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## HUMANISTIC MARXISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF REASON

### ABSTRACT

Mengacu pada gagasan tentang alienasi Marx, artikel ini menyoroti struktur pola aktivitas yang tidak teralienasi. Aktivitas yang tak teralienasi ditandai oleh beberapa hal yang umumnya bertentangan dengan pola aktivitas dalam struktur masyarakat kapitalistik. Pertama, aktivitas itu mengandaikan ikatan ontologis antar manusia. Manusia bukan sarana melainkan tujuan. Obyektivikasi diri tidak boleh menghambat obyektivikasi orang lain sejauh yang terakhir itu mengakui kodrat sosial manusia. Kedua, di dalamnya tendensi ke arah “pemilikan” tidak dianggap pola apropriasi utama, melainkan sekedar salah satu bentuk apropriasi diantara sekian banyak bentuk lainnya. Ketiga, ia menuntut integrasi harmonis antara berbagai sisi manusia, kognitif maupun konatif, nalar maupun rasa inderawi. Maka yang rasional sekaligus dilihat mengandung yang rasawi; segala yang rasawi mengandung rasionalitas. Untuk memajukan aktivitas yang tak teralienasi ini di butuhkan transformasi rasionalitas praktis, suatu akal-sehat yang baru.

### Key Words:

*Alienation • unalienated mode of activity • new practical reason • having • Capitalism • manifold appropriation • rationality of domination • sensuous rationality.*

We set out from Marx's analysis of estranged labor that is, his analysis of objectification within the framework of alienation as it appears in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.<sup>1</sup> In that analysis Marx singles out four aspects of estranged labor all of which are deeply interconnected with one another. In estranged labor, human beings are alienated with respect to: (a) the product of their labor, (b) the activity of their labor, (c) other people, and (d) the "species essence" understood as "free conscious activity". It is important to stress that these different aspects of alienation are dynamically interrelated with one another. While Marx's analysis of an alienated mode of activity in the world differentiates various aspects of alienation, what is differentiated in analysis is dynamically interconnected in practice. So deeply interconnected are these four aspects of alienation in Marx's thought, that, in order to overcome alienation with respect to any one aspect, it is necessary to overcome alienation with respect to the remaining aspects.

Against this contrasting background we can get a preliminary sighting on an unalienated mode of activity. For in such a mode, all the various aspects of alienation that Marx distinguishes would have been overcome. In the discussion which follows we will bring out the structures of such an unalienated mode of activity.<sup>2</sup> The guide for this discussion is as follows. People in an unalienated mode of expressing their powers are consciously active in such a way that they continuously bridge the separation between themselves: and (a) other people, (b) the products of their activity, (c) their own activity, and (d) the "species essence".

Now the social relationship among human subjects is not only a convenient, but also a natural point for beginning the sketch of an unalienated mode of activity. This is suggested by Marx's consideration that "man's relation to himself only becomes for him *objective* and *actual* through his relation to the other man";<sup>3</sup> and also his consideration that "the estrangement of man . . . is first realized and expressed in the relationship in which he stands to other men".<sup>4</sup> Since man's relation to himself is first realized in the relation in which man stands to other men, we have every reason to expect that the transcendence of alienation would also first be expressed through the relationship of men with one another.

Here we must remember that the individual is for Marx a social individual. Individuals are constituted, or rather constitute themselves, as individuals of a particular sort through the social relationships in which they stand to other people. If individuals are social individuals, then the specific nature of their social relationships will be constitutive of the

specific nature of the individuals. And indeed if individuals are social individuals, then the most positive development of individuals is intimately bound up with the most positive development of their social relationships. Thus, insofar as the social relationships obtaining among specific groups of individuals are of an antagonistic nature insofar as the individuals are pitted against one another in their social relationships then so far are the individuals pitted against their own positive unfolding, so far are the individuals pitted against themselves.

It is not that the individuals of capitalist society are not social individuals. It is rather that these individuals are interconnected with one another in antagonistic social relationships. Although such individuals may seem to themselves to be individuals who are such independently of society,<sup>5</sup> they are in reality antagonistic social individuals but social individuals nonetheless. Although these "individuals appear to be independent . . . they appear so, however, only to someone who abstracts from the conditions of existence in which these individuals come into contact".<sup>6</sup> They are "atoms only in imagination".<sup>7</sup>

Since all individuals, even the seemingly independent individuals of capitalist society, are social individuals, then both the kind as well as the degree of individual development will be contingent on the specific kinds of social relationships which obtain. To the extent that such relationships among individuals are antagonistic in nature, then the development of these individuals will be the development of antagonistic individuals. To the extent that individuals develop within the framework of social relationships in which people are pitted against one another and in which each treats the other only as a means to further his own ends to that extent individual development will be development within the form of antagonism. It will be development as against other individuals and therefore development that negates other individuals.

In very clear contrast to the general character of the social relationships which prevail in capitalism where antagonistic individuals systematically treat each other only as a means, and where individual development is development as against other individuals the general form of unalienated social relationships can be understood as one in which individuals relate to other individuals as ends in themselves in concrete practice. In unalienated social relationships, society is no longer regarded as an external framework, which hinders the development of supposedly independent individuals. Rather, individuals recognize that they are internally related with other people through the concrete practical affirmation of their own social nature

and therefore through the concrete practical affirmation of other people as ends in themselves. Community with other people is no longer recognized as a limitation of individual fulfillment, but rather as a pathway toward human fulfillment. This is so because community no longer means the common pursuit of private interest, as against the interest of others. It means instead the common affirmation of the unfolding of all people, within frameworks that give full, positive, practical recognition to the social nature of human being.

These considerations have a crucial bearing on individual development. For insofar as individual development takes place within the framework of antagonistic social relationships, it is trammled in fetters that block its development as an end in itself. Therein, all individual development is distorted into active alienation from other people and from one's own self. However, within the framework of unalienated social relationships, individual development would no longer be fettered by the repressive need to develop in a way that negates other people. In such a context individual development would no longer subserve the overriding compulsion to dominate and tyrannize over other selves.

[Here] it will be seen how in place of the *wealth* and *poverty* of political economy comes the *rich human being* and *rich human need*. The *rich human being* is simultaneously the human being *in need* of a totality of human manifestations of life the man in whom his own realization exists as an inner necessity, as *need*. Not only *wealth*, but likewise the *poverty* of man under the assumption of socialism receives in equal measure a *human* and therefore a social significance. Poverty is the passive bond which causes the human being to experience the need of the greatest wealth the *other human being*.<sup>8</sup>

Individual development which has thrown off its fetters, and which has taken on a specifically human face, is development in which individuals simultaneously have a need for the realization of a "totality of human manifestations of life", and a need for the other person as a person. It is individual development in which people both men and women concretely regard their own development and the development of other people as an end in itself.

In a framework of unalienated social relationships, individual development would be shaped by a *new form of practical reason*. For the moral imperative of the form of practical reason implicit in Marx's notion of unalienated activity calls for a transformation toward a *new common sense*. It calls for a common sense which is sensitive to the dynamic interplay of the

social factors which constitute and reconstitute the form of social reality a common sense which recognizes that the growing dominion of things over human life is grounded in an oppressive and dehumanizing social practice a common sense which requires the concrete extension of democracy to the workings of the economic process a common sense which gives full positive recognition to the social nature of human being a common sense which comprehends that community with other people need not operate as a limitation of individual fulfillment, but rather as a pathway toward individual fulfillment a common sense which affirms the need for a manifold of human expressions of life, and which affirms as well the need to be related to the other person as a person a common sense which rejects the oppression and exploitation of women, blacks, etc.; and which rejects their degradation to second class semi-persons.

This will all become clearer as we elaborate the meaning of unalienated activity more fully. We can sum up the results of the previous sections as they bear on the meaning of unalienated activity in the following way. Unalienated activity is activity undertaken and experienced as an end in itself. It is activity concretely affirmative of the social nature of the individual. It is activity that, in concrete practice, recognizes the internal ontological bond between human beings in a positive way. Thus, it is activity that objectifies itself in a way that concretely affirms the unobstructed objectification of the other person, insofar as the activity of the other person is also a concrete affirmation of the social nature of human being. Bearing in mind these cardinal features of unalienated activity, we turn to other aspects of unalienated activity that have not yet been explicitly addressed.

The next aspect we address is the notion of an unalienated mode of expressing one's powers. The meaning of this can be more clearly understood if it is contrasted with the alienated mode of activity that is associated with the antagonistic social relations of capitalism. Within the framework of capitalism, forces are operative in such a way that the specific activities, capacities, powers, and needs through which individuals objectify themselves are all expressed within the confines of a single mode of appropriation the mode of appropriation of "having." Referring to "seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, observing, experiencing, wanting, acting, loving," Marx maintains that within capitalism "[a]ll these physical and mental senses have therefore the sheer estrangement of *all* these senses the sense of *having*".<sup>9</sup> And he indicates that within capitalism, appropriation is understood "merely in the sense of *immediate*, one-sided

*gratification* merely in the sense of *possessing, of having*".<sup>10</sup>

At this juncture, we should note in passing the deep internal connection that obtains between "having" as the overarching mode of activity, and activity as a means. We saw earlier that conscious activity within the framework of capitalism is not experienced as an end in itself. Here, activity is distorted into a means for the realization of some external end that is, some end that stands in consciousness as external to the activity directed toward the realization of the end. Here the underlying meaning of all particular activities and relationships is that of "having". Thus, it seems clear that the appropriative activity of "having", in its capitalist form, must also reflect the dichotomy between means and ends. In other words, "having" in its capitalist form appears as a means to an external end. Put in still another way, we might say that "having", in its capitalist form, appears as an external relation between a possessing agent and what is possessed. For in its capitalist form, the appropriative activity of "having" interposes the appearance of an external relation between the human being and the world. In so doing it distorts the awareness of the internal relation that actually obtains between the human being and the world, and more especially the internal relation which obtains between human being and human being.

In capitalism particular activities are undertaken, and particular capacities are expressed, within the overarching appropriative activity of "having". This means that all individual development is the development of "having". But, too, individual development within capitalism is restricted concerning the range of activities that can be undertaken by any given individual within the overarching mode of "having". As Marx makes clear:

If the circumstances in which the individual lives allow him only the one-sided development of a single quality at the expense of all the rest, if they give him the material and time to develop only that one quality, then this individual achieves only a one-sided, crippled development.<sup>11</sup>

Forces within capitalism operate so that] each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape.<sup>12</sup>

Thus individual development within capitalism is a confined development in two respects. It is development confined to a narrow range of activities; and it is development confined within the overarching mode of "having".<sup>13</sup> Moreover, a dynamic internal connection exists between these two aspects. Confinement in one respect is reinforced by confinement in the other respect; and confinement in both respects is rooted in the social

relations of capitalism. We shall see that unalienated development within the framework of genuine socialism involves the emergence of individual development, both from "having" and from a narrow range of activities.

Against the background of the alienated mode of appropriation of capitalism, we can now begin to sketch the unalienated mode of expressing one's powers that is constitutive of unalienated activity. We point out, first, that in an unalienated mode of appropriation, "having" is no longer the dominant, let alone the single, mode of appropriation. Some idea of the range of unalienated appropriation can be brought out by the following example (which is modeled very loosely upon a brief description of human production provided by Marx in his early work<sup>14</sup>). Suppose someone makes something for a friend, let us say, a desk. Suppose that the person making the desk enjoys the actual process of making the desk. This very enjoyment would be a mode of appropriation of the desk. After the desk is made, suppose that this person, in looking at the desk, experiences the gratification of recognizing the sensuous objectification of him or herself in the desk that he or she had made. This gratification would also be a mode of appropriation of the desk. But the moment of appropriation of the desk need not stop here. For insofar as this person finds satisfaction in the recognition that the desk has fulfilled the need of the friend who will actually use the desk, so far does the appropriation of the desk continue in this satisfaction, although in a different mode. So here we have three different modes of appropriation of the desk on the part of the person who made the desk, no one of which is a mode of "having". Within the context of unalienated activity, "having" is just one mode of appropriation among others and is conspicuously not the predominant mode of appropriation. An unalienated mode of appropriation is one that is constituted by a manifold of different types of appropriation. In unalienated activity, "[m]an appropriates his total essence in a total manner, that is to say, as a whole man. Each of his *human* relations to the world . . . are in their *objective* orientation or in their *orientation to the object*, the appropriation of that object".<sup>15</sup>

Within the framework of the antagonistic social structures of capitalism, individual development is such that human beings appropriate only part of their essence, and in segmental ways, and as fragmented individuals. In contrast, the unconfined, unfettered development of human beings within the framework of genuine socialism is such that human beings appropriate their total that is, manifold and many-sided essence in a total and many-sided way. The manifold, many-sided character of

appropriation is conspicuous in a succession of different activities and varied relationships with the world, as they are undertaken over an extended span of time. But even in a given activity undertaken in the present, the manifold and many-sided character of appropriation is apparent.

Within capitalism particular activities are undertaken and expressed within the overarching mode of "having" that is, within the need-to-have as the overarching need. This renders the development of particular activities into the development of "having" and it prevents the open-ended development of anything else but "having". In genuine socialism, on the other hand, particular activities are undertaken and expressed within the overarching "need of a totality of human manifestations of life".<sup>16</sup> This fosters the open-ended development of a number of different particular activities. Appropriation by the whole person in socialism is appropriation in which human beings actively constitute themselves as whole persons, through a manifold and many-sided objectification of themselves in their relationship with the world and other people. Rich appropriation and through this the "rich human being" is founded on the rich, many-sided objectification of human powers, through the rich, many-sided appropriation of human reality.<sup>17</sup>

At this point we should dwell briefly upon the specifically human character of appropriation, when appropriation is undertaken in an unalienated mode for clearly not every manifestation of life is a human manifestation of life. In doing so, we should point out initially that the model of activity that is human must be drawn in relation to the fully developed condition of the social nature of human beings. Since the human individual is a social individual, then clearly the determination of the meaning of activity that is *human* must take into account the social nature of the individual. Moreover, it must take into account its fully developed condition. It is the unalienated social relations that must figure in the determination of just what constitutes human activity. For it is such social relations that reflect the full development of the social nature of the individual. In unalienated appropriation the human being actively constitutes himself as a "totality of human manifestations of life" by way of a multitude of particular modes of objectification undertaken within the framework of nonantagonistic social relations, such that the "*other* person as a person has become for him a need".<sup>18</sup>

Not only must the very meaning of human activity be understood in reference to the fully developed social nature of humankind; but the human character of unalienated appropriation must also be understood in dynamic

interconnection with the many-sided character of unalienated development. For the human factor, and the many-sided factor, of unalienated appropriation are dynamically interconnected with each other. The development of each factor affects, shapes, and is shaped by the development of the other factor. Moreover, these factors are dynamically interconnected, so that the dynamic tendency of one factor is in harmony with the dynamic tendency of the other. The full practical development of many-sided activity requires, and is based on, the full practical development of human activity, and vice versa.

Just consider: Within the antagonistic social structures of capitalism, "having" is the overarching mode of appropriation. This means, among other things, that "having" is the only activity affirmed in an open-ended way. It means that particular activities are affirmed only insofar as they are affirmations of "having". It is in the nature of "having" as the overarching mode of appropriation to project itself as the general form of all activity, and thus to exclude the open-ended development of anything else. If "having" is the only kind of appropriation that is affirmed in an open-ended way, then a many-sided appropriation is dynamically impossible. The whole person simply cannot be affirmed in an open-ended way, in a context within which only one mode of appropriation is affirmed so. In order for the whole person to be affirmed in an open-ended way, it is necessary that many-sidedness be affirmed in an open-ended way. "Having" precludes the development of the whole person, by precluding the open-ended affirmation of any other kind of appropriation than itself. It also constitutes individuals in their relations with one another as antagonistic centers of one-sided appropriative activity, in which each engages in a one-sided affirmation of himself or herself against the other—that is, one-sided appropriation in which each appropriates for himself or herself only, in competitive antagonism with other people. "Having" as the overarching mode of appropriation generates one-sidedness in all directions. It transforms the activity of the self into one-sided activity, both within the self and between selves.

In this context, however, we indicate that the one-sided development of activity within the antagonistic social structures of capitalism provides the necessary basis for the many-sided and human development of activity, within the nonantagonistic structures of genuine socialism. The universal development of the productive forces in capitalism is obviously attended by the development of new needs, capacities, and abilities. It is also attended by a growing variety in the types of activity that are undertaken in

the society at large (although this growing variety is not characteristic of most individuals in capitalist society because of division of labor and overspecialization). Moreover, the universal development of the productive forces in capitalism brings people, more and more, into general interconnection with one another through the instrument of exchange value. Only on the basis of the universal development of the productive forces in capitalism can the "universally developed individual" of socialism become a reality.

Universally developed individuals . . . are the product not of nature but of history. The extent and universality of the development of capacities which make possible this sort of individuality, presupposes precisely production on the basis of exchange value. The universal nature of this production creates an alienation of the individual from himself and others, but also for the first time the general and universal nature of his relationships and capacities.<sup>19</sup>

To be sure, the concrete realization of individuals who are "universally developed individuals" that is, the concrete realization of free conscious activity means a supersession of exploitative private property, and the other social relations of capitalism. But more than this, the social relation of exploitative private property can only be superseded through an activity of individuals that is concretely developing toward the full realization of free conscious activity. Thus, the degree to which the social relation of exploitative private property is superseded is identical with the degree to which free conscious activity has been concretely realized.

Private property can be abolished only on condition of an all-round development of individuals, because the existing character of intercourse and productive forces is an all-round one, and only individuals that are developing in an all-round fashion can appropriate them, i.e., can turn them into free manifestations of their lives.<sup>20</sup>

We turn now to another aspect of unalienated activity that concerns the mode of integration of the different mental functions in such activity. With respect to this aspect, Marx himself has not provided anything like a clearly formulated and explicit position, let alone an extended analysis. In spite of this, it seems clear that a presupposition of much of Marx's thinking, as it bears on the issue of unalienated activity, is that the dichotomy between cognition and conation is overcome in unalienated activity. The background against which this presupposition is here singled out is the sharp separation, which is so deeply rooted in our tradition, between the rational faculties on

the one side and all the so-called lower faculties on the other including feeling, desire, emotion, will, and so on. We are suggesting that in Marx's understanding of unalienated activity, the separation of these different faculties that obtains in alienated activity is overcome. Unalienated activity requires a structural transformation of consciousness in which an interpenetration and harmonious integration of these different faculties takes place. In slightly different terms, we might say that unalienated activity is activity in which the dichotomy between reason and sensuousness has been overcome, so that "reason is sensuous and sensuousness rational".<sup>21</sup>

To substantiate adequately that this presupposition is implicit in what Marx says in connection with unalienated activity would require an extended textual analysis beyond the scope of this paper. There are, however, some general points that may provide, we hope, some clear indication that such a suggestion is not without warrant. In the course of these considerations, it will also be seen that an understanding of the mode of integration of the different mental functions in unalienated activity will help to further clarify what it means to speak about appropriation by the whole person.

By definition, alienated activity as it obtains within the antagonistic social relations of capitalism is not spontaneous, it is not pleasurable, and it does not provide satisfaction of the sensuous aspects of human nature. For example, Marx points out that in alienated work the worker "does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy . . . and therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself".<sup>22</sup> Further: "[The worker's] labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced. . . . It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a *means* to satisfy needs external to it. . . . [T]he worker's activity [is] not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self".<sup>23</sup>

In alienated activity within capitalism, the operative cognitive faculties are not in harmonic integration with the noncognitive, sensuous faculties. Not only are the cognitive faculties alienated from the noncognitive sensuous faculties, and vice versa, but the cognitive faculties that are operative in alienated activity within capitalism are *antisensuous* in character. This will come out more clearly if we look at some aspects of the concept of reason that is embedded within alienated activity in the framework of capitalism and reflective of it. The aspects in mind have been captured very clearly in Marcuse's formulation of the "logic of domination", or "rationality of domination", which he gives in *Eros and Civilization*.

Whatever the implications of the original Greek conception of Logos as the essence of being, since the canonization of the Aristotelian logic,

the term merges with the idea of ordering, classifying, mastering reason. And this idea of reason becomes increasingly antagonistic to those faculties and attitudes which are receptive rather than productive, which tend toward gratification rather than transcendence which remain strongly committed to the pleasure principle. They appear as the unreasonable and irrational that must be conquered and contained in order to serve the progress of reason.<sup>24</sup>

As the scientific rationality of Western civilization began to bear its full fruit, it became increasingly conscious of its psychical implications. The ego which undertook the rational transformation of the human and natural environment revealed itself as an essentially aggressive, offensive subject, whose thoughts and actions were designed for mastering objects. . . . The struggle begins with the perpetual internal conquest of the "lower" faculties of the individual: his sensuous and appetitive faculties. Their subjugation is, at least since Plato, regarded as a constitutive element of human reason, which is thus in its very function repressive.<sup>25</sup>

The "rationality of domination" is anti-sensuous as well as non-sensuous. Alienated activity within capitalism is characterized by the "rationality of domination", and by the antagonistic bifurcation of reason and the feeling-sensing-striving dimension of human being. Thus, it seems clear that the supersession of alienation must also involve the supersession of this mode of rationality and the supersession of the antagonistic bifurcation of the "higher" and "lower" faculties.

A second general consideration, which will provide some warrant for the suggestion that unalienated activity presupposes a structural transformation of the cognitive and conative faculties as they obtain in capitalism, is the theory of historical materialism. This theory provides a framework within which the supersession of this bifurcation can be understood. The theory of historical materialism was worked out by Marx against the background of, and as an alternative to, the view that cognition and abstract reason have primacy in the understanding human activity. This view has deep roots in our intellectual tradition and can be traced back at least as far as Plato. Moreover, the belief in the primacy of cognition and abstract reason in understanding human activity also has had a long partnership with a dualistic conception of the relation between mind and body.

Diametrically opposed to the primacy of abstract reason and dualistic conception of the relation between mind and body, the theory of historical

materialism bases its understanding of human activity on the primacy of "praxis", that is, on the primacy of conscious-activity-in-the-world. It contends that the conceptual life of man emerges and develops out of his practical activity in the world.<sup>26</sup> If practical activity in the world is taken as primary, and if our conceptual life (our cognitive nature) develops on the basis of our practical activity, then there are grounds for saying that our cognitive nature undergoes change through history. This means that reason must be understood historically. And thus it means that the content of reason is different at different stages in human history.<sup>27</sup>

The suggestion that the concept of reason undergoes development is quite at odds with the traditional view, which sees reason as basically a historical and unchanging. But the conflict is resolved, if we consider that any concept of reason when fully unfolded even the traditional concept of reason embraces much more than the abstract principles of logic. The extralogical content of any concept of reason embraces among other things: (a) specific presuppositions in terms of which the world is understood and explained; (b) specific presuppositions about the nature of reality, both human and nonhuman; and (c) specific value presuppositions.

To be sure, such presuppositions are not always made explicit let alone given extended analysis and defense. One conspicuous exception, of course, is the case of Kant, who actually did provide extended analysis of most of the presuppositions which, taken together, constitute his conception of reason as a whole. (On the side of theoretical reason these presuppositions include the "Categories of the Understanding" and "Ideas of Reason"; on the side of practical reason they include the "Postulates of Practical Reason" and the "Categorical Imperative".) However, one significant presupposition of Kant's concept of reason that is not made explicit by him, but that nonetheless is operative throughout his thought, is his presupposition concerning the a historical and unchanging character of reason. Kant projects his view of reason as the view for all humanity and for all time.

Moreover, the presupposition of the a historical and unchanging character of reason is not in any way unique to Kant. It runs through the mainstream of Western thinking about reason from as far back as Plato and Aristotle, and even earlier.<sup>28</sup> To be sure, there is much variety among individual Western philosophers with respect to the particular constellation of presuppositions that, taken together, constitute a given philosopher's view of reason. However, despite such variety in the particular constellation of presuppositions adopted by given philosophers in their view of reason,

there is much less variety with respect to the subset of presuppositions that make up theoretical reason as opposed to practical reason. In fact, theoretical reason, in some of its chief features, has been fairly constant throughout the mainstream of the Western tradition. This is not surprising considering the predominance of the view throughout the tradition that being is a historical the view that "ultimate reality" does not change. The predominant view of theoretical reason is drawn in relation to the predominant view of being. More than that, the predominant view of being has been lifted right up into the predominant way of understanding reason. Inasmuch as any full-fledged view of reason embraces within itself specific presuppositions about the nature of reality, it is clear that "reason" is metaphysical through and through. A view of reason that regards reason as unchanging reflects within itself metaphysical commitments that see "ultimate reality" as unchanging. The long shadow of Parmenides lies over the mainstream of the tradition in its thinking about being, but also in its thinking about reason.

In any case, the theory of historical materialism provides a framework for understanding the supersession of the rationality of domination, and the emergence of a new mode of rationality. For within the framework of the theory of historical materialism, our cognitive life, including the concept of reason operative therein at any phase of human development, develops on the basis of practical activity in the world. And the conceptual array constitutive of alienated reason (whose central core has been summed up above as the rationality of domination) is one which has emerged out of practical activity which is itself alienated. The predominance of the alienated concept of reason, and the alienated mode of rationality, is grounded upon the predominance of an alienated material and social practice. Once it is seen that abstract reason does not have primacy in the understanding of human activity, and that reason is historical and grounded in the primacy of man's material practice, then it becomes possible to envision a changed mode of rationality arising on the basis of a changed material and social practice. Suppose that the changed material practice was an unalienated material practice, in which people related to one another so as to give sensuous, practical recognition to each other as ends in themselves. Suppose that conscious activity was unforced and spontaneously creative, and provided full opportunity for the simultaneous expression of all the different faculties of the mind. Out of such practical activity, what would be the mode of rationality to arise?

Although we will attempt nothing like a full analysis, there seems every

reason to contend that (on the assumption of the soundness of the theory of historical materialism) a mode of rationality could emerge that would not be repressive of our sensuous nature and would even overcome the split between the cognitive and the noncognitive faculties. Overcoming this split would mean a modification of the structures of both reason and sensuousness, as they generally obtain in the framework of the antagonistic social relations of capitalism. It would mean their harmonious integration into a unitary mode of rational-sensuousness or sensuous-rationality. The dimension of human experience in which the paradigm for such a mode of rationality can be found is the aesthetic dimension. At this point we turn again to Marcuse's work for help.

Although acknowledging the secondary role to which the aesthetic dimension has been consigned within the social structures of capitalism, Marcuse is quick to point out in *Eros and Civilization* that this situation must be understood in dynamic interconnection with the predominance of a mode of rationality that is repressive of the sensuous nature of man. Developing his discussion largely from the aesthetic philosophy of Kant and Johann Christoph Schiller,<sup>29</sup> Marcuse goes on to explore the aesthetic dimension as "a realm which preserves the truth of the senses and reconciles, in the reality of freedom, the 'lower' and the 'higher' faculties of man, sensuousness and intellect, pleasure and reason".<sup>30</sup>

In another work, *An Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse focuses on the central place which the aesthetic sensibility could have in the creation of a new social reality one in which the aesthetic dimension of human experience would no longer be of marginal, secondary importance, but would come into the foreground as a pervasive concern of everyday life and activity in all its various aspects.<sup>31</sup> In a new social reality in which the aesthetic dimension figured pervasively in all aspects of everyday life and activity, the antagonism between reason and sensuousness would have been overcome. We note here that, while the theoretical roots of this antagonism go back to the Greeks, the concrete practical consequences of this antagonism begin to unfold fully only with the advent of capitalism and the growing intensity of alienation.

Given the relation between reason and sensuousness within the rationality of domination, it is clear that both reason and sensuousness would have to be transformed if they are to be brought together in mutual harmony in a new mode of rationality. Theoretical reason would have to undergo a transformation from the non-dialectical structuring principles at play in the rationality of domination to dialectical structuring principles

capable of comprehending reality as process and capable of comprehending the dynamic interconnections that shape human reality. Sensuousness would undergo a transformation from the repressive and antagonistic domination of the sensuous aspects of the human being to a central concern for the cultivation of their "gratification in an order of freedom" (Marcuse's phrase). To arrive at a fuller appreciation of the transformation of human sensuousness, which would go hand in hand with the transformation of theoretical and practical reason in a new mode of rationality, we will explore some considerations suggested by the following passage from the *Economic Manuscripts*:

The *sense* caught up in crude practical need has only a restricted sense. . . . [T]he *senses* of the social man are *other* senses than those of the non-social man. . . . For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses the practical senses (will, love, etc.) in a word, *human* sense the human nature of the senses come to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of *humanized* nature. The *forming* of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present. . . . Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being. . . . The transcendence of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities, but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, *human*. The eye has become a *human* eye, just as its *object* has become a social, *human* object made by man for man. The *senses* have therefore become directly in their practice *theoreticians*. . . . Need or enjoyment have consequently lost their *egotistical* nature, and nature has lost its mere *utility* by use becoming *human* use.<sup>32</sup>

We have already indicated that reason must be understood historically. And we have indicated that the mode of rationality predominant within the antagonistic social structures of capitalism arises from a historically conditioned practice. Running parallel to this notion, the above passage suggests that human sensuousness must also be understood historically. It suggests that the mode of sensuousness that obtains at any given time also arises on the basis of an historically conditioned practice.<sup>33</sup> Human sensuousness gets the particular form it has through the mode of appropriative activity that characterizes the practice out of which the mode of sensuousness arises. The mode of sensuousness, which arises from the historically conditioned practice associated with the antagonistic social

structures of capitalism, is "caught up in crude practical need". It is a mode of sensuousness shaped within the framework of "having" as the overarching mode of appropriation. It is a nonaesthetic mode of sensuousness that is concerned with "mere utility".

At this point, an important distinction between two different aspects of human sensuousness must be drawn, a distinction at which Marx hints when he refers to "not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses the practical senses (will, love, etc.)". The two different aspects of human sensuousness can be distinguished, as the *sense-perceptive aspect* on the one hand, and the *conative-libidinal aspect* on the other hand.<sup>34</sup> Human sensuousness under both aspects is shaped in a given context by the mode of appropriative activity that obtains in that context. Within the context of the social structures of capitalism, the form that both aspects of human sensuousness take on is shaped by the appropriative activity of "having".

If we focus on the sense-perceptive aspect of sensuousness, we can say that the mode of sense perceptiveness that is shaped by the kind of appropriative activity predominant in capitalism is a passive, receptive, nonaesthetic mode of sensuousness. It is a mode of sense perceptiveness whose distinguishing feature is the recognition and discrimination of objects, as objects to be manipulated and used (in the sense of "mere utility"). In such a mode of sense perceptiveness the "cognitive presence" is at a minimum. But even here the cognitive element is not completely absent, because the recognition of something as something requires a cognitive element. Be this as it may, this mode of sense perceptiveness appears in consciousness as passive and receptive. The sensory content appears as simply given without any admixture of cognitive activity. The given is "had".

Shifting attention now to the conative-libidinal aspect of sensuousness, we point out that the conative-libidinal forces as shaped by the appropriative activity of "having" are possessive and tyrannical in their expression vis-à-vis other people. They tend to be "manifested turbulently and forcibly".<sup>35</sup> They are "caught up in crude practical need", and give rise to an enjoyment characterized by its "egotistical nature". And they are confined in their expression to a narrow range of physical and mental zones.

Against the background of this sketch of both aspects of human sensuousness, as they are shaped by "having", we can more clearly understand the transformation of human sensuousness that would occur on the basis of a manifold of different modes of appropriation affirmed in an open-ended way within the context of full-fledged genuine socialism.

Following the suggestions in the above passage, it seems clear that human sensuousness in socialism could be characterized as aesthetic and human under both aspects.

Consider first the transformed condition of the sense-perceptive aspect of human sensuousness in the context of full-fledged socialism. The following points deserve attention. Here there would be a mode of sense perceptiveness in which the aesthetic dimension of "subjective human sensibility" came fully into prominence as a pervasive feature of everyday experience. It would be an active, aesthetic mode of sense perceptiveness in which the cognitive presence was extremely significant and was felt as such in conscious experience. The senses would have "become directly in their practice theoreticians". It would be a mode of sense perceptiveness that involved the recognition and discrimination of the external world as an objective field in relation to which "the richness of subjective human sensibility" can be brought into being and thus as an objective field in relation to which the social nature of man is concretely mediated through a many-sided human appropriation, which concretely affirms persons as ends in themselves.

Consider next the transformed condition of the conative-libidinal aspect of human sensuousness in socialism. As with sense perceptiveness, the mode in which the conative-libidinal forces are expressed in socialism would be shaped by a human, many-sided mode of appropriation. Here too, the conative-libidinal forces would have "become directly in their practice theoreticians". Thus, they would become human in their practical expression. The concrete practical expression of the conative-libidinal forces would no longer be possessive and tyrannical. Instead, they would be sensuously affirmative of other persons as ends in themselves. Moreover, such conative-libidinal forces would no longer be confined in a one-sided way to a narrow range of physical and mental zones, but would radiate through all bodily and mental zones.<sup>36</sup> Corresponding to a many-sided mode of appropriation, there would be a many-sided sensuousness. In their transformed condition, the conative-libidinal forces would no longer be "manifested turbulently and forcibly", but spontaneously, lightly, and naturally. They would give rise to a human, many-sided sensuous enjoyment that would not involve the negation of other people, and that would even find sensuous enjoyment in the human affirmation of other people.

From the foregoing considerations concerning the transformed condition of both aspects of human sensuousness in the context of a genuine socialist reality, it should be clear that this transformed condition

would presuppose the structuring principles of a dialectical reason. In such a reality the sense-perceptive aspect and the conative-libidinal aspect of human sensuousness would have been informed by a dialectical reason employing structuring principles that are attuned to comprehending the complex dynamic interconnections that obtain in the different domains of reality, as opposed to the structuring principles of the traditional mode of reason that make dualistic cuts at every turn, thereby artificially separating what is actually dynamically interconnected.

Here the dialectical interplay of a transformed reason would overcome the traditional dichotomy between sensuousness and reason. Reason would have become sensuous and sensuousness would have become reasonable. Here human activity would be activity in which whole persons expressed themselves. It would be activity in which the dichotomy between reason and sensuousness had been overcome by a structural transformation of consciousness. In such activity there would be a dialectical interplay between cognition and conation, and individuals would concretely express themselves in the wholeness of their cognitive and non-cognitive dimension. In such a situation an order of freedom would obtain. There would be order, but this order would be a sensuous human order.

As we close this paper let us touch on the question of whether or not such a transformation of reason on a wide scale is a real possibility; but let us speak conditionally. If such a transformation of reason in the direction of the kind of unalienated and free activity delineated earlier in this paper were possible, we hold that it would offer the best hope for a human future, and for a sustainable relation to the natural world. However, to make the case that it *is* a real possibility is actually beyond the scope of this present paper. For such a case actually amounts to the case that humanistic-Marxism is the most viable currently available perspective for understanding human cultural evolution, and for nurturing a development toward a new plateau of human culture and of human freedom. While we believe we have made this case elsewhere,<sup>37</sup> here we must be content to simply suggest possibilities. So let us conclude with the suggestion that such a transformation of reason on a wide scale is indeed a real cultural possibility; and also the suggestion that at this juncture in human history such a transformation of reason has now become a *practical necessity*, if humankind is to lift itself out of the mounting world crisis spiritual and otherwise in which we are all enmeshed.

Kevin M. Brien

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#### End Notes:

1. This analysis is given in Marx's well-known essay on "Estranged Labor" in Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. with an Introduction by Dirk J. Struik & trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), pp. 106-19.
2. Some of the material in the discussion that follows is adapted from the chapter on "Freedom as a Mode of Being" in Kevin M. Brien, *Marx, Reason, and the Art of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) © Kevin M. Brien.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.
5. Istvan Meszaros takes important note of this in *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 258. Also see Adam Schaff's discussion of the social individual in his chapter on "The Marxist Concept of the Individual" in *Marxism and the Human Individual*, ed. Robert S. Cohen & trans. O. Wojtasiewicz (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1970). Carol Gould's *Marx's Social Ontology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978) also gives some fine discussion concerning the social individual in Marx.
6. Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Selections ed. & trans. David McLellan (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 72.
7. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family*, trans. R. Dixon (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), p. 163.
8. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, pp. 143-44.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
11. Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. S. Ryazanskaya (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), p. 290.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
13. In close connection with this, see Meszaros' discussion of "having" in *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, pp. 210-11.
14. This description is given in "Excerpt Notes of 1844" in Karl Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. & trans. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 281.
15. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, pp. 138-39.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
17. See the well-known passage in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, in which Marx speaks about the "rich human being," p. 144.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
19. Marx, *The Grundrisse* (trans. McLellan), pp. 70-71.
20. *The German Ideology*, p. 495.
21. This is Marcuse's formulation. See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 164.
22. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, p. 110.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
24. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, p. 101.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
26. Also see companion formulations in *The German Ideology*, pp. 37-38.
27. For developed discussion along these lines, see Kevin M. Brien, *Human Freedom in Marx* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1978), pp. 245-72.
28. In this connection, we refer to a set of unpublished lectures by Marx W. Wartofsky called "Towards an Historical Epistemology. In these lectures Wartofsky points out that the most traditional approach to epistemology is one "which characterizes the problems of perception, belief and knowledge as timeless and ahistorical *analytical* questions, and attempts an essentialist definition or characterization of human knowing. . . . The essentialist character of this model lies precisely in its unconscious universalization of a particular, limited, historical view of cognition".
29. For this discussion, see Marcuse's chapter on "The Aesthetic Dimension" in *Eros and Civilization*.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.
31. On this theme see Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 30-31.
32. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, pp. 139-41. The sentence order has been modified.
33. In relation to the theme that human sensuousness must be considered in historical terms, see Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation*, pp. 23-48.
34. In *Eros and Civilization*, p. 166, Marcuse points to the importance of this distinction for aesthetic philosophy.
35. See *The German Ideology*, pp. 291-92, on this theme; also see Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, pp. 184-85.
36. In a chapter on "The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros" in *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse speculates about the nonrepressive, nondestructive transformation of the conative-libidinal forces beyond the established social reality. Instinctual liberation in a nonrepressive context "involves not simply a release but a *transformation* of the libido: from sexuality constrained under genital supremacy to erotization of the entire personality. It is a spread rather

than explosion of libidina spread over private and societal relations which bridges the gap maintained between them by a repressive reality principle. . . . Moreover, nothing in the nature of Eros justifies the notion that the 'extension' of the impulse is confined to the corporeal sphere. If the antagonistic separation of the physical from the spiritual part of the organism is itself the historical result of repression, the overcoming of this antagonism would open the spiritual sphere to the impulse" (pp. 184-192).

37. For a full-fledged philosophical presentation of this case, see Kevin M. Brien, *Marx, Reason, and the Art of Freedom: Expanded Second Edition* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, forthcoming 2005).

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