment of human nature' (EPM 1975:358).

This is also a new, associative, mode of politics. Marx enables the recovery of the sphere of fellowship and reciprocity as against the rationalised, externalised regulations of an abstracted institutional world, something which restores a concern with the personal aspects of life. Communist workmen gathering together for instruction, propaganda etc. 'acquire a new need - the need for society'. 'Company, association, conversation' 'has society as its goal' (Marx EPM 1975:365). It is this life world that Marx opposes to the official world of abstracted rationality. The reciprocal community that Marx affirms emphasises friendship, sociability, sympathy and empathy as fundamental social attitudes forming the basis of society itself.

This approach challenges the equation of justice with the public realm as an impersonal domain. Marx reworks rather than recovers the classical belief that human beings realise themselves within the political life of the public realm. This 'political life' has a unique meaning for Marx, rooted in an associative mode of life that recovers the public character of personal life. Marx's case for self-determination through social control (chapter 6) is thus rooted in ontological assumptions that challenge the rationalised social order that subjects individuals to external processes and authorities. Marx's perspective permits the intervention within the public realm of human needs, etc, the very things which have been confined to the private sphere in being defined as 'personal'.

In sum, this section has shown the crucial role played by Marx's ontology of self-creation in defining the 'true' public life as incorporating reason into material life. Integrating reason and nature, the normative ideal of a 'rational' community of ends is identified as unfolding through the self-realisation of essential human nature. Praxis,

as the core of Marx's ontology, embraces the full diversity of human activity and, critically, possesses a democratic aspect in treating all individuals as knowledgeable and transformative agents. Precisely what this democratic aspect is and what it implies will now be examined.

5-5 PRAXIS - THE DEMOCRATISATION OF POLITICS, POWER AND PHILOSOPHY

This section examines crucial aspects from the *Theses on Feuerbach* in so far as they elaborate upon the democratic aspects of Marx's embedding of 'rational freedom' in real life. The argument pays particular attention to the potential for new modes of political expression in Marx's praxis, particularly in subverting the educator-educated dualism as the basis of the theoretico-elitist model of politics. This model puts politicians and philosophers in a position of authority as alone being able to rise above the general determinism of circumstances. In locating the revolutionary power in the transformative praxis of the demos, Marx will be shown to be able to realise the emancipatory and democratic principles of 'rational freedom' without having to have recourse to an ideal educational agency, Rousseau's Legislator as public tutor, Kant's moral law as the command of duty, Hegel's state as ethical agency.

Marx's materialism incorporates conscious, creative human agency, taking an activist view of human beings, defined in terms of capacities and powers (Parekh 1982:26; Tucker 1961:25 45/69). In this, he builds upon Kant, for whom the human mind possesses certain innate mental equipment for interpreting the material obtained by sense experience (Kitching 1988:14/5; Kant 1974:113; Callinicos 1983:14/5; Korner 1955:27/32 chs 3 4), and upon Hegel, for whom spirit and reason - the Idea - develop through 'the progress of the consciousness of freedom' (Hegel 1953:19; Kitching 1988:17). Materialising Hegel's concepts of objectification and alienation (Norman 1983:174/5), Marx took the standpoint of 'socialised humanity' (Thesis X 1975:423), arguing for the emancipatory-revolutionary incursion of human beings as subjects into fetishised and alienated 'matter' (Bonefeld et al vol I 1992:38/9). 'Circumstances' are not external to human beings but inherently subjective. This section examines the democratic implications of this argument, showing how Marx subverts hierarchical and elitist claims to power and knowledge, however 'rational'.

The fundamental point of Marx's critique of Feuerbach is that all previous materialists have conceived reality 'only in the form of the object, or of

contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively' (Thesis I 1975:421). This purely contemplative attitude characterised Enlightenment materialism, confronting individuals deterministically with laws of nature which could be observed but not altered. Consequently, 'the active side was developed abstractly by idealism' (Thesis I 1975:421), regarding the real movement of history as an expression of the movement of Spirit.

Marx incorporates idealism's activist, creative principle so as to replace the old conception of human beings as the passive, unconscious product of circumstances with the new view of human beings as the active, conscious producers of circumstances. Hence Marx's emphasis upon 'human activity' as 'practical-critical' activity that creates 'objective' reality (Thesis I 1975:421). This makes the point that 'objective' structures and relations are human, that there is subjectivity in objectivity and vice versa (Sherman 1996:35/7).

In empowering creative human agency, this active materialism possesses a democratic character. Though Marx's concern with the 'scientific' analysis of underlying structures implies an access to knowledge denied to those remaining on the surface level of appearance (McLennan 1989:114 202/3 214/5; Wright 1978:12), in subverting the idea of an alienated, inert totality, the conception of revolutionary-critical praxis makes reality accessible to all. Marx conceives of progress from the externally imposed societal determinism of 'circumstances' to freedom as self-determination through the conscious self-activity of human agents (Parekh 1982:27; Gunn 1992:40; Meister 1990:249 250).

Philosophy is superseded, resolved into practical, social life. Objective truth is defined as a practical question (Thesis II 1975:422). Since 'all social life is practical', the mysteries of theory 'find their rational solution in human practice and the comprehension of this practice' (Thesis VIII 1975:423). The comprehension of the world, of the material as sensuously real, must therefore be integrated with 'practical human-sensuous activity' (Thesis V 1975:422). Reason is now not only located in the world but takes shape as '"practical-critical" activity' (Thesis I 1975:422). For Marx, 'thought' and 'reality' are inextricably connected through human activity whereas speculation about 'thought' in abstraction from activity generates the problems of

philosophy (Thesis II 1975:422). Hence Thesis XI: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point however is to change it' (1975:423).

Feuerbach's materialism, Marx argues, cannot understand that human existence is the product of the 'practical-critical' activity of human beings as conscious, deliberate agents. 'The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself (Thesis III 1975:422).

Passive materialism, transferring activity from the human agent to circumstances, possesses conservative implications which it avoids only by a dualism of the ideal and the real, dividing society into 'two parts, one of which is superior to society' (Thesis III 1975:422) in being raised above social determinism. This privileging of an ideal agency as the emancipator of society forms the basis of an authoritarian politics in which an elite is raised above the general social determinism. Consequently, philosophical materialism, like idealism, 'justifies the state, not on the pretext of organization but that of education' (Lefebvre 1972:33). This was precisely the historical fate of 'rational freedom' in having to become a lawful freedom within an abstract public regulating a coercive, competitive social order organised around private property. Law would force people to be free. Femia may compare Rousseau's advocacy of a 'superior intelligence' to educate people to submit to their 'higher self in the form of the general will with a vanguardism implicit in Marx's position (Femia 1993:119/120) but there is a reciprocity in Marx's position which is specifically designed to overcome the dualism of educators and educated (Thesis III 1975:422).

Marx's activist conception of 'revolutionary practice', asserting the 'coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing' (Thesis III 1975:422; Draper 1978:72/5), the view that 'circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances' (GI 1999:59), roots out the philosophical basis of an abstract educative public. In the process, Marx explicitly renounces the revolutionary tradition which emphasised the minority seizure of political power to reshape society from above. Such authoritarian politics would engineer changes from without in the manner of the educational dictatorship of the 'rational' tradition whereas Marx would engender changes from within as a self-change on the part of the human agents. One

has, therefore, to insist upon Marx's conception that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself (a point reaffirmed in the *Circular Letter* of 1879 where Marx rejects the view that the workers are 'too uneducated to emancipate themselves and must first be freed from above by philanthropic bourgeois and petty bourgeois' (CL FI 1974:375).

The rest of this section explores the political implications of Marx's Theses, arguing for the centrality of praxis in transcending the 'rational' tradition by integrating the phenomenal and the noumenal through 'sensuous human activity' (Thesis I 1975:421).

By repudiating environmental determinism, thus overcoming 'the paradox of emancipation' in which change is conceivable only over the heads of those being emancipated (Femia 1993:118/21; Lindley 1986:169 ch 10; Benton 1982:15), Marx rejects the authoritarian educational implications of the old revolutionary - and 'rational' - politics. The Weitling-Buonarroti view that the masses are too determined by circumstances to emancipate themselves (Thomas 1985:110/1; Geras 1986:134/5 141; Draper 1986:30/4) replaces proletarian self-emancipation by emancipation from above via the ideal agency of self-appointed educators who have, somehow, escaped the general societal determinism (Geras 1986:141; Cleaver 1979:29). In contrast, Marx's active materialism makes the working class the (active) subject rather than the (passive) object of social change (Callinicos 1983:45/6; Draper 1977:59). The education of the working class is not supplied 'from the outside' by an enlightened elite but is a self-education generated by the working class themselves in the course of their self-development (Callinicos 1983:46/7). This shows how a new associative public is constituted through the proletariat as the non-bureaucratic universal class able to forge 'rational' bonds of universality and commonality at the heart of society as a new public without having recourse to the state. Marx argues that 'only the proletarians' can accomplish the 'new social task' 'for all society', abolishing the state - and class - as 'the centralised and organised governmental power usurping to be the master instead of the servant of society' (Marx CWF 1974:250).

That Marx's 'proletarian' public or 'party' is a broad notion constituted by proletarian self-organisation is evident throughout his politically engaged writings, Marx calling for 'revolutionary workers' governments' constituted through 'local committees and councils or workers' clubs or committees' (Marx REV 1973:326) and

'constituent assemblies of the proletariat' forming a civil state within the abstract state (Marx CSF SE 1977:84; Marx Instructions FI 1974:91 92; Gilbert 1981:226; Draper 1978:99/103 599/622). The International was especially valued by Marx for showing the proletarian capacity to generate publicity (Marx FI 1974:99 271). Marx's 'proletariat' is the crucial social agency in avoiding the historical incarnation of reason as a bureaucratisation, evident in both Hegel and Weber.

Through the conception of revolutionary-critical praxis, Marx is able to avoid the way that the thinkers in the 'rational' tradition had to resort to an external ideal realm or agency to embody and impose morality. Femia makes a direct comparison here between Rousseau's Legislator and marxism's vanguard party, praising Lenin's willingness to confront the elitist implications of marxism's redemptive project (Femia 1993:119/120). Presenting Marx's praxis as a democratisation of power, politics and philosophy challenges the arguments that Marx's materialism is linked inextricably with a vanguard politics (Laclau 1990:77; Post 1996:17 291 292 293 325). Marx exposed and repudiated the elitism and authoritarianism implicit in the old materialist determinism, particularly in the raising of an elite over society as an ideal/superior agency able to 'educate' human beings passively dependent on circumstances. With this in mind, his active materialism was designed to root out all possibilities for vanguardism (Meszaros 1995:675; Smith 1996:37/8; Draper 1977:48 50/1; Therborn 1976:332). That the theoretico-elitist model privileging politicians and philosophers raised above a societal determinism returned in the 'scientific socialism' of the marxist parties (Avineri 1968:147/9; Perkins 1993:25; Miller 1982:116 118/23; McCarney 1990:3) suggests a political failure to appreciate the democratic potentialities of Marx's materialism in subverting alienated social conditions (Psychopedis 1992:38/9) rather than any totalitarian potential in Marx's communism itself. Since neither orthodox nor western marxism could incorporate a shaping role for proletarian class praxis, proletarian self-development generating the new public was replaced by a model in which these capacities were supplied for the proletarian movement from the outside (with deleterious consequences for the communist public sphere) (Cleaver 1979:73/4; Cleaver 1992:127/8; Parekh 1982:164/5 168; Colletti 1972:375f; Lukacs 1971:68f 163f).

Marx's connection of praxis with proletarian self-emancipation is designed to overcome the elitism of educational dictatorships (Thomas 1985:110/1; Geras 1986:134/6 137/8; Draper II 1978:78; Draper 1986:39/42). Unlike Rousseau, Marx

had no need of the device of the Legislator as public tutor, generating the capacity for transformation and achieving a genuine commonality and universality from within civil society itself (Miller 1982:93/4), reconstituting individuals as free social beings as a process of self-transformation, without the need for external or ideal agencies.

This suggests Marx's pertinence to the contemporary 'participatory revolution' taking place through intermediate political actors outside of established institutions, and to new modes of political expression emerging in the (post?) modern world (Barnes and Kaase 1979:40f; Kaase 1984; Inglehart 1977; Forbes 1989:233/4; Forbes and Street 1986). Blocking this 'postmodern' politics in its democratic aspects, however, is Weber's rationalisation thesis. The hierarchies, dualisms and boundaries of 'rational' liberal modernity, whatever their normative, anthropological and democratic deficiencies, might be the fate of humankind. Weber certainly thought so and his view needs to be addressed.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the opening two chapters of this thesis was to construct and trace the development of the concept of 'rational freedom' with a view to establishing the normative and political character of Marx's communism. The basic theme has been that whilst the 'rational' tradition promised a rich, reciprocal definition of individual freedom, the realisation of its ideal community was blocked by two basic dualisms - reason and nature, public and private.

This chapter has argued that Marx defined an affirmative mode of life which, in providing an environment for a fulfilling existence for each and all, embodied reason in the material life of society. Marx, with his conception of the human essence as creative self-realisation through history, is able to conceive of a 'true' public life which realises the 'rational' principles of reciprocity, interaction and intersubjectivity within actual social existence.

This chapter, therefore, constructs Marx's concept of the creative human essence so as to envisage that mode of life which would enable the realisation of that essence. By achieving communism as this 'true' public, morality and politics become coextensive with the practical lives of individuals in everyday social existence, no

longer existing as an ideal 'rational' sphere abstracted from the world of experience. And, as the final section defining praxis as a democratisation of politics, power and philosophy demonstrated, Marx realised 'rational freedom' without having to resort to the institutional constraint or educational dictatorship of the 'rational' tradition.

The 'rational subject' of modernity requiring an institutional-legal apparatus constraining the individual to morality has been shown to betray an anti-democratic distrust which Marx overcomes with a conception of emancipatory interaction focused on the everyday life world. Conceiving praxis in terms of human self-creation makes it possible to recover the normative and political dimension of the full range of human creativity from within the rationalised world, putting the moral and the political in touch with the reality of lived experience. Marx thus offers an approach which can confront the way that reason becomes an instrumental notion through a Weberian process of 'rationalisation' which penetrates every area of social existence, removes relations and identities from individuals, imposing its own, and which instrumentalises individual life via overarching transformations proceeding externally (Turner 1992; Brubaker 1984; Bologh 1990). Such a process denies 'rational' emancipation. The next chapter thus confronts Weber, proceeding to develop Marx's alternative rationalisation thesis as identifying possibilities for community and individuality immanent in the capitalist process of development.