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On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics

by Herbert Marcuse

To attempt a fundamental definition of the concept of labor appears superfluous because there is a tacit agreement in economic theory to avoid a "definitional" concept of labor as such and to conceive of labor only as economic activity: the praxis within the economic dimension. "The general concept 'labor' has received such an indeterminate content through its ordinary uses that it is hardly possible to unequivocally demarcate it. It is precisely this situation that gives the representatives of economics the right to utilize a specific economic concept of 'labor' that is not derived from a general concept of 'labor' but, rather, through another procedure." A concept of labor so limited does not appear to prejudice decisions concerning the place, meaning, and function of labor in the totality of human existence; the economically relevant differentiations of labor (as for example, the distinctions between supervisory and supervised, free and unfree labor, and the types of labor in various branches of production) can all be placed within the range of the economic concept of labor. Thus, the elaboration of a "general" concept of labor does not seem to be required by economic theory.

Yet, this "definitional" economic concept of labor (which is not derived from or guaranteed by a "general" concept of labor) immediately turns up in the center of economic theory: "The concept of labor has entered political economy in three basic groups of problems: in the theory of value and prices, the theory of factors of production, and the theory of costs." Furthermore, in all three groups of problems, labor is a fundamental concept and the actual cornerstone of the whole problematic: labor is an "ultimate," or at least one of the "ultimate," factors of production, as well as the basis of value, prices, and costs. At this point, the lack of a definitional determination of a general concept of labor becomes obvious.

The state of the problem is further complicated by the fact that the economic concept of labor has decisively influenced the conception of the essence of labor in general—including labor outside the economic sphere. It has forced reflection on the essence and meaning of labor as such in a definite direction—hence labor in the primary, authentic sense is held to be economic activity, while the activity of, for example, politicians, artists,
researchers, and priests is characterized as labor only in a derivative and somewhat uncertain sense, and is generally put forth as fundamentally opposed to economic activity. This narrowing of the concept of labor has, however, gone further, even within economic theory itself. For the concept of labor is here increasingly limited to supervised, unfree activity (whose conceptual model is the labor of the wage earner)—even where the concept of labor in economics should be defined in the context of the basic concepts of that science. For example, Max Weber\(^3\) wants to deal with labor only as "direction-oriented labor" (and not "directing" activity); and Gottl\(^4\) formulates his concept of labor from the outset as the counter-concept to "creative performance" (e.g., the entrepreneur's), as "an activity that merely fills time, and of which everyone is always capable," "measurable in terms of time," as the "everyday form" of human action whose most distinct type is "factory activity."\(^5\)

Hence, the apparently clear economic concept of labor has been fragmented and this fragmentation and the various resulting concepts of labor (i.e., labor as a factor of production in general, labor as a basic concept of the theory of value and cost, labor as supervised, direction-oriented activity, etc.) have not been understood in their fundamental interconnections and cannot be derived from the concept of labor that is their basis. How can economic activity be grasped as labor in the proper sense? How is economic activity related to other activities in the totality of human existence? Why does supervised, direction-oriented activity present itself within economic activity as labor in the proper sense? It could be that economic theory's limiting of itself to economic labor already presupposes a very specific concept of labor expressing a very specific way of practicing economics that contains a very specific conception of the essence and meaning of economic being in the totality of human existence—hence the apparent obviousness of the economic concept of labor is already highly prejudiced by certain presuppositions. In our opinion, all these questions can only be clarified through a fundamental philosophical discussion of the concept of labor: through a discussion that seeks to carefully outline the place and significance of the "facts" of labor within human existence. It is precisely the "indeterminate content" that the general concept of labor has received that forces us to concern ourselves with this general concept of labor. Perhaps this discussion (which we will only introduce here in a general way) will also contribute to focusing on the material [sachlich] interconnection between philosophy and political economy—an interconnection that was last operative in Marx and has been lost since.

Recently there has been a reawakening of interest in the necessity to re-


establish the actual inner connections of the economy. Over thirty years ago, N...
ized as labor only in a derivative and generally put forth as fundamentally narrowing of the concept of labor has, economic theory itself. For the concept of supervised, unfree activity (whose wage earner)—even where the concept in the context of the basic concepts Weber3 wants to deal with labor only as not directing activity); and Gottfried in the outset as the counter-concept to entrepreneur’s), as “an activity that one is always capable,” “measurable in form” of human action whose most economic concept of labor has been and the various resulting concepts of reduction in general, labor as a basic cost, labor as supervised, direction-understood in their fundamental inter-from the concept of labor that is their grasped as labor in the proper sense? other activities in the totality of human rational-oriented activity present itself in the proper sense? It could be that economic labor already presupposes a giving a very specific way of practicing self-conception of the essence and totality of human existence—hence the concept of labor is already highly s. In our opinion, all these questions mental philosophical discussion of the on that seeks to carefully outline the of labor within human existence. It is that the general concept of labor has itself with this general concept of h we will only introduce here in a using on the material [sachlich] inter-political economy—an interconnection has been lost since.

1921), p. 62.

ebens,” in Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft... establish the actual inner connection between philosophy and political economy. Over thirty years ago, Max Scheler6 programmatically demanded a philosophical discussion of basic economic concepts as a way to this goal, and he himself began with a philosophical discussion of the concept of labor. From a completely different perspective Max Weber had reduced the economic systems of various periods to the “Ethos” which bore them and thus transcended economic theory to the theological-philosophical sphere precisely by using the concept of labor as a guiding thread.

The modern science of labor seeks to approach the problem of labor in its full complexity. However, whenever it goes beyond the economic-technical dimension, it undertakes this task on a natural scientific-biological foundation. For the science of labor, the problem is beyond the economic-technical dimension: it is seen essentially as a psychological problem. Psychology, however (and especially if founded on the biological-natural sciences), cannot adequately deal with the problem of labor since, as the following investigation hopes to make clear, labor is an ontological concept of human existence as such. Yet, if labor is treated as a psychological phenomenon, its fundamental character is already lost at the outset (we shall come back to this in regard to the burdensome character of labor [Lastcharakter der Arbeit]). Because of such a misunderstanding of, or complete absence of, such a basis, in his Philosophie der Arbeit (Halle, 1932), Giese fails to accomplish what the book’s title promises. A great number of possible problems and groups of problems “related” to the concept of labor turns up and is investigated in the book, without making clear their necessary and factual interconnection. The unclear, make-shift conceptualization that comes from various disparate sciences and doctrines is expressed already in his fundamental determination of the concept of labor: accordingly, labor is “an epochal phenomenon...that corresponds to a purposive activity by individuals and society directed toward occupationally-determined cultural goals, that arises on the basis of biological and technological energy, but that follows teleological directives.”

Within economic theory itself the “philosophical stimulus” implicit in the concept of labor becomes evident almost only when “ethical” questions related to labor are raised, especially in connection with the division of labor and its effects on the laborer’s whole existence. Attempts at a fundamental unfolding of the factual content of “labor” within the totality of human existence remain, for the most part, stuck in preliminary rudiments (we are speaking here only of present-day economic theory!); examples will be mentioned in the footnotes. We shall also go more deeply into Gottl’s treatment of the problem of labor.

Within philosophy, we find in the work of Hegel the last radical reflection

6. In the essay “Arbeit und Ethik” (Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre, 1923/24).
on the essence of labor and its unfolding into the concrete spheres of historical existence. It was taken up and further developed on the broadest basis by Marx, especially in the writings of 1844-45; and it appears in the social theory of Lorenz von Stein, where the description of the social order begins with an inquiry into “the essence of labor.” In the following investigation of the concept of labor we shall delve into these three inquiries after we first briefly describe the concept of labor in the science of economics.

2.

In his essay “What is Labor?” 7 K. Elster has brought together typical definitions (from textbooks, etc.) of the concept of labor as generally used in economic theory. For our purposes, it is sufficient to point to the examples collected there. However various the definitions may sound in their details, they all agree that labor is a definite human “activity,” and then, in various ways, bring into the definition goals, objects, and consequences of the activity. Nothing appears more obvious and unhindered by theoretical presuppositions than the statement that labor is a definite human activity. For, is not a demarcation of the phenomenon of labor directly presented by contrasting labor with non-activity of every sort and with every “improper” activity such as play, distraction, and so on? But if we set this definition against those philosophically founded concepts of labor that have been up to now the last ones formulated in the history of the problem, then the questionability of the concept of labor in economics shows itself at once; in economics there is in fact no discussion of labor as a specific activity. Hegel conceived of labor as the doing [das Tun] (not: activity [Tätigkeit]; we shall discuss this essential distinction shortly), in which “the pure being-for-itself of consciousness… steps outside of itself into the element of permanence”; in this element consciousness “comes to itself” by giving itself to the object of labor as a “substance.” 8 Lorenz von Stein says: “Labor is… in every way the actualization of one’s infinite determinations through the self-positing of the individual personality,” in which the personality itself “makes the content of the external world its own and in this way forces the world to become a part of its own internal world.” 9 In the context of his investigations concerning the new founding of political economy, Marx takes up the Hegelian concept of labor with all its essential characteristics: “Labor is the becoming-for-itself of man within externalization [Entäußerung] or as externalized man”; it is the “self-creating or self-objectifying act of man.” 10 Of course, in contrast to the concrete analyses of the “labor processes” in Capital, this is one that is in no way sufficient for explanation for all concrete concepts of labor in Capital: “As the creator of use-value, a condition of human existence in nature, and thus human life,” 11 the transition from the “form of unreality”—all these are philosophical notions of labor.

We have only discussed the definition derived from Hegel in order to make the essential distinction from the concept of labor appears here as a human existence, as an abiding entity of the whole of man’s being and “world.” Here labor is precisely the single activity comprehended and presented every activity always concerns an activity that takes place in partial regions of reality, every single activity is founded on one’s Tätigkeit, winning one’s permanent world “one’s own.” Labor here is on objects, nor through its goal, but through the very human existence.

We want to follow the indication of labor and seek to focus on the human existence in the world. We cannot demarcate this praxis: through rationalization as stressed in the philosophy something happens with man and that the “result” is an essential unit “objectifies” himself and the object. And this relation between the two indicates, e.g., the fact that every human being has objectivity to be

8. Phänomenologie des Geistes, pp. 146f.
11. Kapital, Volksausg., ed. K. Kautsky, p. 123, 136, passim. To be a “function” or “activity,” but as such it is for him explicit (p. 134) and not the whole process.
Having entered the concrete spheres of labor further developed on the broadest terms of 1844-45; and it appears in the description of the social order of labor. In the following investigation, I delve into these three inquiries after labor in the science of economics.

Elster has brought together typical concepts of labor as generally used in economics, sufficient to point to the examples. Definitions may sound in their details, e.g., "activity," and then, in various objects, and consequences of the processes, is the description of the social order of labor. A definite human activity, the concept of labor directly presented by every sort and with every "improper" on? But if we set this definition of labor that has been up in the history of the problem, then the economy shows itself at once; in of labor as a specific activity. Hegel (1819) says: "Labor is... in every way... the pure being-for-itself into the element of permanence"; by giving itself to the object "permanence" and in this way forces the world to do." In the context of his-investigative, political economy, Marx takes up essential characteristics: "Labor is externalization [Entäußerung] or as objectifying of the self-positioning or self-objectifying act of concrete analyses of the "labor processes" in Capital, this is only an "abstract" determination of labor, that is in no way sufficient for economic theory. But it remains the foundation for all concrete concepts of labor in Marx and is explicitly operative in Capital: "As the creator of use-values, as useful labor, labor is therefore a condition of human existence independent of all social forms; it is eternal natural necessity that mediates the material exchange between man and nature, and thus human life." Labor as "mediation," "objectification," transition from the "form of unrest" into the "form of being," and so on—all these are philosophical moments taken over from Hegel's concept of labor.

We have only discussed the philosophically founded concept of labor derived from Hegel in order to be able to outline his starting point. Its essential distinction from the concept of labor in economics is this: the concept of labor appears here as a fundamental event [Grundgeschehen] of human existence, as an abiding event that constantly and continually spans the whole of man's being and at the same time involving every man's "world." Here labor is precisely not a specific human "activity" (for no single activity comprehends and penetrates the totality of human existence; every activity always concerns only partial regions of this totality and only takes place in partial regions of its world); rather, labor is that in which every single activity is founded and to which they again return: a doing [Tun]. And it is precisely the doing of human beings as the mode of one's being in the world: it is that through which one first becomes "for itself" what one is, comes to one's own, acquires the form of one's being-there [Da-seins], winning one's "permanence" and at the same time making the world "one's own." Labor here is not determined through the kind of its objects, nor through its goal, content, result, etc., but through what happens to the very human existence in labor.

We want to follow the indication given in this starting point for a concept of labor and seek to focus on the event itself: labor as the specific praxis of human existence in the world. We already have a further possibility for demarcating this praxis: through the relation between labor and objectification as stressed in the philosophically founded concept of labor. In labor something happens with man and with the objectification in such a manner that the "result" is an essential unity of man and the objectification: man "objectifies" himself and the object becomes "his," it becomes a human object. And this relation between doing and objectification not only indicates, e.g., the fact that every laboring process comes upon and "has" before it some objectivity to be worked upon. It should also designate a

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12. Ibid., pp. 133, 134, passim. To be sure, Marx determines labor also as "purposeful activity," but as such it is for him explicitly only a "moment of the process of labor" (ibid., p. 134) and not the whole process.
constitutive moment for the whole praxis of human existence, a "task" posed for human existence as such. Its task is the "mediation" and "appropriation," etc., of objectification. Only by fulfilling this task can human existence become "for itself" and come to itself. (It is precisely this threefold unity of doing, objectification, and given task which is implicitly in the very meaning of the word labor, as Grimm's dictionary indicates. In all of its meanings it aims at a threefold phenomenon: the laboring [Arbeiten], what is labored upon [Gearbeitete], and what is to be labored for [zu-Arbeitende].) Thus, in consideration of the phenomenon of labor, we must always keep an eye on all three moments: in our analysis of labor as doing we must focus simultaneously on what happens to the objectification and on the task to which human existence submits itself in this doing.

3.

An obvious way to delineate the concept of labor is by means of another human activity often used as a counter-concept to determine labor: play. In what follows, we shall briefly summarize the characteristics that provisionally allow us to define play in explicit reference to the character of labor that we shall later develop:

In play one can (but need not) also be concerned and occupied with objects. But here objectification has a completely different sense and a function completely different from that which it has in labor. While playing, one does not conform to objects, toward their immanent lawfulness as it were (given through their specific objectification), nor towards what requires their "objective content" [Sachhäftigkeit] (in the way that labor must conform to the objective content of its object in the handling, use, and formation of it). Rather, play abolishes this "objective" content and lawfulness and puts in its place another lawfulness, created by man himself, to which the player freely adheres on his own will: the "rules of the game" (in the broadest sense, those who play alone also follow the rules of the game; game rules need not be explicit and can be used ad hoc for single cases). In play the "objectivity" of objects and their effects, and the actuality of the objective world with which one is usually forced constantly to deal, thus learning to respect it, are almost temporarily suspended. For once, one does entirely as one pleases with objects; one places oneself beyond them and becomes "free" from them. This is what is decisive: in this self-positing transcendence of objectivity [sich-hinwegsetzen] one comes precisely to oneself, in a dimension of freedom denied in labor. In a single toss of a ball, the player achieves an infinitely greater objectification than in the most prolonged labor.

In regard to the meaning and goal of play, one is not with objects (which is why one's freedom on the objects, going in and by itself: it is essentially non-activity, self-recuperation from relaxation, self-recuperation from rest, consciousness, etc., and it is all this, tension, etc. Thus, on the whole play, which is its source and goal, and this through the characteristics of regio.

On the foundation of ethnological play is older than labor: "Play comes gradually from entertainment to self-production for use. Even with Volker, Naturvölker... dance still precede it..." It is Büchner's great contribution has in no way exclusively or even primarily motives nor is it primordially rooted, which we will return. However, this play and labor can give rise to a dual sense, within the totality of human life, this "earlier" than labor: it is the principle of play insofar as play is precisely recuperation for labor. Aristotle's[6] between play and labor is valid: all ἀναπαυτής ἔργη; it is thus, a δεξιός (non-leisure, labor in the broad sense).

13. Since play will be characterized as the counter-concept to labor, we cannot allow the character of play to be developed primarily from the play of children. It is still highly questionable whether in the life of children play does not fulfill a role similar or corresponding to labor in the life of adults. Cf. H. Luft, "Der Begriff der Arbeit," in Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie, Vol. 123, 1925.

14. Karl Groos speaks of a "feeling of freedom," Die Spiele der Menschen (len)
15. Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft 1.
the player achieves an infinitely greater triumph of human freedom over objectification than in the most powerful accomplishment of technical labor.

In regard to the meaning and goal of play, the person playing is with oneself and not with objects (which are other than himself): one expresses one’s freedom on the objects, going along with or playing around with them. If we want to express in everyday language the function of play in the life of man, then we can indicate specific kinds of events typical of the ego and not of objects: we speak of self-distraction, relaxing oneself, forgetting oneself and recuperating oneself.

This indicates a further characteristic of play which refers to labor as a direct counter-phenomenon. Within the totality of human existence, play has no duration of permanence: it occurs essentially in “intervals,” “between” the times of other activities that continually dominate human existence. But as life occurs in play, it is not an occurrence that is completed in and by itself: it is essentially non-self-sustaining and dependent, pointing away from itself toward another doing. Play is self-distraction, self-relaxation, self-recuperation from regimentation, tension, toil, intense self-consciousness, etc., and it is all this for the purpose of a new concentration, tension, etc. Thus, on the whole play is necessarily related to an Other which is its source and goal, and this Other is already preconceived as labor through the characteristics of regimentation, tension, toil, etc.

On the foundation of ethnological studies, K. Bücher has claimed that play is older than labor: “Play creates technique, and passes on very gradually from entertainment to something useful... Art is older than production for use. Even with highly developed primitive peoples [Natursündern]... dance still precedes every important labor or follows it...” It is Bücher’s great contribution to have clearly indicated that labor has in no way exclusively or even primarily arisen only from “economic” motives nor is it primordially rooted in the economic dimension (a point to which we will return). However, his formulations of the relations between play and labor can give rise to dangerous misunderstandings. In the structural sense, within the totality of human existence, labor is necessarily and eternally “earlier” than play: it is the starting point, foundation, and principle of play insofar as play is precisely a breaking off from labor and a recuperation for labor. Aristotle’s concise formulation of the relationship between play and labor is valid: all play is not a self-contained telos but is ἀναπλήρωμα τῶν χάριν; it is thus, according to its telos, directed toward ἀσκολία (non-leisure, labor in the broadest sense) and part of it. Πάτησιν

the performance of labor, to the social resistance of the materials, etc. Nor "happiness" that appears in certain kinds that can be abolished or minimized by remedies. Rather, due to the modes of all such burdening, labor as such is. This is a result of the fact that human law: the law of the "thing" [Sache] remains a "thing," an Other to life in labor. In labor it is always primarily of the laborer—even when no total "product of labor" has taken place. one's self-being and directed toward others and for others.

It will be the task of the following this characteristic of labor out of the praxis. At the same time, it should be more a phenomenon of the economic process [Geschehen] of human existence. The concept of labor economics is led by the foundation. Thus, any fundamental economics reflects to these spheres with the same time transcending economi.

The characteristics of labor that question of the meaning and function of human becoming in the world. This focus, insofar as it is doing, praxis (has been clearly unveiled by the philosopher).

The process of human life is praxe make [Tun] his existence itself in fulfill it as a task. One's becoming process of animal existence is a men ultimately based on a complete misunderstanding. The "science of labor" has likewise means. The "science of labor" has likewise been found here a psychological condition logical methods. The burdensome character of apathy or by "feelings of unhappiness," is with specific types of labor. To be sure, these structure of the labor process, through characteristic of labor process will not be touched the in the structure of being typical of human ex the clear.

17. The burdensome character of labor is almost always considered in economic theory—of even enters into many definitions of labor, e.g., in Roscher and Alfred Weber (compare Elster, op.cit.). Just as frequent, however, are the attempts of economic theory to present the burdensome character of labor as inessential to it. As supporting evidence, reference is made to those laboring techniques which allow the transformation of apathy into interesting labor, or those types of labor which seem to lack any burdensome character. Both argumentations are
a formula, this is the essential foundational
and labor.
1. Laboring doing is primarily characterized by
duration, its essential permanence, and its
burden. Of course, all three moments pass
through, toward its meaning and function in the
hat is, duration, permanence, and burden do
for laboring processes, but the human doing
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transformation of apathy into interesting labor, or those
any burdensome character. Both arguments are
the performance of labor, to the social-technical structuring of labor, to the
resistance of the materials, etc. Not is it a question of a “feeling of un-
happiness” that appears in certain kinds of labor or modes of laboring and
that can be abolished or minimized through technological or psychological
remedies. Rather, due to the modes and organization of labor, even before
all such burdening, labor as such is already encountered as a “burden.”
This is a result of the fact that human doing stands under an alien, imposed
law: the law of the “thing” [Sache] that is to be dealt with (and which
remains a “thing,” an Other to life itself even when one provides one’s own
labor). In labor it is always primarily a question of the thing itself and not
of the laborer—even when no total separation between labor and the
“product of labor” has taken place. In labor one is always distanced from
one’s self-being and directed toward something else: one is always with
others and for others.
It will be the task of the following investigation to develop and outline
this characteristic of labor out of the specific human doing: out of human
praxis. At the same time, it should become clear that labor is not at all pri-
normally a phenomenon of the economic dimension, but is rooted in the
process [Geschlehen] of human existence itself. Precisely through the
concept of labor economics is led back to deeper spheres that provide its
foundation. Thus, any fundamental treatment of the concept of labor by
economics refers to these spheres which constitute its foundation while at
the same time transcending economics.

4.

The characteristics of labor that have thus far become visible lead the
question of the meaning and function of laboring doing back to the mode of
human becoming in the world. This process itself must be brought into
focuss, insofar as it is doing, praxis (since it is precisely this doing that has
been clearly unveiled by the philosophical analysis of the concept of labor).
The process of human life is praxis in the eminently sense that man must
make [Tun] his existence himself in such a way that he has to seize it and
fulfill it as a task. One’s becoming is a continual active process (while the
process of animal existence is a mere passive process): the animal allows its
ultimately based on a complete misunderstanding of what this burdensome character really
means. The “science of labor” has likewise made this misunderstanding in that it believes that
it has found here a psychological condition that could be dealt with by psychological-techno-
nological methods. The burdensome character of labor is not identical with labor determined by
apathy or by “feelings of unhappiness,” “inhibitions,” “appearances of fatigue” associated
with specific types of labor. To be sure, these things can be abolished through changes in the
structure of the labor process, through changing the conditions of labor or the like. But the
burdensome character will not be touched through their removal because it is itself grounded
in the structure of being typical of human existence. The following investigation should make
this clear.
existence to happen immediately, even when it "does" something: e.g., it builds its nest, protects itself from attack, seeks nourishment. For animals, all this doing is, in Wexberg's 18 fitting phrase, "biologically sanctioned." The animal does not "have" its existence as a given task which it has to fulfill through its modes of being. Man constantly confronts a situation concerning himself and his world that is not immediately his own, such that he could simply passively allow things to happen to him in this immediacy. Rather, he must first make every situation his own, by "mediating" it himself. This process of mediation is designated by the concepts of "production and reproduction" (concepts which, since Marx, have been deprived of their original essential meaning and have been reduced to the economic dimension). Production and reproduction do not simply refer to the becoming of "material existence" in economic doing, but to the active process of human existence as a whole: appropriation, overcoming, transforming and further developing all of human existence in all of its vital spheres. This applies to both the situation of the "world" which we immediately confront and existence itself—a bringing-before-oneself and a having-brought-before-oneself ("represented") as a creation and development of existence and the world in all of its regions (including "material," "vital" as well as "spiritual" being). For humans, this doing is essentially a conscious doing aware of its goal (the creation and development of human beings and their world as more appropriate and more suitable) and which shapes itself according to its "goal"—purposeful activity.

Labor is grounded in this mediating and conscious doing: in this continual production and reproduction of human existence (and is opposed to the immediate passive process of, e.g., animal existence). All the characteristics cited in the previous analysis of labor are present in this mode of becoming. And in this most universal meaning, which is concerned with the becoming of human existence in the world, this concept of labor is encountered everywhere—precisely where something is to be said about the essence of labor: from its place in Genesis (especially emphasized in Augustine’s commentary) and the Pauline letters, all the way up to Hegel. Here we reach a change in meaning of the concept of labor and its banishment to the economic dimension. Here we must ask why the human activity is essentially "mediation," production and reproduction: why man is essentially prevented from an immediate passive acceptance of his lot, and the answer can only be in terms of the so-called "natural" situation of man in the world: the process of human existence is typified by labor since the world, as man confronts it from time to time, can never satisfy his "needs."

Thus he must constantly hustle in the world at all (procuring clothing, etc.).

This primordial "lack" in man's driving force of his activity. The first and the "satisfaction of needs"—and hence the traditional definition of economics as the three randomly chosen definitions of research in political economy is the "satisfaction of needs" (Diehl). 19 "The satisfaction of human needs. Thus, the making possible such a satisfaction of economies, labor is "designated through satisfaction of needs" (Elster). 21 altered by further determinations of exerted toward the satisfaction of needs.

All these conceptualizations move solid reference points whence to eat briefly elaborated:

Every theory that starts from "man as primarily an organic being" is, in fact, an essential characteristic and conditioned: only an organism, it is not altered by distinguishing human consciousness striving toward certain goals. All of this in no way extricates needs from becoming.

The positing of man as a natural being when dealing with his specific mode of existence is in question to the concept of labor. Such a procedural "dimension" of human being from which human beings are divisible into "dimensions" of other dimensions only as superstructure can be functionalized dimension would be precisely the place—the world of the man-made "world of goods."

This is not the place to investigate this take as its starting point a concept that explicitly or implicitly does through...

18. This essential difference between animal activity and human labor is dealt with in the introductory considerations of E. Wexberg, Arbeit und Gemeinschaft (1932); whereas animal activities are instinctively carried out and are thereby connected with the "want inherent in the function," labor is not "man's natural function" and never takes place "instinctually" (p. 88).

19. Theoretische Nationalökonomie (1918)
20. Theoretische Sozialökonomie (Leipzig, 1931)
Thus he must constantly hustle simply in order to be able to live in the world at all (procuring clothing, nourishment, housing, tools, etc.). This primordial "lack" in man's natural situation makes "need" the driving force of his activity. The first and necessary goal of this activity is the "satisfaction of needs"—and here we are already in the sphere of the traditional definition of economics and labor as economic activity. Here are three randomly chosen definitions of the concept of labor: "The object of research in political economy is the activity of man directed toward the satisfaction of needs" (Drehl).19 "The goal of every economy is the satisfaction of human needs. Thus, the economy is an activity that aims at making possible such a satisfaction of needs" (Cassel).20 In terms of economics, labor is "designated through the goal...of creating means for the satisfaction of needs" (Elster).21 These definitions are not essentially altered by further determinations of the concept of need and of the activity exerted toward the satisfaction of needs.

All these conceptualizations move within a domain which does not allow solid reference points whence to catch the essence of labor. This should be briefly elaborated:

Every theory that starts from "need" as the stimulus of activity takes man as primarily an organic being: as organic "life" in the sense of biology. It is, in fact, an essential characteristic of need of being organically founded and conditioned: only an organism, a natural-organic unity, has needs. This is not altered by distinguishing human from animal needs through the conscious striving after certain goals, through freedom of behavior, etc.22 All of this in no way extricates needs from the sphere of natural-organic becoming.

The positing of man as a natural-organic being, however, is inadequate when dealing with his specific mode of being in the world, when the very praxis of his existence is in question (as in our hypothesis concerning the concept of labor). Such a procedure would prejudicially absolutize a definite "dimension" of human being from the beginning (quite apart from whether human beings are divisible into "dimensions" at all) and could consider the other dimensions only as superstructures or adjoining structures: this absolutized dimension would be precisely that where the satisfaction of needs takes place—the world of the means for the satisfaction of needs or the "world of goods."

This is not the place to investigate whether economics can legitimately take as its starting point a concept of man as a natural organic being (as it explicitly or implicitly does through the basic concept of need) or whether

man performing economic activities does so with, as it were, his whole being and not only as an organism satisfying some needs. At any rate, it is clear that the determination of labor out of and in the sphere of the satisfaction of needs already isolates its meaning in a well-determined dimension (the material "world of goods"). Indeed, it even roots him in this dimension so that all of the other non-economic features of labor are also primarily dealt with from the viewpoint of this dimension.

If, however, for the determination of the concept of labor, human beings are not to be posited as primarily natural organic beings, then how are we to approach them? How are human beings approached by the philosophical concept of labor? We want to speak of it primarily as historical being. Subsequent considerations should allow labor to emerge as a category of historical being.

Economic theory has not always failed to realize that perhaps the traditional starting point of the concept of labor is not adequate to account for the full phenomenon of labor. At the very beginning of his book Arbeit und Rhythmus, K. Bücker indicates that previously labor has always been considered only "as an absolute economic category," whereas all other activities containing their own end are not seen as labor. Yet, it is highly questionable, he continues, "whether one can show that such a boundary between labor and other activity exists in all stages of human development." Bücker, however, does not develop further this fruitful insight, nor does Thomas Brauer, who through his consideration of the problem of labor is forced to explicitly revise the concept of need. Brauer substitutes in place of the satisfaction of needs "providing for wants" [Bedarfservorsorgung] which are no longer primarily aimed at "mere existence" but toward a "specific type of being" [bestimmtes Sosein]. In principle, this allows making man the object of economics not merely as a subject of the "world of needs," but of his full being. Securing and expanding one's existence, which Bücker calls the goal of economic activity, should refer to man's "qualitative existence" in contradistinction to his "mere existence," and thus concerns the totality of human praxis. But Bücker does not heed these insights in the process of his investigation. He quickly returns to the explanation of economic activity through "drives."

More radically, Friedrich von Gottl has recently sought a new perspective for the determination of economic activity. Here, we must deal with his theory only insofar as it is immediately connected with the comprehension of the concept of labor.

According to Gottl, economics is not primarily concerned with the satisfaction of needs, but with the "supplying of wants." Roughly characterized, this term is meant to break through the one-sided absolutizing of the economic dimension as "a world of goods" and of initiating a consideration of economics as life" accounting for human needs not primarily related to individual economic individuals, but rather to the "productive" already organized forms of life. Second demands that in the final analysis aims of "affirmation" and "promotion" of life lying supply ultimately leads to an "affirmation toward a promotion of life." "This means maximizing quantitatively, but achieving

What is decisive is the return of economic human existence. Here, it is not a question of needs, nor of "performing" in goods (K. Elster), etc. Rather, it is a question of existence to exist in the fullness of its possibility for our problem becomes clearer when we consider the immanent telos, the authentic conjunction of the process "in a unity of process ordered in terms of duration and permanence."

"Whenever life is [Lebendiges] there is also an active unity whose internal permanence is brought about by its environment." Economic doing manifests and "therefore every exchange and cooperation ordering together all processes in the internal permanence."

For the problem of labor this implies that only kind at stake in economics) has, in fact, the goal which is no longer economic (in the world of goods). It has the task—essentially self-creating, of creating forms endowed with fact, the first and final meaning of labor of human existence itself, in order to attain permanence. All individual wants are morbid and constant want that exist [Selbstverwirkung] in duration and consistence with this, Gottl aims beyond the economic mode of man: toward the specific mode of human being. Gottl expressly stresses "foundation of economics. Among other things, this cl


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“economics as life” accounting for human beings in their totality. Want is not primarily related to individual economic subjects (as mere economic individuals), but rather to the “products” of the economy as themselves already organized forms of life. Secondly, it always refers to a totality of demands that in the final analysis aims at nothing less than a determinate “affirmation” and “promotion” of life itself. The “interaction of want and supply” ultimately leads to an “affirmation of life, that is, to a degree, toward a promotion of life.” “This means that economics does not aim at maximizing quantitatively, but achieving an overall optimum.”

What is decisive is the return of economic activity to the very becoming of human existence. Here, it is not a question of goods as means for the satisfaction of needs, nor of “performing” in the service of the organization of goods (K. Elster), etc. Rather, it is a question of the potentiality of human existence to exist in the fullness of its possibilities. The significance of this thesis for our problem becomes clearer when we now see how Gottl determines the immanent telos, the authentic “task” of that process. It is the conjunction of the process “in a unity of reality” such “that it appears as a process ordered in terms of duration and, as a unity, in terms of permanence.”

“Whenever life is actualized as a living process [Lebendiger] there is also an active unity whose duration brings about and whose internal permanence is brought about by labor that always fits into its environment.” Economic doing must also be seen under this last aspect and “therefore every exchange and every production contributes toward ordering together all processes in the form of a unity of duration and permanence.”

For the problem of labor this implies that economic labor (which is the only kind at stake in economics) has, from its own viewpoint, a duty and a goal which is no longer economic (in the sense of satisfying needs within the world of goods). It has the task—essential to human existence as such—of self-creating, of creating forms endowed with duration and permanence. In fact, the first and final meaning of labor is to “gain by laboring” the being of human existence itself, in order to “guarantee” it in duration and permanence. All individual wants are ultimately grounded in this primal and constant want that existence has, i.e., its full self-creation [Selbstwirkung] in duration and constancy.

With this, Gottl aims beyond the economic dimension, toward the being of man: toward the specific mode of human praxis in the world. And labor already appears as constant and enduring self-creation precisely in this being. Gottl expressly stresses the “foundational” character of his conceptualizations. Among other things, this character reveals itself in the impos-
sibility, both in principle and in fact, of totally satisfying wants. The primordial want of human existence in which economic activity is ultimately grounded is not want of "goods" of any sort, but a never to be "satisfied" want of human existence for itself: Gottl calls it the "necessity for life" [Lebensnot]. "What is fundamental about the necessity for life...is emphatically posited by the fact that the remedy of wants always leaves something to imagine and that some unfilled want always remains behind."28

Thus, economic theory itself has led us back again to that foundation which we have already attempted to roughly outline. The necessity for life underlines an "ontological" condition: it is grounded in the very structure of being human that simply can never reduce to a passive process, but must constantly be a process of "self-creation" as "self-making." Even the very praxis of human existence which is self-mediated in the process of coming to know itself, requires "labor" as the mode of its becoming.

We have attempted to show that insofar as they take the concept of "needs" and its satisfaction in the world of goods as the starting point, all economic theories fail to recognize the full factual content of labor. At best, these theories can explain labor as "material" production and reproduction. But, in fact, they do not even explain that! Imagine a society that has succeeded in totally supplying economic goods and that this supply is guaranteed for a foreseeable period. Even then the interaction between human existence and its world would continue as "labor." This would remain even if all economic motives and compulsions to labor were removed. The only thing likely to happen would largely be the transference of this process from the economic dimension to other dimensions of human existence and its world (and thus the place, form, and function of economics in the totality of human life would also change completely: in such a society economic labor could no longer serve as a model for labor in general). The essential factual content of labor is not grounded in the scarcity of goods, nor in a discontinuity between the world of disposable and utilizable goods and human needs, but, on the contrary, in an essential excess of human existence beyond every possible situation in which it finds itself and the world. Being human is always more than its present existence. It goes beyond every possible situation and precisely because of this there is always an ineliminable discrepancy between the two: a discrepancy that demands constant labor for its overcoming, even though human existence can never rest in possession of itself and its world.

This essential excess of being over existence constitutes the primordial and ineliminable human "necessity for life" (Gottl). Man's very structure of need [Bedürfnis] is grounded in it and its fulfilling is the final meaning of labor: the need for an enduring and lasting self-fulfillment of the existence in the actuality of all its forms. If economy ultimately is also engaged in concrete character of labor could not be impossible to pursue here, given the already mentioned by (which now have been generally recognized) existence), we shall next consider existent [Gegenständlichkeit] and factuality [Sachlichkeit] of labor. Our choice of direct description of the phenomenon.

The claim that all labor is essentially the self-determined work of the will is first doubtful if one thinks, for example, of the social, economic activity, social service work (such as in the context of our investigation to being-a-self. Objectification more than the self. For the self all objectifications. Even other men and things that of the self; they have their own history of the self. In active existence, he is himself confronted with a world which is always already past a world filled and formed by a human activity, which is always already part of the world of public conveniences, institutions, economic nature, means of production, use, works of art, etc., a world of space and time which, as a whole, as a whole, as a whole of the existing world has received from the fulfillment of the vital space in the basis of the current historical development, the "substance" the family, the tribe, the estate,
existence in the actuality of all its possibilities—a task in whose service the economy ultimately is also engaged. Further pursuing the suggested path would necessarily lead to an ontology of man, and only within it the concrete character of labor could be developed. This path is obviously impossible to pursue here, given the limitations of this work. In order to give greater concreteness to the concept of labor, and especially in order to define the meaning of its use in economics, we must proceed otherwise. In tying up the already mentioned basic characteristics of the laboring activity (which now have been generally related to the developing process of human existence), we shall next consider the relation between labor and objectification [Gegenständlichkeit] and the objectifying [Vergegenständlichung] of life in labor. Our choice of direction is a function of the character of the “factuality” [Sachlichkeit] of labor that was already visible in our first description of the phenomenon of labor.

5.

The claim that all labor is essentially related to objectification appears at first doubtful if one thinks, for example, of “intellectual” labor, political activity, social service work (such as the activity of doctors, teachers, etc.). In the context of our investigation, being-objectified is the counter-concept to being-a-self. Objectification means, first and foremost, only what is other than the self. For the self all entities outside it are fundamentally objectifications. Even other men and one’s own body fall into this category. Although in different ways, works of art, science, etc., are as much objectifications as works of technology, nature, use-objects, etc.

The self is only within its “world,” in and with a world of objectifications. But in regard to the very process of becoming of the self, the present world as a whole and everything in it have a process of becoming “other” than that of the self; they have their own “history” which never coincides with the history of the self. In actively constituting its existence, the self finds himself confronted with a world which is the world of another existence: a world filled and formed by a human animating power which is not its own, which is always already past and is yet present and actual—a world of public conveniences, institutions, concerns of a political, social and economic nature, means of production and objects of consumption, things of use, works of art, etc., a world of division and of universal organizations of space and time which, as a whole, remains the work of a past human existence, even in every new creation. What the existence is that the pre-existing world has received from its time and to which the organization and the fulfillment of the vital space is to be attributed can only be determined on the basis of the current historical situation. According to the stages of historical development, the “subject” of the “world-formation” appears to be the family, the tribe, the estate, the class, etc. Yet, the organized world is
always encountered as the reality of a past existence: as past which is still present. Just as the objectified world is the reality as an already past human existence, so it also carries the future of this past life in it: it is the actuality of its provisions and foresight, its discoveries and failures, its alliances and enemies. Thus, it is not something like a closed “state” [Zustand], nor is it a completely static manifold of disposable entities, but it is through and through unfinished and open: it is movement and process through and through. The processual character of the objective world that comes out of the past toward the present and yet anticipates the future, proceeds as always already encountered by human existence. This process unfolds, as it were, with its own temporal and spatial dimensionality beside the process of human existence. It has its own immanent power and regularity by virtue of which it can even “become solidified” and can elude human control.

The first decisive experience constituting laboring activity is that existence, in order to develop at all, must first allow this objectivity also to develop and must preserve it, take care of it, develop it, and work on it. Now we can say that the process of “mediation,” of production and reproduction, begins with the overcoming of the past-made-present. In order for human existence to generate its own situation, to appropriate its own world and make it conform to its dynamic, it must interact with this process that emerges from the past. This past in the process of becoming presents itself as an objective process which spontaneously makes definite demands on the development of human existence. The countryside once it is opened to commerce—the field once it is cultivated—the mine, once it is exploited—the factory, once it is set in operation—the law, once it is promulgated—the constitution, once it is implemented—the work of art or science, once it is offered to the public: all of these have their own “history” that never coincides with the history of existence in this or that epoch, and can never be deduced from that history. They all have their own law-like development. In order for existence to simply continue to develop, all of these objectifications demand a specific kind of care, maintenance, securing, developing and overcoming based on them—a laboring that is in no way only based on the needs of the present, but must rather take into consideration the immanent want in these objectifications: the necessity already implicit in the mere existence of the organized and realized “world.”

29. This “autonomy” of the process of the objective world as a historical world has been sharply worked out by Gollin: “Organization...does not refer back exclusively to human action. Rather more preponderant than this is a self-organization of all structures. All entities and processes occurring in common life press forward toward duration and constancy. For it only falls to human action to affirm what has been; the action adapts itself to it and seeks to maintain it,” And: “Conscious action comes, however, already too late in regard to organization, because the economy is now already there, it or something similar to it in its effects must be there already, simply because it is the branch upon which we sit. Therefore, where action consciously intervenes, its value lies only in transforming or realizing a form.” (Arbeit als Tatbestand des Wirtschaftslebens, op.cit., pp. 291-2.)
FLEXIBILITY OF A PAST EXISTENCE: AS PAST WHICH IS STILL
WORLD IS THE REALITY AS A READY PREVIOUS HUMAN
FUTURE OF THIS PAST LIFE IN IT: IT IS THE ACTUALITY
OF ITS DISCOVERIES AND FAILURES, ITS ALLIANCES AND
HING LIKE A CLOSED "STATE" [ZUSISUND], NOR IS IT A
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IN SPACE DIMENSIONALITY BESIDE THE PROCESS OF
IMMANENT POWER AND REGULARITY BY VIRTUE OF
"FRICTION" AND CAN ELUDE HUMAN CONTROL.

Since constituting laboring activity is that
at all, must first allow this objectivity also to
be, then care for it, develop it, and work on it,
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To these demands posed by objectivity, human activity answers through
the conscious regulating of itself according to its object by binding itself to
its immanent regularity which is revealed in every single laboring process
and which gives to the "mediation" between man and objectivity the
character of a relation among things and makes the object into a thing (to
be treated as such). Whether explicitly or not, willingly or not, in labor what
is at stake is always the thing itself. In laboring, the laborer is always "with
the thing": whether one stands by a machine, draws technical plans, is
concerned with organizational measures, researches scientific problems,
instructs people, etc. In his activity he allows himself to be directed by the
thing, subjects himself and obeys its laws, even when he dominates his
object, directs it, guides it, and lets it go its own way. In each case he is not
"with himself," does not passively stand by his own existence. On the
contrary, he places himself in the service of an "Other than himself," and
he is with an "Other than himself"—even when this doing fulfills his own
freely assumed life. This externalization and alienation of human existence,
this taking-up-in-oneself the law of the thing rather than passively standing
by the process of development of one's existence is ineliminable in principle
(even if it can almost completely disappear during and after labor). This
phenomenon does not correspond at all with the resistance of "matter" and
it does not stop with the termination of a particular laboring activity.
Human existence itself is turned toward this factuality.

We can now attempt to formulate the essential objective character of
labor in its true "negativity" by at least thereby indicating the fundamental
significance of the burdensome character of labor. Since one's becoming
human in the world is first and foremost "self-activity"—the process of
determining one's own existence or in being-oneself in every existence—
and since, on the other hand, this self-being is only made possible by
rendering objectivity passive as a being-with-others and for others, laboring
upon objectivity is essentially burdensome, independent of any burden
implied in particular laboring processes. In the last analysis, the burdens-
some character of labor expresses nothing other than a negativity rooted in
the very essence of human existence: man can achieve his own self only by
passing through otherness: by passing through "externalization" and
"alienation."

6.

By showing the interconnection between the burdensome character of
labor, its essential objectivity, and the primordial negativity of laboring
activity, we have sought to partially clarify the relation between labor and
objectivity. We must pursue this path further and ask: what happens in
labor to objectivity and to the laborer?
We approach the problem backwards, as it were, in order to show how the object as subjected to labor presents itself, i.e., the object obtained through labor as a finished “product” of labor. Here we see that its mode of being-objective has become totally different. Roughly put, if it previously was raw stuff, matter, a thing, etc., now it has become a disposable and utilizable object (a “good”). Now it stands in a concrete and well determined relation to human existence and its history. In a peculiar way, it has been “enlivened” [verlebendigt]. Its being and developmental process is no longer a “natural” process. Its essence is no longer materiality, thinghood, and the like. Its movement can no longer be grasped through the concepts and laws of any physics. Events related to objects worked-up and obtained through labor do not take place in the dimension of “nature,” “materiality,” etc., but in the dimension of human history. Yet, this objective process is other than human existence. Events related to produced commodities, the functioning factory and the cultivated landscape, take place in the space and time of a historical life and they are part of a historical process.

This seemingly trivial state of affairs acquires its full significance when it is pushed to the recognition that the objects’ animation and historicity is not just a mere aspect under which theory sees things, but that it is precisely what constitutes the “substantiality” of objects. Through labor the object has become real and generates further events. Man’s objective world is the reality of objectified life. Labor, as the product of human life, has become solidified and concretized in objects of use, enjoyment, decoration, etc.: home, city, and country, in all the institutions and organizations that daily surround us—in these objectified life demands, dominates, and determines us at every moment (without this necessarily becoming conscious at any time). Human activity constantly interacts with that historical life that has become actualized in its objects.30

Already by simply presenting itself in an organized world in a determinate way and by forcing man to bear the determinate historicity of this world, the object of labor also brings about the historicity of the very laborer. By working, man actually places himself in the totally concrete situation of history, deals with its present, accepts its past, and works for its future. This human “practical” becoming historical extends through the entire laboring process; it begins with the very specific pre-givenness of the objects as “matter” (which, in relation to their selection and the form that they will receive are themselves historically transmitted); and it encompasses methodology, the spatial and temporal organization of labor, and is expressed in the meaning and goal of labor.


Only in labor, and not before, man takes a determinate position in the historical machine, dig coal in a mine, serve in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach. He stepped out of their own private spheres to find a place in an already organized into various corporations, occupations, and enterprises as members of specific organizations by labor that roots the individual laborer in a “position” [Stellung] within the historical. Basis of this position that it is possible to accept and alter his situation. Before the man is outside of the praxis in the service of existence can project many possibilities of labor where the industry has entered into a definite acquired historical permanence. There is an employee, an official, an owner, an in here as examples of actual historical “positions” [Stände]. The laborer is powerful or powerless: part of a system exposed to the power or powerless.

Man’s actual historical becoming labor by means of labor. Because the object of his labor, in the worked-up something perservering, present, “of the historical domain and in vital historic to this state of affairs in his description bound itself up with its object. It is upon. What appears as the form of the laborer, from the viewpoint of the form of being.” “During the converted from the form of becoming movement into that of objectivity.”

By now it should have become clear that the historical category; a category of his...

“Whatever man in his development designates as labor in order to define the historicity of labor, Be of the continuation of labor”; it is “the union through which man distinguishes himself from specie begins with each animal… But ever animals of the culture of all previous generations that will follow.” (Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft.

Only in labor, and not before, man becomes historical and acquires his determinate position in the historical process. Those who stand behind a machine, dig coal in a mine, serve a counter, function as officials in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach as scientists—in each case they have stepped out of their own private sphere in order to occupy a well-determined place in an already organized and articulated environment divided into various corporations, occupations, classes, etc., and thus find themselves as members of specific organizations. It is only this situation provided by labor that roots the individual in a unique and unexchangeable "position" [Stand] within the historical world and its becoming. It is on the basis of this position that it is possible for the individual to exist, and to accept and alter his situation. Before and outside of labor, i.e., before and outside of praxis in the service of production and reproduction, human existence can project many possibilities but it can realize none. Through labor it has entered into a definite circle of possibilities: its existence has acquired historical permanence. The laborer is now a factory worker, an employee, an official, an owner, an intellectual and so on (these titles serve here as examples of actual historical positions) and thereby he has taken over all the concrete relations, conditions, and possibilities of these "positions" [Stände]. The laborer has now become truly historically powerful or powerless: part of a social stratum, of a class, etc., and is exposed to the power or powerlessness of these groups.

Man's actual historical becoming is expressed in the objectification of labor by means of labor. Because the laborer almost works himself into the object of his labor, in the worked-upon and produced object he becomes something persevering, present, "objectively" real and operative within the historical domain and in vital historical time. Marx has sharply emphasized this state of affairs in his description of the labor process: "Labor has bound itself up with its object. It is objectified and the object is worked upon. What appears as the form of becoming from the viewpoint of the laborer, from the viewpoint of the product appears as a static property in the form of being." "During the laboring process, labor is constantly converted from the form of becoming into that of being: from the form of movement into that of objectivity." 31

By now it should have become clear to what extent labor is a specifically historical category: a category of human existence as historical existence.

"Whatever man in his development designates as reality is a function of human labor..." In order to define the historicity of labor, Bücher finds recourse to Friedrich List's "principle of the continuation of labor": it is "the universal historical principle of social development through which man distinguishes himself from the animal world. A new existence of an equal specie begins with each animal... But every generation of men takes over the accomplishments of the culture of all previous generations in order to enlarge it and bequeath it to those that will follow." (Entwicklung der Volkswirtschaft, op. cit., p. 268.) 31

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We approach the problem backwards, as it were, in order to show how the object as subjected to labor presents itself, i.e., the object obtained through labor as a finished "product" of labor. Here we see that its mode of being-objective has become totally different. Roughly put, if it previously was raw stuff, matter, a thing, etc., now it has become a disposable and utilizable object (a "good"). Now it stands in a concrete and well determined relation to human existence and its history. In a peculiar way, it has been "enlivened" [verlebendigt]. Its being and developmental process is no longer a "natural" process. Its essence is no longer materiality, thinghood, and the like. Its movement can no longer be grasped through the concepts and laws of any physics. Events related to objects worked-upon and obtained through labor do not take place in the dimension of "nature," "materiality," etc., but in the dimension of human history. Yet, this objective process is other than human existence. Events related to produced commodities, the functioning factory and the cultivated landscape, take place in the space and time of a historical life and they are part of a historical process.

This seemingly trivial state of affairs acquires its full significance when it is pushed to the recognition that the objects' animation and historicity is not just a mere aspect under which theory sees things, but that it is precisely what constitutes the "substantiality" of objects. Through labor the object has become real and generates further effects. Man's objective world is the reality of objectified life. Labor, as the product of human life, has become solidified and concretized in objects of use, enjoyment, decoration, etc.: home, city, and country, in all the institutions and organizations that daily surround us—in these objectified life demands, dominates, and determines us at every moment (without this necessarily becoming conscious at any time). Human activity constantly interacts with that historical life that has become actualized in its objects.30

Already by simply presenting itself in an organized world in a determinate way and by forcing man to bear the determinate historicity of this world, the object of labor also brings about the historicity of the very laborer. By working, man actually places himself in the totally concrete situation of history, deals with its present, accepts its past, and works for its future. This human "practical" becoming historical extends through the entire laboring process: it begins with the very specific pregivenness of the objects as "matter" (which, in relation to their selection and the form that they will receive are themselves historically transmitted); and it encompasses methodology, the spatial and temporal organization of labor, and is expressed in the meaning and goal of labor.


Only in labor, and not before, man acquires a determinate position in the historical machine, dig coal in a mine, serve in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach; stepped out of their own private occupied space in an already organized into various corporations, occupying themselves as members of specific organizations by labor that roots the individual "position" [Stand] within the historicity. The basis of this position that it is possible to accept and alter his situation. Before outside of praxis in the service of an objective existence can project many possible positions of labor it has entered into a definite historical permanence. The employee, an official, an owner, are all here as examples of actual historicity over all the concrete relations, as "positions" [Stüde]. The laborer is powerful or powerless: part of a system or exposed to the power or powerless.

Man's actual historical becoming is not labor by means of labor. Because the object of his labor, in the working, becomes something perservering, present, "part" of the historical domain and in vital history that state of affairs in his description bound itself up with its object. It is upon. What appears as the form of the laborer, from the viewpoint of the viewpoint of the form of being." "During the transformation of the from the form of becoming to the movement into that of objectivity.

By now it should have become each historical category: a category of
Only in labor, and not before, man becomes historical and acquires his determinate position in the historical process. Those who stand behind a machine, dig coal in a mine, serve behind a counter, function as officials in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach as scientists—in each case they have stepped out of their own private sphere in order to occupy a well-determined place in an already organized and articulated environment divided into various corporations, occupations, classes, etc., and thus find themselves as members of specific organizations. It is only this situation provided by labor that roots the individual in a unique and unexchangeable "position" [Ständen] within the historical world and its becoming. It is on the basis of this position that it is possible for the individual to exist, and to accept and alter his situation. Before and outside of labor, i.e., before and outside of praxis in the service of production and reproduction, human existence can project many possibilities but it can realize none. Through labor it has entered into a definite circle of possibilities: its existence has acquired historical permanence. The laborer is now a factory worker, an employee, an official, an owner, an intellectual and so on [these titles serve here as examples of actual historical positions] and thereby he has taken over all the concrete relations, conditions, and possibilities of these "positions" [Stände]. The laborer has now become truly historically powerful or powerless: part of a social stratum, of a class, etc., and is exposed to the power or powerlessness of these groups.

Man's actual historical becoming is expressed in the objectification of labor by means of labor. Because the laborer almost works himself into the object of his labor, in the worked-upon and produced object he becomes something persevering, present, "objectively" real and operative within the historical domain and in vital historical time. Marx has sharply emphasized this state of affairs in his description of the labor process: "Labor has bound itself up with its object. It is objectified and the object is worked upon. What appears as the form of becoming from the viewpoint of the laborer, from the viewpoint of the product appears as a static property in the form of being." "During the laboring process, labor is constantly converted from the form of becoming into that of being: from the form of movement into that of objectivity."

By now it should have become clear to what extent labor is a specifically historical category: a category of human existence as historical existence.

"Whatever man in his development designates as reality is a function of human labor..." In order to define the historicity of labor, Bücher finds recourse to Friedrich List's "principle of the continuation of labor": it is "the universal historical principle of social development through which man distinguishes himself from the animal world. A new existence of an equal species begins with each animal... But every generation of men takes over the accomplishments of the culture of all previous generations in order to enlarge it and bequeath it to those that will follow." (Entstehung der Völkerwirtschaft, op.cit., p. 268.)

Labor presupposes a well-determined relation to time which thoroughly dominates human existence and guides its praxis. We have already indicated some modes of this relation to time. Human praxis is labor on and in the present through the "overcoming" and the transformation of the past while at the same time turned with anticipatory care towards the future. The laborer maintains himself in a stable way in his own temporality and in that of the objective world, and this attitude is expressed in many ways: in creating, handling, and evaluating the material of labor, in distributing and administrating the means of labor, and especially in partitioning time according to a general rule, to which all laborers are more or less subjected (both within the individual laboring processes as well as in the division of existence into labor and "free time," in the determining of the length of the working day, etc.). Only within very narrow boundaries is the individual free to dispose of his partitioned time. The true "subject" of vital time lies in the various historical communities (or better, those "groups" that have constituted themselves into historical communities as the "dominating class").

From this standpoint, the question of the role of labor in the life of so-called primitives can be clarified. It has always been claimed that, for primitive people, labor seems to have an essentially different meaning than it has for so-called civilized people—indeed, one cannot speak of labor proper in a definite stage of development of primitive people. In primitive societies, labor is not a "regulated activity." The supplying of wants does not go beyond "what is necessary at the moment" (not even when they know very well that in the future, e.g., in the winter, they will find themselves in a situation of need). The time dedicated to labor stands in a striking "incongruity" to play, dance, production of decorations, etc. These facts directly evoke the interconnection between the relation of human existence to time (historicity) and labor as a mode of human praxis. Primitives do not have that relation to time which makes human existence historical and constitutes labor as human praxis. Their existence is essentially pre-historical, even when we encounter them "in" our history, or even in our present. (The boundary between historical and pre-historical existence cannot be dated in our historical chronology: it is an "essential boundary" (Wesensgrenze) dividing various modes of human existence.)

Here we cannot investigate whether the introduction of the historical

33. See Section 8 below.

Now we can attempt to roughly outline of human existence. In its broadest ground in the mode of being human, developing one's own existence by means of production and reproduction. Now, the existence always confronts divided, organized and accomplished in the labor, labor unfolds in a temporal and laboring processes with various objects, historical situation of the worker and processes take place in the various divisions of "intellectual" production and not purely necessary for human existence lies beyond these necessities. All of them to be sure, as individual laboring processes subordinated to the final intention of human beings in their permanence.

From this standpoint, it is clear that "itself"': it is not self-contained and does basically a lack, something negative: it is not yet there, that is not already present. The overcoming of this lack, the goal and fulfillment of human existence in its own, one says that the goal of labor lies dangerously ambiguous. Since the goal of existence, "outside of" must not exist, it does not refer to any goal of any sort of objectivity whatsoever. The outside of something outside of it. The expression "outside of" in regard to the essentially transcends every individual labor, it obtains, and aims at the very existence, in spite of the determination
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ser of the general regulation of time has been particularly
Leben des sozialen Körpers Second Edition (Tübingen-
olkswirtschaft, op. cit., pp. 30f; Eliaueberg, "Arbeit und 
l. (1922), p. 113; Grosse, Die Formen der Familie... 
Die Entwicklung der menschlichen Bedürfnisse (1900).

relation in time and thus the passage to labor as human praxis can be 
explained through the growing impoverishment of human existence and the 
creasing contraction of the quantity of disposable goods. Throughout the 
already mentioned literature, economic theory itself seems to almost 
generally give a negative answer to this question. It holds that the pro-
gression from a "pre-economic" to an "economic condition" cannot be 
explained through "purely economic motives" (Gurewitsch).

7.

Now we can attempt to roughly outline the "place" of labor in the totality 
of human existence. In its broadest and most primordial sense labor is 
grounded in the mode of being human as historical being: in consciously 
developing one's own existence by means of the conscious mediating praxis 
of production and reproduction. Now, since this praxis (as the praxis of 
historical existence) always confronts an objective world that is already 
divided, organized and accomplished in definite ways with which we have to 
deal, labor unfolds in a temporal and spatial multiplicity of individual 
laboring processes with various objects, modes and goals. According to the 
historical situation of the worker and of his world, the individual laboring 
processes take place in the various dimensions of existence: in "material" 
or in "intellectual" production and reproduction in the praxis of what is 
purely necessary for human existence or in the praxis concerned with what 
flies beyond these necessities. All of these individual laboring processes (not, 
to be sure, as individual laboring processes, but as labor in general) are 
subordinated to the final intention of giving, securing, and developing 
human beings in their permanence, duration, and fullness of existence.

From this standpoint, it is clear that labor as such is not an "end-in-
itsel it is not self-contained and does not contain its own "goal." It is 
basically a lack, something negative: it is directed towards something which 
is not yet there, that is not already present and must be created. The true 
overcoming of this lack, the goal and end of labor, is precisely that real 
fulfillment of human existence in its duration and permanence. But when 
one says that the goal of labor lies outside of it, this "outside of" is 
dangerously ambiguous. Since the goal of labor is the full reality of human 
existence, "outside of" must not indicate something beyond human 
existence: it does not refer to any goal transcending human existence, nor 
any sort of objectivity whatsoever. The goal of labor is human existence and 
outside of it. The expression is justified if one speaks of 
"outside of" in regard to the essential objectivity of labor: all labor essen-
tially transcends every individual laboring process, all "otherness" in which 
it obtains, and aims at the very existence of the laborer.

In spite of the essential universality and duration of labor in human 
existence, in spite of the determination of human existence as labor, every
human activity is not necessarily labor. Indeed, even that activity widely
described and glorified as labor, may not be labor. Every mere occupation,
every "busyness" torn loose from the process of the development of human
existence, from its "self-creation," cannot be counted as labor. Both poles
of the general concept of labor described here indicate its range, and both
fall within the concept of labor. On the one side, there is the doing in the
service of "material" production and reproduction, i.e., the providing,
procuring, and conserving of the basic necessities of existence. (We must
note that what is important here is not what the laborer produces for
others, but what "comes out" of this labor for himself. In the commodity-
producing society the finished product of the laboring process no longer
belongs to the producing and reproducing laborer—yet, even the factory
worker who produces luxury items works for the pure necessities of his
existence.) On the other side, there is all the labor which goes beyond these
necessities and which is and remains tied to the developmental process of
existence. We shall now briefly consider the difference, essential for the
meaning of labor, between both forms of praxis.

We have already suggested that the world of historical existence is
divided into two regions: what must necessarily be present and disposable
so that human existence as such can exist at all; and what is not merely
necessary, but in itself complete and fulfilled (we know of no better general
designation for both regions than through the Aristotelian concepts of
\(\alpha\nu\gamma\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\) and \(\kappa\alpha\lambda\alpha\).\)\(^{35}\) The necessary is not already in itself \(\kappa\alpha\lambda\alpha\) and
does not immediately carry \(\kappa\alpha\lambda\alpha\) with it; as we have seen, it is itself a lack,
incomplete in relation to the totality of human existence, and it is not an
"end-in-itself": it must first produce and secure that in which and with
which human existence can develop the truth and fulfillment of its own pos-
sibilities. Roughly speaking, the region of \(\alpha\nu\gamma\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\) can be equated with
the region of material production and reproduction. An appropriate term is
lacking for the region beyond material production and reproduction: what
lies beyond mere "necessities." Marx described this sphere as the "realm
of freedom." We will accept this designation since it captures well what we
are dealing with here, i.e., the specific mode of human praxis beyond material
production and reproduction, and at the same time expresses the reciprocal
interpenetration of the two spheres. To the extent that they remedy the first
and most immediate necessities of human existence, material production
and reproduction are the condition of all fulfilling and completion of

existence. Only when relieved of these own possibilities. Even beyond necessity
remains praxis: even here "labor" has not changed. Now labor is no longer
development of mere human existence: a stable organization aimed at winning a
as if its direction changes: labor no longer
human existence as something that it is
rather, it is an event resulting from existence as its realization. Thus, this
dlacks that being-delivered-over to an and stable framing of an imposed even
that existence can be at all. Here existence it truly is: it must disclose the truth and
itself in this disclosed truth and fully
analysis, it can be. Thus, praxis in the praxis and "goal" to which all other lab
existence in its true possibilities.

In principle, every mode of praxis contains possibility and power of that existence
what human existence "truly is" is not or of their sum total, existence itself not
order" [Rangordnung] of the modes of
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under whose influence we remain.
"theory." We are inclined (although science) to maintain this hierarchical "labor" in art, science, etc., above other
into the question of the justification in
orders.

With this, we believe that we have or at least sufficiently to indicate the dimen
dimension which, despite this transcen
donomics. For its part, economic theory
philosophical character of the concept of
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"goods," corresponding approximately
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however, is precluded precisely becaus
dimension of human praxis—a dimension
constituted through the being and beco

35. The split does not indicate the social subdivision of vital space and time in the sense
that both spheres are attributed to different groups, classes, etc. Rather, it is every single
existence that is split within its own totality into the two spheres of the necessary and
no-longer-necessary; every individual existence demands a becoming and a fulfillment in both
spheres and the sussoring of this totality through the just mentioned economic-social appro-
priation is only the result of a specific form of the "division of labor." We shall come back to
this in the last section.
Indeed, even that activity widely held to be labor. Every mere occupation, process of the development of human need to be counted as labor. Both poles of the laborer—on the one side, the doing in the reproduction, i.e., the providing, necessary of existence. (We must not what the laborer produces for himself. In the commodity-creating laborer—yet, even the factory worker for the pure necessities of the labor which goes beyond these to the developmental process of the difference, essential for the world of historical existence necessarily be present and disposable at all, and what is not merely filled (we know of no better general definition of the Aristotelian concepts of y is not already in itself καλόν and ; as we have seen, it is itself a lack, human existence, and it is not an nd secure that in which and with truth and fulfillment of its own pos- of διανοητικόν can be equated with production. An appropriate term is production and reproduction: what scribed this sphere as the "realm of on since it captures well what we are of human praxis beyond material the same time expresses the reciprocal extent that they remedy the first an existence, material production m fulfilling and completion of division of vital space and time in the sense of the two spheres of the necessary and mands a becoming and a fulfillment in both the just mentioned economic-social appro- "division of labor." We shall come back to existence. Only when relieved of these needs can existence be free for its own possibilities. Even beyond necessities, the process of human existence remains praxis: even here "labor" has to be performed, but its character has changed. Now labor is no longer at the service of the process of development of mere human existence; it is no longer an enduring and stable organization aimed at winning and securing vital space. It is almost as if its direction changes: labor no longer aims at shaping and fulfilling human existence as something that it has yet to create and secure but, rather, it is an event resulting from the form and fullness of human existence as its realization. Thus, this praxis contains its goal and end; it lacks being-delivered-over to an "alien" objectivity, that continuing and stable framing of an imposed event to which it must give itself up so that existence can be at all. Here existence must assume and become what it truly is: it must disclose the truth and fullness of its being and maintain itself in this disclosed truth and fullness—to be what, in the ultimate analysis, it can be. Thus, praxis in the "realm of freedom" is the authentic praxis and "goal" to which all other labor is directed: the free unfolding of existence in its true possibilities.

In principle, every mode of praxis can become "free" according to the possibility and power of that existence which is realized in it. But because what human existence "truly is" is not an arbitrary function of individuals or of their sum total, existence itself necessitates the idea of a "hierarchical order" [Rangordnung] of the modes of praxis in regard to the immanent truth and fullness of human existence. For the Greeks, who were the first in the Western World to develop and present such a "hierarchical order" (and under whose influence we remain), the highest mode of praxis was "theory." We are inclined (although no longer with such a good conscience) to maintain this hierarchical order and to place "intellectual labor" in art, science, etc., above other modes of praxis. Here, we cannot go into the question of the justification and grounds of such hierarchical orders.

With this, we believe that we have outlined the general concept of labor at least sufficiently to indicate the dimension that transcends economics—a dimension which, despite this transcendence, constantly penetrates economics. For its part, economic theory need not concern itself with this philosophical character of the concept of labor were it methodologically possible to conceive of the economic dimension as a self-enclosed field of objects for scientific research independently of the theme of human praxis as such (i.e., if it were possible to outline a picture of a pure "world of goods," corresponding approximately to the picture outlined by modern science of "nature" as a field mathematizable in principle). This possibility, however, is precluded precisely because economic theory constitutes a dimension of human praxis—a dimension whose being and becoming are constituted through the being and becoming of historical, human existence,
in terms of its "ontological place" within the totality of being. The meaning of labor, which is grounded in this ontological place of man and is the constitutive element for all human praxis, cannot be excluded from any dimension of the latter. Hence, every genuine economic theory is explicitly or implicitly connected with an ontology of man that transcends it. Furthermore, economic theory has at least a rough concept [Entwurf] of historical human existence as such, which directs its development.37

8.

In order to be able to understand how the concept of labor has been rejected and captured in the economic dimension, thus undergoing a change in meaning, we must examine an already mentioned fact: the division of labor.

The expression "division of labor" is misleading since in the field of historical life there has never been labor as an integral unity which, at some point in time, was divided. Rather, historical labor has always already been divided: it is in itself partial and does not require subsequent divisions. The praxis of every human existence unfolds in individual laboring processes always dealing only with specific objects in specific dimensions of human existence and its world. What individual human beings require for their becoming (in the broadest sense, as necessities related to the totality of life) comes from others and from a past that is not their own, and ends with others in a future that is not their own. Human existence develops in a space shaped by others and in a time temporized by others. From his position, every individual human being contributes his part to this shaping and temporalizing. This essential partiality "terminates" only with various historical communities (family, tribe, city, state, etc.) as the true "subject" of their world. Only they "have" the totality of all that human existence requires for its becoming. Every praxis seeking to order, secure, take care of, and render disposable the objective world, takes place within the boundaries of the vital space and time of the community. By laboring, individual human beings derive from this world what they need and replace it by laboring. The process of development of individual human beings is itself a process of development with others alongside others, and for others. Community, its praxis is partial.

The divisions of labor traditionally understood only within this partiality, is understood is the division of labor of sex, constitution, talent, etc. To the first historical community is operative in every stage of history, the "sexual" division of labor between men and women concerns the division of classes, occupations, etc., and the kinds of labor to specific groups: production and reproduction and everything of human existence. Here, we need labor only insofar as it is necessary to crystallize labor and its existence. Despite all the differences in them, the natural and social division of labor is carried out in the opposite way: labor ("directing" and "directed") is considered before its realization and lies in the very essence of labor as Laboring as a conscious activity, one's own possibilities and one's foresight into what is to be done with what "to be done" with what every labor is a partial labor of others: it implies reckoning and foresight into what is to be done with what every labor is a partial labor of others: it implies reckoning and foresight into what is to be done with what every labor is a partial labor of others: it implies reckoning and foresight into what is to be done with what...
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nderstand how the concept of labor has been he economic dimension, thus undergoing a st examine an already mentioned fact: the of labor” is misleading since in the field of been labor as an integral unity which later, at ed. Rather, historical labor has always already f partial and does not require subsequent very human existence unfolds in individual ealing only with specific objects in specific nce and its world. What individual human coming (in the broadest sense, as necessities comes from others and from a past that is not bers in a future that is not their own. Human shaped by others and in a time temporali- a, every individual human being contributes and temporalizing. This essential partiality us historical communities (family, tribe, city, oject” of their world. Only they “have” the stance requires for its becoming. Every praxis care of, and render disposable the objective boundaries of the vital space and time of the individual human beings derive from this world it by laboring. The process of development of itself a process of development with others,

alongsides others, and for others. Within the totality of the historical community, its praxis is partial.

The divisions of labor traditionally distinguished as “natural” and “social” obtain only within this partiality. By natural division of labor, what is understood is the division of labor according to, or under considerations of, sex, constitution, talent, etc. This division of labor arose in the family as the first historical community but, within certain limitations, it is still operative in every stage of historical development. Its prototype is the “sexual” division of labor between man and woman. The social division of labor concerns the division of labor according to positions [Sittden], classes, occupations, etc., and the socially consolidated ascription of specific kinds of labor to specific groups—starting from the process of “material” production and reproduction and eventually encompassing all dimensions of human existence. Here, we need to deal with both types of divisions of labor only insofar as it is necessary to explain the social and economic crystallization of labor and its ascription to a specific mode of human existence.

Despite all the differences in the causes and principles that determine them, the natural and social divisions of labor coincide in that the divided labor is carried out in the opposition between dominating and dominated labor (“directing” and “directed” labor). This opposition as such (considered before its realization and crystallization in socio-economic relations) lies in the very essence of labor as the praxis of historical human existence. Laboring as a conscious activity demands a self-restraint and relating to one’s own possibilities and one’s objectivity: a specific circumspection and foresight into what is to happen in and through labor, a self-acquaintance with what “is to be done” with objects and with human existence. And since every labor is a partial labor in a common living space and time, 38 this circumspection and foresight always comprise also the existence and labor of others: it implies reckoning with other existences, with their possibilities and necessities. The main guarantee for the winning, securing, and further development of human existence in all of its vital spheres lies within the conditions of a “natural” and socio-economic situation of existence, in the depth, breadth, and force of this circumspection and foresight. Since every praxis confronts an unexchangeably unique situation of human existence, a unique and unexchangeable circle of possibilities and necessities, every circumspection and foresight is from the very beginning already “divided” differently. This need not mean, however, that this prismatic diversity, given through the situation of the historicity of existence and in turn bound to it, already implies a diversity of “groups,” “classes,” and

37. “Every activity is an element in the process of production based on the division of labor. The activity of every man is no longer his own activity at all, but obtains only to the extent that it is inserted within the framework of a society bound by the division of labor” (Lederer, Grundzüge der ökonomischen Theorie [1923], p. 41).
suchlike, and an ascription to these groups of determinate labors—in the sense of a diversity and of an ascription transmitted through a crystallized form of socio-economic development. Rather, the power that existence derives from its circumspection and foresight could determine its "status" in the world, without any longer becoming crystalized in a merely socio-economic ascription.

Now, however, the social division of labor and the "relations of production" in the various societies, decisively oppose every "essential" division of labor (i.e., a division directed toward the most authentic possibilities of human existence).9 Here, we must refer to states of affairs that we cannot develop. We will deal with them, in a very general way, only to the extent that they can be accepted by any theory as a basis for discussion.

Every historical society (every "political" collectivity which is relatively independent and has, on the socio-economic level, its own foundation and its own developed structures that allow it to be described as "subject" of its own vital and historical space and time) is constituted upon the basic relationship of domination and servitude [Herrschaft und Knechtschaft]. Each is constituted in a (political, economic or social) struggle as a result of which the conquering party holds the conquered in a state of servitude under its domination.40 The concepts of domination and servitude, used by Hegel as categories of historical existence, designate here a universal historical fact: servitude means the enduring and constant binding of the praxis of the whole of human existence to material production and reproduction, in the service and under the direction of another existence (indeed, the one that "dominates") and its needs. The historical community is constituted as a "subject" of the process only when domination is enduring and secured and, correspondingly, servitude has received the duration and permanence of a whole mode of existence. The meaning and goal of an historical community can be considered completed only through an order that spans the totality of human existence, and divides a priori the needs of the community while simultaneously providing for their satisfaction. This order consists always in a specific division of labor since it is precisely in labor that the duration, permanence and fullness of existence is realized and guaranteed.

The realization of the division of labor in the relation of domination and servitude, which has come to a full and secure development on the socio-economic level, is the fundamental condition of every further division of labor among groups, classes, occupying the socio-economic appropriation. The subjugated existence is limited by the necessities of the common needs (which cannot be investigated here): it becomes consolidated into a mode of human existence (servitude).

We saw that all labor demands circumspection and foresight. Praxis in the production and reproduction of goods, which is only possible on the basis of circulation within the world: a state in which one's needs, and has attained a certain amount of immediate things. Only in such a state of being be seen beyond what is necessarily provided. Existence must be able to really develop freely. One's insights is in having seen that the theory of production and reproduction refines as an act of stepping over into the dimension of labor cannot be separated from material object of labor becomes independent of the worker, the latter is also necessary individualized, alienated and becomes an agent independently of his freedom. For the "things," those things become chained themselves without sacrificing his very existence to material production and the acquisition of conscious foresight of its own possibilities. The "status" of things are no longer determined through foresight and circumspection, but the whole individual is already born or born.

Labor, which is in its very essence the totality of human existence, i.e., identity and freedom); is transferred as a total dimension; in the dimension of productive activity. This happens when the two dimensions of the totality of existence has been divided into the totality of human existence: a division transmitted in the socio-economic situation of burden and toil of labor falls in the dimension of necessity, the praxis of necessities, while at the
e groups of determinate labors—in the
ption transmitted through a crystalized
nt. Rather, the power that existence
foresight could determine its “status”
becoming crystallized in a merely socio-

The concept of labor and the “relations of
es, decisively oppose every “essential”
ected toward the most authentic possi-
we must refer to states of affairs that
th them, in a very general way, only to
by any theory as a basis for discussion,
itical” collectivity which is relatively
economic level, its own foundation and
ow it to be described as “subject” of its
d time) is constituted upon the base
Herrschaft und Knabenschaft]
omic or social) struggle as a result of
the conquered in a state of servitude
is of domination and servitude, used by
existence, designate here a universal
enduring and constant binding of the
existence to material production and
nder the direction of another existence
nd its needs. The historical community
process only when domination is
pondingly, servitude has received the
mode of existence. The meaning and
be considered completed only through
man existence, and divides a priori the
ultaneously providing for their satis-
in a specific division of labor since it
a, permanence and fullness of existence

labor in the relation of domination and
and secure development on the socio-
condition of every further division of

1. Max Scheler does not consider the distinction
vision of labor. Cf. Köhler Vierteljahressheft für

t., Vol. I, pp. 326f; Schmoller, “Das Wesen der
gebung,…” Vol. XIV (1890), pp. 49 and 83;
Grundrisse der Sozialökonomik, Vol. II, part I,
le (Unnabruck, 1928), pp. 103ff; Oppenheimer.

 labor among groups, classes, occupations, etc., which are connected with
the socio-economic appropriation of labor. Initially, the praxis of the
subjugated existence is limited by and bound to providing for the mere
necessities of the common needs (through what means and in what ways
cannot be investigated here): material production and reproduction
becomes consolidated into a mode of being that dominates the whole of
human existence (servitude).

We saw that all labor demands a certain measure of conscious circum-
spection and foresight. Praxis in the realm of freedom beyond material
production and reproduction demands a circumspection and foresight
which is only possible on the basis of a well-determined state of existence
within the world: a state in which existence can already dispose of what it
needs, and has attained a certain distance from the most necessary and
immediate things. Only in such a situation can the integrity and fulfillment
of being be seen beyond what is present at hand and what must be
necessarily provided. Existence must hold fast to this knowledge in order to
be able to really develop freely. One of Hegel’s and Marx’s most profound
insights is in having seen that the tie that binds all of existence to material
production and reproduction refines this very existence and prevents it from
stepping over into the dimension of free praxis. As a mode of being human,
labor cannot be separated from man—not even in its “product.” When the
object of labor becomes independent and is separated from the being of the
worker, the latter is also necessarily objectified: his existence is exter-
nalized, alienated and becomes an alien objective power standing over him
independently of his freedom. For whomever is placed in the service of
“things,” those things become chains from which he can no longer liberate
himself without sacrificing his very existence. The lasting and permanent tie
of existence to material production and reproduction cuts off at the roots
the acquisition of conscious foresight and circumspection corresponding to
its own possibilities. The “status” [Stand] and the ascription of labor to it
are no longer determined through the power of existence grounded in
foresight and circumspection, but become socio-economic chains, in which
the individual is already born or into which he is forced.

Labor, which is in its very essence and meaning related to the becoming of
the totality of human existence, i.e., to praxis in its dual dimension (neces-
sity and freedom); is transferred and becomes crystallized in the economic
dimension: in the dimension of production and reproduction of necessities.
This happens when the two-dimensionality of necessity and freedom within
the totality of existence has become a two-dimensionality of different
totalities of human existence: a diversity of modes of existence founded and
transmitted in the socio-economic sphere. Now, for the first time, the entire
burden and toil of labor falls (insofar as it is already grounded in its
objectivity) into the dimension of material production and reproduction, in
the praxis of necessities, while at the same time, on the existential level, the
dimension of freedom is extricated and separated from this praxis. The socio-economic division of labor, expressed in the fundamental relationship of domination and servitude, splinters the essential union of both dimensions of human existence and both fundamental modes of its praxis that alone can realize the full meaning of labor as the developing process of the totality of human existence, and thus cuts labor in material production and reproduction from the positivity to which it owes its realization. The actual enduring and permanent developing process of human existence falls now completely to the praxis of material production and reproduction, which from the very beginning to the end remains in the hands of specific socio-economic strata and classes, while praxis in the dimension lying beyond this sphere appears at the same time as socio-economic appropriation and is no longer open to every existence as one’s own free possibility: as something which can and must be gained through labor.

It is a decisive phenomenon that the cutting off of material production and reproduction from the dimension of “freedom” that completes and fulfills it, now turns again back to these very dimensions and their praxis. Once separated from the fulfilling and at the same time binding spheres, the praxis of the “economic dimension” idles and devours the totality of existence by even objectifying free praxis. This is a process which here we cannot go into, but that takes place before our eyes. Even beyond material production and reproduction, labor now loses its true meaning: it is no longer essentially bound with the actual developmental process and praxis of existence. Similarly, it can no longer fulfill its highest possibility which is to intervene in the developing process of the totality of existence in order to give it meaning and scope. Robbed of its full reality as praxis, labor ultimately ends up by no longer being labor; it now only accompanies labor, follows it or precedes it (without solid ground).

The overcoming of the socio-economic division of the totality of existence into modes opposed to each other, and the transformation of material production and reproduction (which, unified from the dimensions fulfilling them and having become independent, now idle) in a praxis controlled, limited and completed by these dimensions, and deriving its fulfillment from them is the conditions making possible the restitution to existence of its true labor. Thus, labor, free from alienation and reification, can again become what it essentially is: the free and full realization of the whole man in his historical world. “In fact, the realm of freedom begins only where

41. “The coupling of the economic zone with labor leads to an ontological distortion” (Giese, op. cit., p. 253).
42. Spending time in the truly “fulfilling” dimension beyond material production and reproduction is now for the laborer limited to a small “rest period” of his person and limited to the shortest time: evenings, Sundays, etc. Through this suppression and degradation of the decisive vital becoming to mere “free time,” nothing less is accomplished than a reification of this rest period as well. Compare here Giese, op.cit., pp. 183f.
labor determined by necessity and external purposes stops. Therefore, it lies by definition beyond the sphere of actual material production... Freedom in this realm can only consist in that socialized men, i.e., the associated producers, rationally control their material exchange with nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being controlled by it as a blind force, performing it with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most worthy and adequate to their human nature. But this always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins the development of human powers, which is an end-in-itself, the true realm of freedom. This, however, can only unfold on the basis of the realm of necessity.”


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