



MARX BEYOND MARX

LESSONS ON THE GRUNDRISSE

MARX BEYOND MARX ANTONIO NEGRI

Translated and Introduced by
Harry Cleaver, Michael Ryan and Maurizio Viano
Edited by Jim Fleming

"In 1978, at the invitation of Louis Althusser, Negri presented a series of seminars on Marx's *Grundrisse* in Paris. This is the book of those seminars. Negri, a leading figure of the Italian *Autonomia*, was in France as a consequence of charges relating to revolutionary action brought against him by the Italian state....

Marx Beyond Marx aims toward a reconstruction of Marxist theory, a reconstruction that goes beyond Marx by going back to Marx, an angry Marxism summoned by the real possibility of communism... In setting the agenda for such a reconstruction, and in clarifying its priorities, *Marx Beyond Marx* is a pathbreaking and indispensable work."

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ANTONIO NEGRI

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Antonio Negri

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Contents

Editor's Prefaces	vii
Author's Prefaces	xiv
Translators' Introductions	
Part I <i>Harry Cleaver</i>	xix
Part II <i>Michael Ryan</i>	xxviii
Part III <i>Maurizio Viano</i>	xxxi
<i>Lesson One</i> The Grundrisse, an Open Work	1
<i>Lesson Two</i> Money & Value	21
<i>Lesson Three</i> The Method of the Antagonistic Tendency	41
<i>Lesson Four</i> Surplus Value & Exploitation	59
<i>Lesson Five</i> Profit, Crisis, Catastrophe	85
<i>Lesson Six</i> Social Capital & World Market	105
<i>Lesson Seven</i> The Theory of the Wage & Its Developments	127
<i>Lesson Eight</i> Communism & Transition	151
<i>Lesson Nine</i> Capitalist Development & Revolutionary Class ..	171
Epilogue <i>Michael Ryan</i>	191
Bibliography <i>Harry Cleaver, Jim Fleming, Conrad Herold</i>	222
Index	243

Lesson Seven
The Theory
of the Wage
& Its Developments

A. The antithetical form of capitalist development once again: an essential articulation of the *Grundrisse*. □ B. The Book on the Wage and the polemic it stirs up: its central position in the genesis and the development of Marxian thought. □ The Book on the Wage as foundation and as development. □ From the wage to the subject. □ C. Circulation and small-scale circulation. □ Money and small-scale circulation. □ The logic of separation in the theory of circulation: the theory of the wage, the guiding thread of the theory of the subject; it permits us to give the theory a new foundation. □ D. The "Fragment on Machines": the logic of separation at work. □ The collective power of subjectivity and the constitution of the social individual of the communist revolution. □ E. Notes disguised as a conclusion: the metamorphoses of the theory of value, the path of subjectivity, the methodology confirmed.

We must deepen the analysis undertaken in Lesson 6 and the conclusions of that lesson. The antithetical form of capitalist development, the explosion of the logic of separation, could appear to be more a description than a proof. It is now a question of attaining the level of the *neue Darstellung*, the level at which all of the terms of the proof are displaced. It is a question of seeing that the antithetical character of capital is not only a result: it is a result, but *this antithetical form is also the key, the general characteristic of development*. In certain of its aspects, the constituting process which led us to the definition of social capital must be completely reversed. This is absolutely obvious if we cling to the simple coherence of Marx's approach. That approach, as we have often repeated all along the path of our argumentation, proposes the thematic of surplus value as the basic law to be

fully developed. This is what gives to the concept of social capital the distinct mark of duality and of antagonism. This is what allows a second moment of explaining the law: the more capitalist socialization expands, the more its antagonistic character deepens (qualitatively) and grows (quantitatively). The synthesis of the spacial-temporal categories integrates the fundamental contradiction of the law of profit. The actual structure of the *Grundrisse* is based on this integration through successive stages. We enter here into the conclusive stage of the argumentation. This stage comes after the expansive effects of the theory of surplus value or of the theory of exploitation have undergone—in the *Excursus on Crises* and in *Die Formen*—a first synchronic and categorial contraction and then a second diachronic and historical contraction—after these expansive effects have undergone those contractions necessary to their presentation and their examples. Now these effects develop in a new space, a space which is social, collective and general. *The rule of antagonism must now appear in all its originality and with all its force.* The process of valorization, when it reaches this totalitarian dimension, must allow proletarian *self-valorization* to appear. It must allow its own antagonism to develop in all its potential. We will analyse this articulation of Marx's thought at length in the following pages. Its resolving character will appear clearly. We could say that the *Grundrisse* comes to completion with this "Fragment on Machines" (which is precisely the terms of our analysis in this Lesson), and thus that the logical rhythm of Marx's argument here reaches its fullness. What follows the "Fragment on Machines" (there is almost all of Notebook VII) is mostly complementary to these conclusions. What follows is a deepening and development of various partial lines of argument begun in other earlier phases of the work. The material is certainly very important, but not essential. We are thus at a fundamental articulation in the center of this *second part*, of this second side of the analysis of the *Grundrisse* represented by the *theory of circulation*. Let us take up the text where we left it at the end of Lesson 6. The progression of Marx's argument appears here to surge forward. The argument proceeds by waves which advance and subside. The wave that now subsides brought us social capital, and in subsiding it uncovers its antithesis: *working class subjectivity*. Let us go discover this category of the logic of separation in its most developed form, there where the condensation of capital is strongest: this is the same procedure as Marx's.

That necessary labor and its creativity are hidden under the form of the wage—this is what we learn by dwelling on the theory of surplus value. This reality which is hidden—but still unique and powerful as a productive force—is found everywhere the law of surplus value operates. It joins in all the law's movements. This means that in order to attain working class subjectivity, in order to illuminate its role, we must above all explore the wage-form in order to break the envelope that hides the vitality of value,

that pumps out its substance and gives it the appearance of the productivity of capital. That means, essentially, to discover the laws of movement of the wage, which, by developing itself independently (or relatively independently) from the general movement of commodities, can lead us to that particular reality which is now covered up. This project was present, as we have seen, in the "outline" of the *Grundrisse*, in the plans Marx had for the development of his research. Then, in the drafting of *Capital*, it disappeared. This specific Book which would have been consecrated to the wage disappeared from *Capital* as a separate Book. Why? Roman Rosdolsky (pp. 57–62) has asked the question explicitly, or rather he has asked two questions: (1) What were the themes that should have been developed in this book? (2) Why did Marx renounce his plan for a special "Book on Wage Labor"? The response that Rosdolsky gives to the first question is satisfying. That which he gives to the second is less so. We will see this a little further on. But first let us see which themes would have been included in this book on waged labor. A long and careful analysis allows us to make up a list. Here are the essentials:

Grundrisse, p. 264; 175: the wage as a form of existence of the proletariat face to face—in circulation—with the two other classes.

Grundrisse, pp. 281–82; 193–94: the forms of the wage. Piece wages: the demystification of the illusion of participation that it contains.

Grundrisse, pp. 398–401; 302–04: the relationship wage/global population and the relation necessary labor/surplus labor. Towards the payment of necessary labor as a payment of the reproduction of a social totality.

Grundrisse, p. 416; 319: necessary labor as the limit of the exchange value of living labor power (downward rigidity of wages?).

Grundrisse, p. 426 and footnote; 329: on the other side, on the laws of the reduction of the wage beyond the limits of necessary labor. The historical evolution of the forms of the wage.

Grundrisse, pp. 464–65; 368–69: again on the historical evolution of the wage-form: the demystification of the wage as the appearance of exchange between equals. Labor power as "property" of the worker.

Grundrisse, pp. 520–21; 420: "small-scale circulation," or the wage as revenue in the sphere of circulation.

Grundrisse, pp. 607–08; 501: the wage and the excess of workers.

Grundrisse, pp. 817–18; 702: the hypothesis of the minimum wage. The fluidity of this hypothesis in the development of the analysis.

Taking account of these points and of other fundamental problems (such as the reduction of concrete labor to abstract labor and the reduction of particular human workers to simple, undifferentiated average labor. On the question of skilled labor also see Rosdolsky, pp. 506–20), Rosdolsky moves to the resolution of the second problem and concludes that Marx dropped the special book on wage labor because "the strict separation of the categories of capital and wage labor, which the old outline envisaged, could only be taken up to a certain point and then had to be abandoned." Which means

that all these listed themes must be considered as elements subaltern to the analysis of capital.

But this is not true. It is not true, as we have already underlined here and there, for some of these themes; nor is it true for the others, as we will see. But it is also not true in general; because all these elements must be considered to be subordinated, not to the laws of capital but, to the laws of the class struggle. As we have already seen: "the *proportion* itself becomes a real moment of economic life itself. Further, in the struggle between the two classes—which necessarily arises with the development of the working class—the measurement of the distance between them, which, precisely, is expressed by wages itself as a proportion, becomes decisively important. The *semblance of exchange* vanishes in the course {*Prozess*} of the mode of production founded on capital" (*Grundrisse*, p. 597; 491).

At this stage we need to restate the problem. Rosdolsky can help us through a remark that he makes, which for him is secondary. He notes that the reduction of concrete labor to abstract labor and the reduction of particular workers to average social labor do not demand, strictly speaking, a chapter on the wage. These reductions involve the elaboration of the theory of surplus value. They were thus *at the base of the theory of capital*. Fundamental reductions, yes, veritable foundations: why repeat it? We can respond to the rhetorical question of Rosdolsky. We must repeat it because the fundamental character of Marx's discovery of surplus value (and of the reductions which found it) *cannot* be exhausted in the book on capital. Because each time this fundamental element appears, it imposes a different logical rhythm on the analysis: the *logic of separation* against an all-resolving dialectic. Perhaps we should say, from this point of view, that if "*the Book on the Wage*" was not written, it was not because it represented—at the level of the theory of capital—a problem that had already been resolved, but because on the contrary, *the whole theory of capital can only base itself and develop by way of the theory of the wage*. The former refers constantly to the latter and contains it. My point of view is an extreme one, I know this: beginning with Lesson 1, I already deplored the absence of this "Book on the Wage" which introduced an essential element of ambiguity. But now, here, we are perhaps able to show that this ambiguity has tripped up almost all interpreters of Marx, but not Marx himself.

Let us return to the heart of the problem. *The chapter on the wage founds the chapter on capital* in so far as concrete labor is transformed into abstract labor, in so far as distinct and skilled labor is transformed into simple average labor. This transmutation is not a completed synthesis, a given on which to build: it is a *tendency*—an antagonistic tendency. Productive labor, labor power, do not constitute an immobile motor out of which capital is created:

they exist throughout the articulations of capital, they animate in a contradictory fashion all the objectifications of capital. The formation of the relation of force between the classes—at a certain level of capitalist development—expresses in a real and collective way what was already present in the capitalist relation from the beginning. The circulation of capital intervenes—spatially and temporally (as an averaging factor)—to allow the dualism of the concept to explode and to take the form of a duality of subjects. But always on the same basis, that of a continuous process that never stops. There is not a single category of capital that can be taken out of this antagonism, out of this perpetually fissioning flux. Nor can we subordinate a supposed theory of the wage to the theory of capital. When the wage actually does appear in the first volume of *Capital*, taking over a number of themes explicitly launched in the *Grundrisse*, it appears as an "independent variable." Its laws flow from the condensation into a subject of the revolt against work contained in capitalist development. They present themselves immediately as rules of independence. The whole system of categories such as it exists when the wage is introduced must therefore change. We must pass from the extraction of absolute surplus value to the organization of the extraction of relative surplus value, from the formal subsumption to the real subsumption of society by capital. The increase in the value of necessary labor that results from the struggle over the working day and over its reduction demands a *general displacement* of the categorical forms of accumulation and of capitalist reproduction. The foundation of the theory of capital is continually forced to submit to this dynamic.

This is true so far as the categories are concerned. But this is not sufficient. The fact that the wage must appear, always and despite everything, as a variable that is independent of the process of capital engenders a *sequence of effects* that we can follow on all levels of development. The chapter on the wage is not only the implicit foundation, but also *the guiding thread to the development* of Marx's theory of capital. At the very moment that we succeed in defining the first categorical themes, we must deal with their historical variations and their particular determinations: the point of view of the wage dominates here. The opposition is given from the beginning: "The exchange of a part of the capital for living labour capacity can be regarded as a particular moment, and must be so regarded, since the labour market is ruled by other laws than the product market, etc." (*Grundrisse*, p. 521; 420). Here, in fact, the main problem is that of necessary labor, which consolidates itself more and more fully, at ever more irreversible levels. And all this "belongs to the section on wages." What does it mean, "other laws"? It means that the logic of separation dominates. In other words, the wage is, as far as its social quantities are concerned, an *independent magnitude* that varies independently. Its rigidity is irreversible and given in the analysis.

It is true that this rigidity can change. Let us suppose, for example, that in order to obtain some constancy in the law of profit necessary labor is fixed at the necessary minimum of wages. This is only a totally abstract hypothesis. In reality, we must study historically the rigidities that are based on a real relation of force. "All of these fixed suppositions themselves become fluid in the further course of development" (*Grundrisse*, p. 817; 702). In practice then, "the standard of necessary labour may differ in various epochs and in various countries." For capital, on the contrary, "at any given epoch, the standard is to be considered and acted upon as a fixed one. To consider these changes themselves belongs altogether to the chapter on wage labor." (*Grundrisse*, p. 817; 702).

But the contrast between these contradictory assertions leaves a potentiality hanging undeveloped—yes, *the reality of the class struggle. The wage is an independent variable in so far as the quantity, the quality, the value of necessary labor "must" be a fixed dimension for capital.* The contradiction constituted by the capitalist relationship evolves within this contradictory relation. There is no alternative: capital can only mature through the logic of separation. The pole of separation is formed by the wage, by this mass of necessary labor whose value capital must absolutely fix, no matter what—and which is in fact mobile, variable. Its value is not determined once and for all in exchange, but is *the result of the class struggle*, when it fails to become the dictatorship of the proletariat. Independence determines the struggles, fixes the possibilities and the development. It is the struggle which consolidates the values of necessary labor and poses them as historical entities: the sign of a totality of needs, of behaviors, of acquired values that only the struggle succeeds in modifying and developing—and this according to the possibilities that living labor contains, as a function of the historical transformations it has undergone, possibilities that are always linked with the productive transformations of capital. Let us examine this *power of living labor*: in the form of the wage it shows only the mystified aspect of its existence, this fixity that capital demands in order to measure it. But once we go beyond this necessity that capital imposes, we can see in the wage, beyond the wage, the palpitation of living labor in all its social reality, with all the power of its antagonism. And we can see this at every stage of Marx's reasoning. We can perceive these never-ending pulsations at each moment of capitalist development. The complexity of the problem is dizzying. In so far as we refuse the objectivist interpretations of the "school of capital-logic"—which infinitely assert the power of capital to possess and command all development—in so far as we reject this, it seems to us that we must also avoid the *path of subjectivity* which imputes capital to an objectification *tout court*. But those are not the theoretical tensions—terrible simplifications—that interest us. What does interest us, on the contrary, is the ambiguity of the process, the absence of a solution, the exhaustion of any law of command at this level. In the *Grundrisse* we can read each theoretical passage within this extreme

variability of the relationship of force. We can, with reason, regret the uncertainty of *Capital* on this question: that book gives only a fragmented clarification. It only shows moments of this singular whole that is the development of the categories. What it fails to give us—and what the *Grundrisse* does give us—is the global framework, the background within which this antagonism is situated. The wage, the quantity of necessary labor are not only the basis of capitalist development, they also determine, in a general way, the fundamental laws. There lies the *creative function of necessary labor*, its irresistible *upward* bias. From being a condition, the theory of the wage becomes the rule of development. We cannot read the *Grundrisse* (as an anticipation of the course of history) without inducing that separation dominates the whole process. The separation, from the workers' point of view, is the consolidation of a historically given reality; it is the productive power of the free subject which dominates on this terrain.

The analysis progresses. The veil of mystery which enveloped work when it had the form of the wage has been torn, now we need to rip it away completely. All the elements that we have underlined as we have gone along converge here to form a combination rich in creativity. In the first place, the *power of living labor*, the real key to the whole dynamic of production, is the motor that transforms nature into history. Remember how, from the first pages of the analysis, when money began to represent the rarified but powerful space of social command, living labor began to rise up untiringly before it? Remember how, in its development, living labor takes the form of "real" *abstraction*, of workers' society, of mediator of production? *The red thread of abstract labor traces a constituting process.* The more work becomes abstract and socialized—this is the second element that displaces the analysis—the more the sphere of needs grows. Work creates its own needs and forces capital to satisfy them. The progressive evolution of needs gives a concretization to the unity, to the different composite unities created by the progression of abstract and social labor. The *wage* is formed on the basis of these needs—to *mystify* the individuality, henceforth clear, of the masses of necessary labor that this process has consolidated. A third element: this individuality tends to become subjectivity. This means that the connection between needs and the individual materiality of their composition must come to life. The relation with capital breaks the subjection to economic necessity, comes to life in the only way that matter can come to life: as behavior, as *power (potenza)*. This power is subjectivity. It is irreducible. Capital is forced to see itself as relation, as proportion, as a rule imposed on a separation. *The form of the relation is both sides of the struggle.* The class struggle and politics are henceforth at the center of economic theory. *If the theory of surplus value introduces into economic theory the fact of exploitation, the Marxist theory of circulation introduces the class struggle.* It is at this stage that

we can fully understand what the *book on waged labor* is for Marx. It is the theoretical reasoning that leads from economics to politics, it is the immersion of the political in the economic and vice versa. The theory of surplus value brought out and described the cell-form of bourgeois society; here it is a question of analysing and unveiling the organic, developed, mature relation of capital. All the threads come together. As we will see further on, the fruits of this discovery are inestimable. It may have been difficult to cross over the line separating this second side of Marx's work: we can now progress more easily in the vast landscape that opens up before us. The theme of the *book on waged labor* is this and this alone: *from the wage to the subject, from capital relation to the class struggle*. Marx didn't write a separate book on the wage because his whole work constantly returns to this theme. Without ever relaxing it seeks to approach the class struggle, subversion, revolution. Now we must examine how the worker-subject develops an independent logic.

Let us take up the analysis of the text at the point where we left it at the end of *Lesson Six*. The chapter on "*small scale circulation*." We find here an immediate example of the *possibility of inverting* the reading of capital *from the point of view of subjectivity*. Whether this possibility actually develops obviously depends on the state of the historical class relations. What we want to underline here is that these terms outline the theoretical (tendential) possibility of proletarian independence within capital.

"Within circulation as the total process, we can distinguish between large-scale and small-scale circulation. The former spans the entire period from the moment when capital exits from the production process until it enters again. The second is continuous and constantly proceeds simultaneously with the production process. It is the part of capital which is paid out as wages, exchanged for labouring capacity" (*Grundrisse*, p. 673; 565). *What are the characteristics* of this second and "small-scale" circulation? *What are its effects?* Above all small-scale circulation is the sphere where the *value of necessary labor is reproduced* and determined. "The labour time contained in labour capacity, i.e. the time required to produce living labour capacity, is the same as is required—presupposing the same stage of the productive forces—to reproduce it, i.e. to maintain it" (*Grundrisse*, p. 673; 565–66). This production and reproduction-conservation of labor power are present in circulation but in a particular manner. This implies that "the circulation of the part of capital which is posited as wages accompanies the production process, appears as an economic form-relation alongside it, and is simultaneous and interwoven with it" (*Grundrisse*, p. 674; 566). This means that *the capitalist relation, exchange and exploitation do not annul the independence of the proletarian subject*. Better: the tangling up which is born out of the dualism of the forms of circulation is characteristic of the emergence of an irreducible

subject, one that nothing can pacify. The values that are linked with the subject influence the capitalist process. "Here is the only moment in the circulation of capital where consumption enters directly." (*Grundrisse*, p. 675; 567). Productive consumption? It is not a question of entering onto this uncertain terrain. We must simply and always underline the immediate and insoluble aspect of the relationship. It is present in all of Marx's reflections: "Thus the circulating capital here appears directly as that which is specified for the workers' individual consumption; specified for direct consumption generally, and hence existing in the form of finished product. Thus, while in one respect capital appears as the presupposition of the product, the finished product also at the same time appears as the presupposition of capital—which means, historically, that capital did not begin the world from the beginning, but rather encountered production and products already present, before it subjugated them beneath its process. Once in motion, proceeding from itself as basis, it constantly posits itself ahead of itself in its various forms as consumable product, raw material and instrument of labour, in order constantly to reproduce itself in these forms. They appear initially as the conditions presupposed by it, and then as its result. In its reproduction it produces its own conditions. Here, then—through the relation of capital to living labour capacity and to the natural conditions of the latter's maintenance—we find circulating capital specified in respect of its use value" (*Grundrisse*, p. 675; 567).

In respect of its use value: this is what founds the insoluble character of the relation. Necessary labor touches products and transforms them, through its own consumption, into use values. Only necessary labor has this capacity to oppose its own resistance to capitalist valorization, a resistance that is its own conservation and reproduction. A resistance that does not consist of simply a point of immobility, but rather is itself *a cycle*, a movement, a growth. "The payment of wages is an act of circulation which proceeds simultaneously with and alongside the act of production" (*Grundrisse*, p. 676; 568). *Simultaneity and parallelism distinguish the independence of the worker-subject, its own self-valorization face to face with capitalist valorization*. Modern economists outline this relationship between the two opposed forms of valorization as a *double spiral* or a double windmill of parallel convergences; they well know how many crises are by this process determined, a process which at any rate always contains the formal possibility of crisis. And it has this possibility increasingly as the power of the proletariat grows. The relation is no longer dialectical, it is an antagonistic relation, always dominated, but full of risks and insurrections. Capital cannot separate itself from this relation. It must recompose it, and in order to do this it must bend to the relation, not only in its abstract form but also in its contents. "Small-scale circulation between capital and labour capacity. This accompanies the production process and appears as contract, exchange, form of intercourse; these things are presupposed before the production process can

be set going. The part of capital entering into this circulation—the ap-provisionnement—is circulating capital. It is specified not only in respect to its form; in addition to this, its use value, i.e. its material character as a consumable product entering directly into individual consumption, itself constitutes a part of its form.” (*Grundrisse*, p. 678; 570). The *two faces* of the wage (*Grundrisse*, pp. 593-94; 639-40; 759) dissolve. It appears rather as a *second* face completely redone as worker *revenue*; it denies all complementarity with respect to capital and rises up in opposition to it. The insistence of Marx on this dynamic of small-scale circulation is very important for us. The theoretical hypothesis is as usual rigid *and* flexible: rigid in the indicative tendency; flexible in the historical relations it experiences. From this last point of view, we should not be astonished that Marx returns frequently to the real conditions of the process and insists, showing punctually his sharp sense of history, on the fact that capital, at the stage that was present to him, dominates petty circulation and recuperates it within the overall process of circulation. But this in no way undermines the antagonistic power with which small-scale circulation appears: not only as a fact but as a dynamic process, as a tendency. It is this passage from fact to dynamic process which characterizes small-scale circulation. We have seen in the abstract how the creative power of labor becomes subject; we can now see how this movement is accomplished concretely. Small-scale circulation is the space within which the sphere of needs related to necessary labor develops. Thus it takes form and constitutes itself dynamically, consolidates itself in the composition of labor power, in the composition of the working class. It reproduces itself and grows, finally defining itself as the potential of struggle.

Several problems appear here. The *first* is that of deepening the constituting articulation described here. The *second* will be to analyse the general antagonistic consequences which flow from this first apparition in the completed form of the proletarian subject. It is not the place to deepen these points: as far as I am concerned, I have tried to formalize some of them in the last part of my book *La forma Stato* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1977). We will sometimes return to this but always with haste. Yet we should nevertheless remember that we are touching here one of the *central points* in the political debate of Marxism. It is on the issue of how these questions should be developed that revolutionary Marxists *are divided*. I am not so much concerned for the moment with which side one prefers (supposing that such similar theoretical situations exist); I only want to underline that on these questions we must go our different ways. For Marx the historical judgment passed on the phase of self-valorization is an *objective* one. For us, at the level of composition (and of power) reached by the working and proletariat class, it has become totally *subjective*. This means that each relation is maintained by the will, that each determination founds a development, that each episode is significative of a tendency. Moreover, the basis of self-valorization has expanded to the point

where we can define the revolutionary project as *the construction of an opposition power based on the class dynamic. A dynamic of power*. Of power: because use value is for the proletariat an immediate revindication and immediate practice of power. Necessary labor can only be defined—even if it is a purely abstract definition—in terms of power: rigidity, irreversibility, pretension, subversive will to insurrection. Use-value. Use-value is indispensable for defining small-scale circulation. The dualism is complete from the point of view of the tendency: a new proclamation of power. The dualism is the actuality of the crisis for capital or, at any rate, the precariousness of its development.

Let us examine this carefully. We are already beyond Marxism. It is around these propositions that a large number of vulgar Marxists fail to understand Marx. These are theoretical problems which lead us—at a minimum—to regret the split in Marxist thought between an objectivist (economic) position and a subjectivist (political) position and to denounce—thereafter—the lack of an adequate and sufficient political perspective. Marx is seen as objectivistic and economistic and interpreted as an alibi for the paralysis of revolutionary thought and action. It thus becomes necessary to demand the *unity of Marxist thought* beyond Marxism, beyond the orthodoxy of a suffocating tradition. We do not want to deny that partial examination can find aspects of Marx's thought that are apparently separated from the unity of the project. Nor do we want to deny that one can read numerous pages of Marx (especially those collected and published in the German circles of the Second International) purely and simply through the spectacles of objectivism. We have, ourselves, often brought out the gap that exists between the *Grundrisse* (and the unity that marks its project) and *Capital* (whose development is not without lapses in the dialectic). On the other hand what we want to say is that there is no possibility of giving a general interpretation of Marx's thought by employing objectivist considerations and by always returning his analysis to that of the economy. It is from this point of view that we radically critique the recent rising tide of vulgar Marxism with its catastrophic and consoling aspects, its objectivist and opportunist aspects, and its always economistic bent. Should we take the field against some of the common elements of these recent interpretations? Why not. We have everything to win. Let us consider, for example, while remaining within the theme of small-scale circulation and proletarian self-valorization, the Marxist treatment of the “*reproduction schemes*” of Volume II of *Capital*. It is clear that the logic of separation that we see at work in the *Grundrisse* denies that these schemes can really work. It considers them only as an approximation, as adequate as it can be for a reality that is in fact profoundly broken up and rent by antagonism. This does not mean that we should throw garbage on these schemes: it means simply that they can serve to *approach* productive circulation and its concept from the point of view of economic unity, or, of the *accounting* unity of the process. To make of these

abstractions, which are situated at a very high level of abstraction, schemes that can be used to interpret the class struggle; to try—in negative or positive ways—to find the logical coherence in order to obtain a necessary force to recognize the spaces and objectives of the class struggle; this is an error and a pettiness. This single piece of fabric within which reproduction grows, in an antagonistic manner, is something else, we have seen this. It is something else and far more complicated.

The *concept of self-valorization*, with all its density, refers us back to the concept of money as it was elaborated in the first pages of the *Grundrisse*. Money is general, social, abstract and antagonistic. From both sides we have forms that are opposed to each other in a contradictory way. *We must underline the antagonistic aspect of the relationship*. Money is the great mediator of capitalist development (the quantity theory is linked with this function) and it even represents the command of capital in this mediation constituted by the class relation (the Keynesian theory of money represents this aspect). Confronted with self-valorization, these functions fade. *Small-scale circulation seems to reject the functions of money*, even though money can function within it in terms of simple commodity circulation. Within this small-scale circulation, the sequence M-C-M' does not hold: money exchanged between proletarians is use-value. *Money is subordinated to self-valorization*. Naturally this analysis will seem abstract and full of utopianism if it does not take account of the way in which a contradictory relation is established between the collective forces. It is less abstract as soon as we situate it at this level. It is, for example, impossible today to appreciate the antagonistic class relations that run through the social functions of capitalist exploitation (State-as-entrepreneur, public expenses, etc.) if we do not take account of these dimensions of the problem. *The reduction of money to the pure and simple function of command*, on one side of the relation, *equals its subordination to self-valorization* on the other side of the relation. And this occurs in antagonistic terms. Well, it is all this that Marx begins to examine theoretically in these chapters. The conditions are all given: the emergence of the subjectivity of the two classes, the general and social character of their formation, the antagonistic nature of their confrontation in circulation and in reproduction. The possibility of defining the categories of capital in a new way, by beginning with Marx's teaching, the possibility of giving new foundations and a new and adequate formulation to the character of *social capital* in our time, depends on this thematic: *money (command)—self-valorization*, more than on any other Marxist moment. It is only by taking this thematic as point of departure that we can perhaps grasp the actual class antagonism in its real dimensions. Here, too, we will discover the possibility of raising the level of analysis such that we can understand the political mechanisms of capital and the *problem of power*. At the heart of this relationship, the capitalist relation is immediately a relation of power. The same is true from the working class point of view. This means that after having seen the potential of the *Marxist theory of the*

wage develop with the elaboration of the theory of the subject, we are now going to be able to take it as a point of reference in order to revise and found the *most important categories of the theory of the class struggle*. It is a question of implementing the logic of separation at every level. It is a question of understanding the crisis as a constituting moment of every apparition, of every concretization of capital. It is a question of reviewing the whole outline of *Capital* and of confronting it point by point with the modifications implied by the development of the class struggle today. As far as I am concerned, I am always stupefied to see the power of Marx's intuitions, the extraordinary anticipations of the *Grundrisse*. But that does not allow us to avoid the work of creation that we must give here.

To Summarize. It seems to me that the Marxist theory of the wage and the theoretical openings it creates allow us to define the fundamental moment where the theory of the class struggle enters into the theory of circulation. Once the social determinations of capital and its progressive power are solidly set out and reviewed, then we come face to face with the rule of antagonism. Important results follow. Above all from the point of view of the analysis of the working class: little by little a *subjective direction* emerges which takes on more and more materiality, to wind up determining the real composition of the class. The path that runs in this direction is open, and we will see in the following pages how Marx proceeds. In the second place, the logic of separation defines the general space where the analysis can develop; the space where we find a few anticipations that tend to found anew the main categories. At this point all we can do is follow the development of Marx's thought in the *Grundrisse*, in the pages that follow the analysis of "small-scale circulation."

Basing ourselves on what we have obtained so far, we can now take up the "*Fragment on Machines*." This is, without doubt, the highest example of the use of an antagonistic and constituting dialectic that we can find, certainly in the *Grundrisse*, but perhaps also in the whole of Marx's work. The chapter on machines covers the last pages of Notebook VI and the beginning of Notebook VII (*Grundrisse*, pp. 690–712; 582–600). This chapter was written at the end of February 1858 and is located, we have already pointed this out, at the peak of Marx's theoretical tension in the *Grundrisse*. It is also a moment of logical conclusion. Henceforth the process of capital develops through a series of critical elements, as much from the point of view of synchronic construction of the categories as from the point of view of their diachronic, historical determination: to the point where the antagonism takes on the form of working class subjectivity. At this point the antagonism opens into subversion. It is now a matter of bringing the different threads together, to harvest the totality of the process in all its richness. Let us begin again at the beginning and move forward.

The analysis begins with the dialectic of *living labor*. This living labor finds itself inserted into "the dynamic, constituting unity of the labor process". This unity deepens, and changes form as capital, through the machine, or the "*automatic system of machinery*," subsumes labor. The automatic system of machinery is

set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages. In the machine, and even more in machinery as an automatic system, the use value, i.e., the material quality of the means of labour, is transformed into an existence adequate to fixed capital and to capital as such; and the form in which it was adopted into the production process of capital, the direct means of labour, is superseded by a form posited by capital itself and corresponding to it. In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker's means of labour. Its distinguishing characteristic is not in the least, as with the means of labour, to transmit the worker's activity to the object; this activity, rather is posited in such a way that it merely transmits the machine's work, the machine's action on to the raw material—supervises it and guards against interruptions. Not as with the instrument, which the worker animates and makes into his organ with his skill and strength, and whose handling therefore depends on his virtuosity. Rather, it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it; and it consumes coal, oil etc (*matières instrumentales*), just as the worker consumes food, to keep up its perpetual motion. The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite. The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself. The appropriation of living labour by objectified labour—of the power or activity which creates value by value existing for-itself—which lies in the concept of capital, is posited, in production resting on machinery, as the character of the production process itself, including its material elements and its material motion. The production process has ceased to be a labour process in the sense of a process dominated by labour as its governing unity. Labour appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the individual living workers at numerous points of the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism. In machinery, objectified labour confronts living labour within the labour process itself as the power which

rules it; a power which as the appropriation of living labour, is the form of capital. The transformation of the means of labour into machinery, and of living labour into mere living accessory of this machinery, as the means of its action, also posits the absorption of the labour process in its material character as a mere moment of the realization process of capital. The increase of the productive force of labour and the greatest possible negation of necessary labour is the necessary tendency of capital, as we have seen. The transformation of the means of labour into machinery is the realization of this tendency. In machinery, objectified labour materially confronts living labour as a ruling power and as an active subsumption of the latter under itself, not only by appropriating it, but in the real production process itself; the relation of capital as value which appropriates value-creating activity is, in fixed capital existing as machinery, posited at the same time as the relation of the use value of capital to the use value of labour capacity; further, the value objectified in machinery appears as a presupposition against which the value-creating power of the individual labour capacity is an infinitesimal, vanishing magnitude; the production in enormous mass quantities which is posited with machinery destroys every connection of the product with the direct need of the producer, and hence with direct use value; it is already posited in the form of the product's production and in the relations in which it is produced, that it is produced only as a conveyor of value, and its use value only as condition to that end. In machinery, objectified labour itself appears not only in the form of product or of the product employed as means of labour, but in the form of the force of production itself. The development of the means of labour into machinery is not an accidental moment of capital, but is rather the historical reshaping of the traditional, inherited means of labour into a form adequate to capital. The accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of *fixed capital*, in so far as it enters into the production process as a means of production proper. *Machinery* appears, then, as the most adequate form of *fixed capital*, and fixed capital, in so far as capital's relations with itself are concerned, appears as *the most adequate form of capital* as such. In another respect, however, in so far as fixed capital is condemned to an existence within the confines of a specific use value, it does not correspond to the concept of capital, which, as value, is indifferent to every specific form of use value, and can adopt or shed any of them as equivalent incarnations. In this respect, as regards capital's external relations, it is *circulating capital* which appears as the adequate form of capital, and not fixed capital [*Grundrisse*, pp. 692–694; 584–86].

To simply comment on these quoted pages would necessitate going back over everything we have said already; it's not worth the trouble. It is more useful to underline a few particular points which appear here and to under-

stand how Marx used them to move forward. The first point is an intensive one: *the labor process is taken as a simple element of the process of valorization*. The second point is extensive: *productive capital extends into circulation*. Real subsumption of labor can't but be (in the same moment) real subsumption of society. Of society, in other words of the productive social forces, especially of science. "The entire production process appears as not subsumed under the direct skilfulness of the worker, but rather as the technological application of science" (*Grundrisse*, p. 699; 587). And Marx continues, insisting on the subsumption of the social productive forces—in their totality—on their being totally functional to the development of capital. The moment arrives when the whole system *is displaced* and advances. First from the point of view of an intensive analysis, that is with respect to *the labor process* and its subsumption to the process of valorization. Here, the displacement of categories signifies the capitalist dissolution of working class use value.

To the degree that labour time—the mere quantity of labour—is posited by capital as the sole determinant element, to that degree does direct labour and its quantity disappear as the determinant principle of production—of the creation of use values—and is reduced both quantitatively, to a smaller proportion, and qualitatively, as an, of course, indispensable but subordinate moment, compared to general scientific labour, technological application of natural sciences, on one side, and to the general productive force arising from social combination (*Gliederung*) in total production on the other side—a combination which appears as a natural fruit of social labour (although it is a historic product). Capital thus works towards its own dissolution as the form dominating production [*Grundrisse*, p. 700; 587–88].

Furthermore, in the second place, from the point of view of an extensive analysis. Here circulating capital appears as productive capital by taking *the form of planning* and of control of the reproduction of society. The subsumption of society has become the production of that same society. The displacement is total. "So does it now appear, in another respect, as a quality of *circulating capital*, to maintain labour in one branch of production by means of *co-existing* labour in another" (*Grundrisse*, p. 700; 588).

This exchange of one's own labour with alien labour appears here not as mediated and determined by the simultaneous existence of the labour of others, but rather by the advance which capital makes. The worker's ability to engage in the exchange of substances necessary for his consumption during production appears as due to an attribute of the part of circulating capital which is paid to the worker, and of circulating capital generally. It appears not as an exchange of substances between the simultaneous labour powers, but as the metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*) of capital; as the ex-

istence of circulating capital; the productive power of labour into fixed capital (posited as external to labour and as existing independently of it (as object (*sachlich*))); and, in circulating capital, the fact that the worker himself has created the conditions for the repetition of his labour, and that the exchange of this, his labour, is mediated by the co-existing labour of others, appears in such a way that capital gives him an advance and posits the simultaneity of the branches of labour. (These last two aspects actually belong to accumulation.) Capital in the form of circulating capital posits itself as mediator between the different workers [*Grundrisse*, pp. 700–701; 588].

At this stage, *the capitalist appropriation of society is total*. The subjectivity of capital has been violently activated. Machines and science have constituted and produced it. *But the separation within the category has not been suppressed*. The antagonism must reproduce itself at the highest level of power. The displacement of antagonistic dialectic must be totally revealed and operate fully at this stage. You can criticize all you like this way Marx has of proceeding via large *tranches* of argument which appear as relatively exterior one to another, this somewhat mechanical way of linking up the developments. We would sometimes wish to find a more interior, more subtle, more refined dialectic. We could skip these improvised displacements which emerge suddenly and leave us breathless, reminding us of the taste of a certain "catastrophism." Yet, it seems to us difficult to imagine that we could develop a logical argument as powerful, or such an incredible capacity of prediction of capitalist development, in terms that would not be necessarily rigid but would still be strong, powerful, marked by an exceptional scientific tension. Here thought possesses such strength that it cannot be reduced to a simple caricature. The cleavage reappears and the process advances. *The separation occurs within the process*. "But to the degree that large industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labour time and on the amount of labour employed than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labour time, whose 'powerful effectiveness' is itself in turn out of all proportion to the direct labour time spent on their production, but depends rather on the general state of science and on the progress of technology, or the application of this science to production (*Grundrisse*, pp. 704–705; 592). But from within the process where it was hidden the separation *is suddenly displaced to the outside* and there takes the form of an independent subjectivity. In the conditions of the process described already

real wealth manifests itself, rather—and large industry reveals this—in the monstrous disproportion between the labour time applied, and its product, as well as in the qualitative imbalance between labour, reduced to a pure abstraction, and the power of the production process it super-

intends. Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself. (What holds for machinery holds likewise for the combination of human activities and the development of human intercourse.) No longer does the worker insert a modified natural thing (*Naturgegenstand*) as middle link between the object (*Objekt*) and himself; rather, he inserts the process of nature, transformed into an industrial process, as a means between himself and inorganic nature, mastering it. He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth. *The theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based*, appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large-scale industry itself. As soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange value [must cease to be the measure] of use value. *The surplus labour of the mass* has ceased to be the condition for the development of general wealth, just as the *non-labour of the few*, for the development of the general powers of the human head. With that, production based on exchange value breaks down, and the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis. The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them. Capital itself is the moving contradiction, [in] that it presses to reduce labour time to a minimum, while it posits labour time, on the other side, as sole measure and source of wealth. Hence it diminishes labour time in the necessary form so as to increase it in the superfluous form; hence posits the superfluous in growing measure as a condition—question of life or death—for the necessary. On the one side, then, it calls to life all the powers of science and of nature, as of social combination and of social intercourse, in order to make the creation of wealth independent (relatively) of the labour time employed on it. On the other side, it wants to use labour time as the measuring rod for the giant social forces thereby created, and to confine them within the limits required to maintain the already created value as value. Forces of production and social relations—two different sides of the development of the social individual—appear to capital as mere means, and are merely means for it to produce on its

limited foundation. In fact, however, they are the material conditions to blow this foundation sky-high [*Grundrisse*, pp. 705–706; 592–94].

The first result produced by the logic of separation is to displace the relationship necessary labor/surplus labor to situate it at the level of the capacity of capital to subsume society, and to *transform the relation between two complete, opposed subjectivities* that are hostile to the point of destroying each other reciprocally. This is *impossible* for capital, which lives on exploitation. It is *possible* for the proletariat, whose power (*potenza*) becomes more and more immense as capital tries to destroy its identity. Capital seeks a continual reduction in necessary labor in order to expand the proportion of surplus value extorted, but the more it succeeds individually with workers taken one by one, the more necessary labor benefits the collectivity and is reappropriated by absorbing the great collective forces that capital would like to determine purely for its own account. *The compression of necessary individual labor is the expansion of necessary collective labor* and it constructs a "social individual," capable not only of producing but also of *enjoying* the wealth produced. After a first analysis, Marx returns to the argument, retraces the path that he had at first jumped, takes up again each category of the threads that allowed the displacement of the analysis and redefines the law of value at this new level of complexity. Various indices—sometimes allusive, sometimes precise—allow us to advance in our research. Each time the categories work in a reversed way: to surplus labor, the motor of development, is opposed non-work; to capitalism is opposed communism.

The creation of a large quantity of disposable time apart from necessary labour time for society generally and each of its members (i.e. room for the development of the individuals' full productive forces, hence those of society also), this creation of not-labour time appears in the stage of capital, as of all earlier ones, as not-labour time, free time, for a few. What capital adds is that it increases the surplus labour time of the mass by all the means of art and science, because its wealth consists directly in the appropriation of surplus labour time; since *value directly its purpose*, not use value. It is thus, despite itself, instrumental in creating the means of social disposable time, in order to reduce labour time for the whole society to a diminishing minimum, and thus to free everyone's time for their own development. But its tendency always, on the one side, *to create disposable time, on the other, to convert it into surplus labour*. If it succeeds too well at the first, then it suffers from surplus production, and then necessary labour is interrupted, because *no surplus labour can be realized by capital*. The more this contradiction develops, the more does it become evident that the growth of the forces of production can no longer be bound up with the appropriation of alien labour, but that the mass of workers must themselves

appropriate their own surplus labour. Once they have done so—and *disposable time* thereby ceases to have an *antithetical* existence—then, on one side, necessary labour time will be measured by the needs of the social individual, and, on the other, the development of the power of social production will grow so rapidly that, even though production is now calculated for the wealth of all, *disposable time* will grow for all. For real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals. The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labour time, but rather disposable time. *Labour time as the measure of value* posits wealth itself as founded on poverty, and disposable time as existing *in and because of the antithesis to surplus labour time*; or, the positing of an individual's entire time as labour time, and his degradation therefore to mere worker, subsumption under labour. *The most developed machinery thus forces the worker to work longer than the savage does, or than he himself did with the simplest, crudest tools* [*Grundrisse*, pp. 708–709; 595–96].

Some want to see, in this fierce *demand* by Marx for a *communism that is liberation from exploitation*, the mark of individualism and of humanist compassion. Even if that were so, there is certainly no evil there. However, it is not the case. It is not the case because, if we stay at the level of categories, we must remember that the communist destruction of the law of value (or better, its overthrow and reversal) suppresses and denies the individual elements of individual productivity on which—from the capitalist point of view and the corresponding Marxist analysis—it is based. The *displacement* is here totally completed. To social capital corresponds the collective worker. Once more the temporal dimension demands and implies an extensive spatial dimension. “As the basis on which large industry rests, the appropriation of alien labour time, ceases, with its development, to make up or to create wealth, so does *direct labour* as such cease to be the basis of production since, in one respect, it is transformed more into a supervisory and regulatory activity; but then also because the product ceases to be the product of isolated direct labour, and the *combination* of social activity appears, rather, as the producer” (*Grundrisse*, p. 709; 596–97). *In the communist revolution, the individual is social*. Social but concrete, he is exaltation and overdetermination, expansion of enjoyment, founder of that expansion.

Real economy—saving—consists of the saving of labour time (minimum (and minimization) of production costs); but this saving identical with development of the productive force. Hence in no way *abstinence from consumption*, but rather the development of power, of capabilities of production, and hence both of the capabilities as well as the means of consumption. The capability to consume is a condition of consumption, hence its primary means, and this capability is the development of an individual potential, a force of production. The saving of labour time [is] equal to

an increase of free time, i.e. time for the full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power. From the standpoint of the direct production process it can be regarded as the production of *fixed capital*, this fixed capital being man himself. It goes without saying, by the way, that direct labour time itself cannot remain in the abstract antithesis to free time in which it appears from the perspective of bourgeois economy. Labour cannot become play, as Fourier would like, although it remains his great contribution to have expressed the suspension not of distribution, but of the mode of production itself, in a higher form, as the ultimate object. Free time—which is both idle time and time for higher activity—has naturally transformed its possessor into a different subject, and he then enters into the direct production process as this different subject. This process is then both discipline, as regards the human being in the process of becoming; and at the same time, practice (*Ausübung*), experimental science, materially creative and objectifying science, as regards the human being who has become, in whose head exists the accumulated knowledge of society. For both, in so far as labour requires practical use of the hands and free bodily movement, as in agriculture, at the same time exercise [*Grundrisse*, pp. 711–12; 599–600].

It is time to draw some conclusions about this important book on the wage—that is to say the unfolding of the logic of separation. We can now outline in its totality the path followed by the antithetical form of capitalist development. In the first place, beginning with the theory of surplus value, in other words in the terms and categories of the theoretical framework of the first part of the *Grundrisse*, a framework which is completely reversed in the second part. *The theory of surplus value is reversed*. Where, in capital's project, labor is commanded by surplus labor, *in the proletariat's revolutionary project reappropriated surplus labor is commanded by necessary labor*. In the first part of the *Grundrisse*, the theory of value appeared to us as an abstract subordinate of the theory of surplus value, from the point of view of the exploited class. Here, the theory of value is no longer simply subordinated. It undergoes, in this subordination, an important displacement and is subjected to a fundamental metamorphosis. In other words, when the theory of value can not measure itself by a quantity of labor time or by an individual dimension of labor, when a first displacement leads it to confront social time and the collective dimension of labor, at this moment the *impossibility of measuring exploitation modifies the form of exploitation*. The emptiness that appears in the theory of value, the evacuation of any element of measure which is not a generic reference to social industriousness, the liberation of social industriousness and its constitution in collective individuality, does not suppress the law of value but reduces it to a mere formality. Of course, formality does not mean a lack of efficacy. Formality does not mean a lack

of meaning. The *form of the law of value* is, on the contrary, efficient and full of meaning, but efficacy and meaning are given to it only by its *irrationality*, by the end of the progressive and rationalizing function of exploitation. The form is the empty, miserable base of exploitation. The *form of value is pure and simple command, the pure and simple form of politics*—of the “essential inessentiality,” as the young Marx would say in Hegelian terms. We are here at the culminating point of a process in which the power relations—rationally established—regulated and included within the development of capital—are reversed. Where the relation of rationality inverts itself. *The inversion is total.* The law of surplus value continues to rule, but in reversed terms. Non-work, the refusal of work becomes the worker’s point of view, the basis from which the law of value can be inverted and the law of surplus value reinterpreted. The second part of the *Grundrisse* is this process in action. We could have entitled our Lesson: “*The Metamorphoses of the Law of Value*” and the following Lesson, which we consecrate to “the concept of communism,” could be called “the refusal of work”; finally, the Ninth Lesson, in which we will treat the mechanisms of “*enlarged reproduction*,” could also have as title: “*Worker Self-valorization.*” All in all we have here rapidly traced the whole path of liberation and communism. But when we speak of this path, we speak of a subject which is linked to it. A subject which materially possesses as a power the keys to the reversal of the law of surplus value. Nevertheless, above all let us remember the result at which we have arrived, that is to say this law of value which is emptied, which is reduced to being only an empty form of capitalist command. Empty and efficient. Efficient and irrational. Irrational and cruel.

What does it mean, from the class point of view, to possess the key to the reversal of surplus value? Some have thought that this proposition allows us to say this: *capital, when there is a reversal, becomes working class use-value.* This is *false.* Whoever tries to prove it must work within the logic of separation and will find himself stuck in the dualism of the capital relation. On another side it would be to stop before the inversion occurs: that is, it would be to invert the concept of capital instead of its reality, instead of its relation. This would not definitively split the capital relation but would globally attribute an opposed valence to its concept by hypostatizing a superior will to the relation. By imagining it. By self-illusion. By mystification. Mystification, because along this path worker behavior appears as an “equivalent” to capitalist behavior? Worker behavior becomes command over the capital relation and not destruction—by necessary labor—of the capitalist appropriation of surplus labor. It is a *typically sophistic treatment:* in so far as it is a question of critique, capital is a relation that must be broken; when we pass from critique to theory, capital becomes something to be dominated. But that is only possible for capital, which can objectify its own negation. It is not possible for the working class, which denies that which is its negation. It is possible for capital, which mystifies the relation

and encloses it in objectivity. It cannot be possible for the worker-subject who unveils the mystification and moves the relation to the foreground.

We insist on this critique for several different reasons. In the first place, because of the falsity of the results that are obtained from the point of view we have criticized: this view hypostatizes capital when it makes it a working-class use value, whereas there can only be working-class use value in the accumulated part of surplus labor that it is possible to reappropriate, that part which can be reduced to non-work, to working class liberty, to self-valorization. This part is negation, the wealth of negation. In the second place, because the point of view that I have criticized winds up giving autonomy to the political in a very mystified way: the political in this case is not the new form of the law of value but rather is a relation superior to capital and independent of it. In the *Grundrisse* there are no relations superior to capital that are not functions of capitalism, that are not forms taken by capital’s command as it develops. To break it from inside, to not seek outside points of references, to smash it beginning with worker subjectivity as negation and as potential wealth (which is already used in its global aspect by capital); in sum, *to deepen the rupture of the capital relation from within this relation;* basing oneself on the contradictory essence of the law of surplus value: this is the only path that we find in Marx, in the *Grundrisse*, and in all his work. A work in which we can find contradictions, divisions and in which we can—and we freely admit to this—prefer some parts to others. But not because in the other parts we can not find the same unity of the *critique of political economy* and the *critique of the political* that we see in the *Grundrisse.* At the point we have reached, and this can be seen in the present polemic, we begin to *master subjectivity, Marx’s acceptance of subjectivity, its working class and proletarian development.* Here we have accentuation of separation which is implicitly contained, as an element of definition in the theory of surplus value, which shows us the theory of the wage, the development and dynamism that gives to the working-class pole—liberated from the capital relation in the theory of the wage—the theory of “small-scale circulation.” The general displacement undergone by this antagonistic terrain through the theories of machinery, of social capital, and of real and global social subsumption—well, all that leads to the theory of the *social individual* and of *communism* as the negation of the capital relation. *Not* as an inversion of capitalist command, *but* as an inversion of the relation between necessary labor and surplus labor, as the negation and reappropriation of surplus labor. The path of subjectivity lies within the capital relation, it does not try to imagine alternatives, but knows how, as it deepens its separation, to destroy the relation. The path of subjectivity is an intensive path. It is a continual and coherent recomposition of successive negations. It raises necessary labor to the point where it can destroy surplus labor.

In this intensity which characterizes separation we find maximum liberty. The social individual is *multilateral*. The highest intensity of difference

is the highest approach to communism. When the capital relation has reached the point where it explodes, the liberated negation is not a synthesis. It knows no formal equivalences whatsoever. *Working-class power is not the reversal of capitalist power, not even formally.* Working-class power is the negation of the power of capital. It is the negation of the centralized and homogeneous power of the bourgeoisie, of the political classes of capital. It is the dissolution of all homogeneity. This methodological "plural", this multilaterality triumphs. We cannot impose on liberated subjectivity any uniform and flat scheme for organizing social reality. Surplus labor had a uniform aspect in the capitalist project. The wage refigured the shape of capital. When the wage as it developed became *self-valorization* and *reappropriation* of surplus labor, it was the end of all rules useful for development. There is no more profit because labor productivity is no longer translated into capital. There is no more capitalist rationality. Subjectivity not only liberates itself, it liberates a totality of possibilities. It draws a new horizon. Labor productivity is founded and spread socially. It is both a magma which gathers and recomposes everything, and a network of streams of enjoyment, of propositions and inventions which spread out across a land made fertile by the magma. The communist revolution, the emergence in all its power of the social individual, creates this wealth of alternatives, of propositions, of functions. Of liberty. Never has communism appeared as synonymous with liberty as in these pages of the *Grundrisse* that we have just studied.

Lesson Eight Communism & Transition

The problem of communism and the problem of transition in the *Grundrisse*. □ Synthesis of the material covered? A critique of this synthesis and of the way of posing the problem. □ (a.) On the humanism of Marx. A new thematic proposition: transition rather than utopia, or demystification and inversion. The great dynamic themes; from prehistory to history, communism building itself. □ (b.) The demystification and development of the categories of the critique of political economy. The great substantial themes. The content of communism. From demystification to inversion, from substantial themes to the form of the transition. □ (c.) Transition and subjectivity. Transition and constituting praxis. The power (*potenza*) of the inversion: the suppression of work. □ (d.) The refusal of work as the communist mode of production. □ Giving the dialectic back to capital and the destruction of utopia.

From the world market to communism. Where we have arrived in our reasoning, after all our insistence on bringing out the subjective dimension of the process, is a kind of path that always appears as a veritable paradox. It is nevertheless a path that Marx indicates more than once: in the outline of the *Grundrisse* (pp. 227–28; 139) and in the outline of page 264 (175): "At last, the world market. Bourgeois society dominates the state. Crises. The dissolution of the mode of production and of the form of society founded on exchange-value. Individual work seen clearly in its social form and vice versa." Communism springs forth from the intensity of the contradictions that are contained in the concept of world market: at once a moment of maximum capitalist integration and a moment of maximum antagonism, a synthesis of the temporal and spatial determinations of capital's process. *Posed in these terms, the problem of communism does not even recognize the problem of the transition, it does not know the problem of subjectivity: it can pose*